

NEW JERSEY AIDS/HIV/STD HOTLINE

PRESS RELEASE
February 2017

Start Talking – Stop New HIV Infection - National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day -

(Newark, NJ) – With Black History Month underway and Valentine’s Day around the corner, National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD), observed on February 7th, offers an opportunity to discuss the importance sexual health plays in keeping black/African American communities healthy. While loving your partner is a priority, it’s as important to love yourself by taking care of your personal health which includes getting tested and receiving treatment for HIV and any other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Although we have made great progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS, there is still much to be done in order to achieve the global vision of zero new infections, zero deaths, and zero stigma/discrimination. Unfortunately there are still many people who are HIV positive and do not know they are infected. Not knowing your status puts your health and the health of others at risk. If an HIV positive person is not getting medical care to treat his/her infection, he/she can continue to spread the virus to others.

Why do we observe NBHAAD? Although we are all at risk for infection regardless of race, religion or ethnicity, HIV and AIDS affects the health and well-being of blacks/African Americans the most. This population is affected more than any other racial/ethnic group in the U.S. NBHAAD is observed to increase awareness of the risk of HIV infection and encourage community members to get educated, get tested, get involved and get treated.

“If current diagnosis rates persist, approximately one in 20 black men, one in 48 black women, and one in two black gay and bisexual men will be diagnosed with HIV during their lifetimes, according to a CDC projection analysis.”¹ Gay and bisexual men within the black/African American community are most affected by the HIV virus with young men who have sex with men (MSM) accounting for most new infections.²

Anyone can get HIV through unprotected vaginal and anal sex, sharing needles to inject drugs, and/or tattoos and piercings. Even newborns are at risk when born to HIV positive mothers. Testing is the **ONLY** way to know for sure if you are infected. You cannot rely on symptoms; some may not have any symptoms for years and then developed severe complications.

What you can do to protect yourself and your partner³

- Use condoms the right way every time you have sex. [Learn](#) the right way to use a condom.
- [Choose less risky sexual behaviors](#), like oral sex.
- Limit your number of sexual partners.
- Never share needles or drug works.
- Have an open conversation with your partner about his/her sexual history.

¹ CDC Fact Sheet. [HIV among African Americans](#). August 2016

² Ibid.

³ CDC. [National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#). September 2016.

- Those at high risk for HIV should consider taking [pre-exposure prophylaxis \(PrEP\)](#) to prevent getting HIV.
- If you think you may have been exposed to HIV within the last 3 days consider taking [post-exposure prophylaxis \(PEP\)](#).

Take control of your own health and help prevent illness of those around you. If you do not know your HI status, don't wait – get tested today. If you are sexually active, you should be tested for HIV and other STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) every year.

The NJ AIDS/HIV/STD hotline is a go-to resource for information. If you are looking to find a free, state-funded testing site near you for initial testing, follow-up care, or have questions about HIV/AIDS, STDs, or hepatitis, contact us either by calling 800-624-2377, text/email at 8006242377@njpies.org, or chat via our site at www.njhivstdline.org. We are always here to help 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week! Calls are free and confidential.

Services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year

- Referrals for free, testing sites and other related services
- HIV/AIDS, STD and Hepatitis Prevention Information
- HIV Counseling and Treatment Locations
- HIV Treatment Information
- Referrals for free, clean needles/syringes

About NJPIES

As New Jersey's only poison control center, the New Jersey Poison Information & Education System provides information on poison prevention and treatments. Chartered in 1983, NJPIES provides free consultation through telephone hot line services and the Web. Medical professionals such as physicians, registered nurses and pharmacists offer confidential advice regarding poison emergencies and provide information on poison prevention, drugs, food poisoning, animal bites and more. These specialists are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

NJPIES coordinates state poison education and research and is designated as the regional poison center by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and the American Association of Poison Control Centers. It tracks incidences of adverse reactions to food, drugs and vaccines in order to monitor potential public health issues and provide data to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A division of the Department of Emergency Medicine of the New Jersey Medical School of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. NJPIES has a state-of-the-art center located on the school's Newark campus. NJPIES is funded, in part, by the NJ Department of Health and the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

New Jersey residents seeking immediate information about treating poison emergencies, and those with any drug information questions, should call the toll-free hot line, **800-222-1222**, any time. The hearing impaired may call **973-926-8008**. For more information, visit www.njpies.org or call **973-972-9280**.

About Rutgers

Established in 1766, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is America's eighth oldest institution of higher learning and one of the nation's premier public research universities. Serving more than 65,000 students on campuses, centers, institutes and other locations throughout the state, Rutgers is the only public university in New Jersey that is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities.

Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) is the health care education, research, and clinical division of Rutgers University, comprising nine schools and their attendant faculty practices, centers, institutes and clinics; New Jersey's leading comprehensive cancer care center; and New Jersey's largest behavioral health care network.