

NEW JERSEY AIDS/HIV/STD HOTLINE

PRESS RELEASE

September 2016

Gay Men's Awareness Day - Have the Conversation that Can Stop HIV -

Newark, NJ – On September 27th, National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NGMHAAD), we as a country will join together to raise the awareness of every person in every community about the devastating effects HIV continues to have on men who have sex with men (MSM) here in the U.S. Although many communities have suffered greatly from HIV infection, the MSM community has been most affected by this virus.¹ CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) reports that MSM "represent approximately two percent of the U.S. population, but they accounted for nearly 67 percent of all diagnosed HIV infections in 2014."²

Since many new infections are transmitted by people who do not know they are infected, undiagnosed infections continue to fuel the epidemic. This means that many HIV infected individuals are not receiving ongoing medical care and treatment, thereby continuing to spread the virus to others.

CDC Snapshot³

- HIV diagnoses increased six percent among MSM from 2005 to 2014
- The steepest increases occurred among young black and Latino MSM aged 13-24
- Young, black MSM – the most severely affected subpopulation of MSM – accounted for more new infections in the United States (4,800 in 2010) than any other subgroup by race/ethnicity, age and sex

Let this day serve as a call to action to continue to educate all, but especially black and Latino MSM about the importance of getting tested (know your HIV status), disclosing their HIV status to sex partners, practicing safe sex (using a latex condom consistently and correctly with every sexual act), and using medicine to prevent and treat the virus. If we as a nation stand to stop HIV, every person who is infected with the virus needs to know that they are infected (positive) and must be in and stay in medical care/treatment to prevent the further spread of HIV.

Get Tested. Get in Care. Stay in Care. Stay Healthy.

There is now a prescription HIV prevention option available, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), to those at high risk of infection. This medicine must be prescribed by a healthcare professional; it cannot be bought over-the-counter. "PrEP is for people without HIV who are at very high risk for getting it from sex or injection drug use."⁴ Studies have shown that PrEP is very effective when used according to the directions; one pill taken every day.⁵ By adding another layer of protection, condoms, it is found to be even more effective; condoms must be used correctly, every time a person is involved in sexual contact.⁶ "Daily PrEP use can lower the risk of getting HIV from sex by more than 90% and from injection drug use by more than 70%."⁷

Open dialogue between sex partners about prevention strategies and treatment options is an effective way to communicate the importance of reducing new HIV infections and continuing to stay in medical care. The risk of becoming infected and continuing to spread HIV must be taken seriously – it does not discriminate. Remember, all sexually active individuals are at risk if they are having or have ever had unprotected sex (vaginal and/or anal) with an infected partner, even if it was their first time. Testing is the ONLY way to know for sure.

¹ CDC Fact Sheet. [HIV Among Gay and Bisexual Men](#). August 2016.

² CDC Fact Sheet. [The Nation's Approach to HIV Prevention for Gay and Bisexual Men](#). August 2016.

³ CDC Fact Sheet. [HIV Among Gay and Bisexual Men](#). August 2016.

⁴ CDC. [Daily pill can prevent HIV](#). December 2015.

⁵ CDC. [PrEP information sheet](#). February 2016.

⁶ CDC. [Are you ready for PrEP?](#) Accessed September 21, 2016.

⁷ CDC. [PrEP](#). February 2016.

What You Can Do to Protect Yourself and your partner⁸

- 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.
- If you are at very high risk for HIV, talk to your doctor about [pre-exposure prophylaxis \(PrEP\)](#), which is medicine taken daily to prevent HIV.
- Talk to your doctor about [post-exposure prophylaxis \(PEP\)](#) if you think you may have been exposed to HIV within the last 3 days.

Don't wait and don't depend on luck! Get tested now! HIV testing has never been quicker and easier than it is today with rapid HIV testing. These tests were designed to produce rapid results in less than an hour. The sooner HIV infection is found, the sooner treatment can begin. Ignoring your infection will not make it go away. Remember, HIV is no longer a death sentence. Those infected can live long, healthy lives if they stay in medical care.

If you are looking to find a free, state-funded testing site near you for initial testing or follow-up or have questions about HIV/AIDS, STDs, or hepatitis, contact us (The New Jersey AIDS/HIV/STD Hotline) either by calling 800-624-2377, text/email at 8006242377@njpies.org, or chat via our site at www.njhivstdline.org; TTD/TTY Line (for the hearing impaired) 973-926-8008. We are always here to help 24hours a day/ 7 days a week! Calls are free and confidential. Services include:

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

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.

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⁸ CDC. [National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#). September 20, 2016.