

## NEW JERSEY AIDS/HIV/STD HOTLINE

### **PRESS RELEASE**

February 2021

### **We're in This Together** National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

**(New Jersey, NJ)** – Have you joined in the fight against HIV? Getting tested for HIV and knowing your status is how you help end HIV in New Jersey. HIV testing also connects you to other sexual health services that are important to your health and wellbeing. It provides the opportunity to discuss your sexual practices and risk, getting tested for other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), the right prevention and treatment options, and how to reduce HIV stigma.

February 7<sup>th</sup> is National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD), an opportunity to raise awareness within Black and African American communities about HIV infection, and the effective prevention and treatment options that are available today. When compared to other races and ethnicities, HIV affects communities of color the most — higher rates of new HIV diagnoses and people living with HIV.

[According to CDC's](#) (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) latest data, HIV diagnoses have decreased overall in Black and African American communities. The decrease in HIV diagnoses was noted in all but one group — Black and African American people aged 25-34 years old which saw an increase in HIV diagnoses. Also reported, Black and African American gay, bisexual, and other men who reported male-to-male sexual contact had the highest number of new HIV diagnoses in 2018.

Sexual health is an important part of staying healthy. It is not only important to know your HIV status, but also the HIV status of your sexual partner(s). Sex partners need to talk openly about lowering their HIV and STI risk, sex and drug use history, getting tested, and prevention strategies and treatment options. Some sex practices and behaviors carry a higher risk of spreading HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. By sharing your HIV status with each other, you can take steps to keep both of you healthy.

Anyone is at risk of HIV and STI infections if they are sexually active or have a history of drug use. Testing is the only way to know for sure whether you have HIV. Testing should be part of your yearly health checkups. People living with HIV may never have symptoms or their symptoms may not appear for years. It is common for HIV to be passed to others without the person living with HIV knowing it. Protect yourself and your partner by using condoms correctly and every time you have oral, vaginal or anal sex.

If you test positive for HIV (have HIV):

- start HIV [treatment](#) right after getting your positive test result.
- [share your HIV status](#) with previous and current sex partners(s) and anyone you use needles or syringes with to inject drugs.

- get and keep an [undetectable viral load](#) (very low amount of HIV in the body) so you can stay healthy and not pass HIV to others through sex.
- continue using [condoms](#) the right way every time you have sex to prevent getting sexually transmitted infections like chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea, and hepatitis.

If you test negative for HIV (do not have HIV):

- continue using [safer sex practices](#) to lower your risk of getting the virus.
- talk to your sex partner(s) about testing and their HIV and STI status.
- make testing part of your yearly health checkups. If you are at high risk for HIV, get tested more often.
- talk to your healthcare provider about using HIV medicines to prevent getting HIV:  
[PrEP/Truvada \(pre-exposure prophylaxis\)](#) or [PEP \(post-exposure prophylaxis\)](#)

## **Get Tested, Get Treatment, Stay Undetectable, Stop HIV.**

New Jersey offers free HIV and other STI services to all state residents via the hotline. Knowing who to call for resources and information is the first step in ending the HIV epidemic in New Jersey. The hotline is staffed by health professionals (doctors, nurses, and pharmacists) available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide free, confidential help: Call: 1-800-624-2377; Text: 973-339-0712, or [chat here](#)

- Referrals for testing, prevention, treatment, and other related services
- Prevention and treatment information for HIV, hepatitis, and other sexually transmitted infections
- Information on the side effects of medicines used to treat HIV and other sexually transmitted infections
- Referrals to PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) services
- Counseling and treatment locations
- Referrals to harm reduction centers (syringe access available)
- Partner notification services
- New Jersey's AIDS Drug Distribution Program ([ADDP](#))

Connect with the NJ AIDS/HIV/STD Hotline on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

Observance Day hashtags: #NBHAAD and #StopHIVTogether

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### **New Jersey AIDS/HIV/STD Hotline**

Healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses and pharmacists) provide telephone consultation for people seeking information about HIV/AIDS, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and other sexually transmitted infections (STI) including hepatitis. Callers receive information tailored to their needs; discussion about prevention, referrals for testing sites and other related services, counseling and testing locations, and information on treatment and adverse reactions to medications. The hotline is administered by the New Jersey Poison Control Center and funded by the New Jersey Department of Health, Division of HIV, STD, and TB services.

### **Rutgers New Jersey Medical School**



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Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
140 Bergen Street, Suite G1600  
Newark, NJ 07103

[www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org)  
p. 973-972-9280  
f. 973-643-2679  
Emergencies: 800-222-1222

Founded in 1954, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School is the oldest school of medicine in the state. Today it is part of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and graduates approximately 170 physicians a year. In addition to providing the MD degree, the school offers MD/PhD, MD/MPH and MD/MBA degrees through collaborations with other institutions of higher education.

Dedicated to excellence in education, research, clinical care and community outreach, the medical school comprises 20 academic departments and works with several healthcare partners, including its principal teaching hospital, University Hospital. Its faculty consists of numerous world-renowned scientists and many of the region's "top doctors." Home to the nation's oldest student-run clinic, New Jersey Medical School hosts more than 50 centers and institutes, including the Public Health Research Institute Center, the Global Tuberculosis Institute and the Neurological Institute of New Jersey. For more information please visit: [njms.rutgers.edu](http://njms.rutgers.edu).

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