

Branch – Hillsdale – St. Joseph Community Health Agency

National HIV Testing Day Press Release – June 23, 2003

June 27, 2003 is tagged as National HIV Testing day by the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA). The World Health Organization estimates nearly 42,000,000 people are infected with HIV worldwide. AIDS does not discriminate against men and women when it comes to infection, as approximately 50% of all infected adults are women.

Additionally

- * 42 million people are estimated to be infected worldwide
- * 3.2 million infected are children
- * Approximately 40,000 new infections are reported in the U.S. each year.
- * Approximately 15,500 are HIV positive in Michigan.
- * Michigan is **not** one of the top 10 states in number of reported cases.
- * From 1995 to 2000, deaths due to AIDS declined in Michigan by 66%
- * The total estimated persons living with AIDS is slowly increasing due to better treatment.

The primary reason you see the word “approximately” with HIV/AIDS is that many people who are at risk for infection refuse or neglectfully do not seek testing. 25% of persons diagnosed with HIV already have symptoms of AIDS. This fact does not go unnoticed by health officials and is the reason for events such as National HIV Testing Day. The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency in association with the Michigan Department of Community Health and NAPWA, urge persons who feel that they may have been exposed to HIV to seek testing immediately. The increase in quality and quantity of life for persons living with HIV/AIDS directly relates to early detection and treatment. Examples of high risk for HIV exposure include:

- * Intravenous drug use
- * Male/male sexual activity
- * Sexual activity with high risk partner(s)

Both HIV blood tests and Orasure (cheek swab) are available and testing is either confidential or anonymous. The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency will emphasize screening during the week of June 23-June 27. Appointments are preferred from Monday through Thursday; however walk-in's are welcome Friday June 27th from 8:00am to 2:00pm. Testing takes between 15 and 30 minutes and results are given within 7 days. Don't let fear or misinformation run your life. Testing is the first step in combating this deadly disease.

Visit our Web site for information on AIDS and other topics of concern to Public Health at:

WWW.BHSJ.ORG

Call your Local Public Health Department site at the following numbers

**Coldwater 279-9561 Hillsdale – 1888-544-7395 Sturgis – 1-800-258-1093
Three Rivers 1-800-258-1092**