



NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Observes National HIV Testing Day *Department of Health Urges Testing for At-Risk People*

BISMARCK, N.D. – In observance of National HIV Testing Day on June 27, the North Dakota Department of Health is urging people at risk for HIV/AIDS to get tested, according to Krissie Guerard, HIV/AIDS/TB Program manager for the Department of Health.

It is estimated that more than one million people in the United States are HIV positive, and approximately 56,300 new infections occur every year. As of Dec. 31, 2009, 480 cases of HIV/AIDS had been reported in North Dakota since HIV/AIDS surveillance began in 1984. About one-fourth of the people estimated to be HIV positive are believed to be unaware of their infections; as a result, they do not receive medical care that could help them live longer, fuller lives. Without knowing it, they also may be transmitting HIV to others. That is why it is important for people to learn their HIV status by getting tested.

HIV testing is available at test sites throughout the state, and results are available in 20 minutes. The test sites are staffed by trained personnel who offer free and confidential HIV testing, counseling and referrals to those at risk. HIV can be prevented by avoiding or not engaging in risky behaviors, such as unprotected sex, needle-sharing for drug use, or tattooing and body piercing.

For information about HIV testing and other HIV/AIDS services, call the North Dakota Department of Health HIV/AIDS Program hotline at 800.70.NDHIV or visit the program's website at www.ndhealth.gov/hiv.

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