



## Branch - Hillsdale - St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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"Your Local  
Health Department"

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## National HIV Testing Day —Tuesday June 27th, 2017

*An annual observance to encourage people of all ages to get tested for HIV and to know their status!*

In observance of the National HIV Testing Day, *The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency* encourages you to get tested for HIV. HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome), if virus is left untreated.

This year National HIV Testing Day will take place on Tuesday June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

### Why should I be tested for HIV?

The only way to know if you have HIV is to get tested. More than 1.2 million people in the United States are living with HIV. Many people with HIV don't have any symptoms. In the United States, 1 in 8 people don't know they have it. Even if you don't feel sick, getting tested for HIV early is still very important. Getting tested early can help you to receive timely treatment to live a longer and healthier life. Moreover, getting treatment can also ensure that you are less likely to pass the HIV virus to other people.

### Am I at risk for HIV?

HIV is spread through some of the body's fluids, like blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. HIV is also passed from one person to another by:

- Having sex (vaginal, anal or oral) without the use of a condom or dental dam with a person who has HIV.
- Sharing needles with someone who has HIV.
- Breastfeeding, pregnancy, or childbirth if the mother has HIV.
- Getting a transfusion of blood that's infected with HIV.

### **How is HIV testing done (procedure)?**

There are three options patients can choose from to test for HIV. The first option is to have blood work done. The second option you can do is to have the rapid test which consists of pricking the finger and gives results to you in 30 minutes or less. The third option is to do an oral swap from the side of your cheek.

### **Where can I get HIV testing done? And, how much will it cost?**

Under the Affordable Care Act, the health care reform law passed in 2010, insurance plans must cover HIV testing. To learn more please consult with your insurance company.

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency offers HIV testing and counseling at all three office sites. All HIV testing is kept confidential, anonymous and available free of charge for those who qualify.

If you are interested in being tested for HIV, please contact your local health department office and schedule an appointment. To learn more about HIV/AIDs, testing and counseling or if you have any questions, please visit our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org) and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/BHSJWIC/>.