
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Testing Events Planned for Tenth Annual
“National Latino AIDS Awareness Day”**

GRAND RAPIDS – Testing and early diagnosis are critical to living with HIV. The Hispanic population in Kent County has a rate of HIV infection more than double the Caucasians rate. Michigan recognizes Monday, October 15th as the tenth annual “National Latino AIDS Awareness Day.” In honor of this, the Kent County Health Department offering free HIV testing and counseling at three sites in Grand Rapids:

- Monday, October 15th: 9 a.m. until noon - Black Hills Community Center, 1035 Godfrey Ave. SW
- Tuesday, October 16th: 9 a.m. until noon - Sheldon Clinic, 121 Franklin SE
- Thursday, October 18th: 5:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. - Heartside Ministries, 54 Division SE

A Spanish-speaking interpreter will be provided on site, and bilingual HIV prevention materials will be available.

“Our Health Educators, Counselors and Nurses feel it is critical to host community events like these, encouraging people to seek HIV testing in confidential and convenient locations,” said Cathy Raevsky, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “Everyone will also receive counseling while waiting for their preliminary results.”

According to a 2010 study by the Michigan Department of Community Health, fifty-two percent of AIDS cases in Hispanics were diagnosed as HIV positive at the same time, which typically indicates late testing, or inadequate health care and education. Thirteen percent of the persons living with HIV in Kent County are Hispanic, however Hispanics only comprise ten percent of the population. Statewide, only four percent of Hispanics are living with HIV. “Prevention, education, improving access to HIV testing and early diagnosis are all extremely important issues for the health of Kent County residents,” Raevsky added.

This year’s theme is “**Hispanics United to End AIDS! Get tested for HIV.**” More information about National Latino AIDS Awareness Day is available on the website: www.nlaad.org.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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