
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Health Department Offers One Week of Free Walk-in Testing in
Recognition of World Aids Day 2016**

GRAND RAPIDS, MI. - More than one million people in the United States are living with HIV according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) prepares to recognize World Aids Day on Tuesday, December 1, 2016, the agency will be offering free, confidential, walk in testing during the week of November 28th – December 2nd. The testing will take place at the Kent County Health Department's Main Clinic, located at 700 Fuller NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan during normal business hours from 8AM until 5PM. The simple finger poke test can yield preliminary results in about 20 minutes. During that time our Personal Health Services certified counselors provide advice on protecting yourself and others from HIV.

A diagnosis of HIV today means something very different than it did in the past. With proper medical care, people who are diagnosed with the virus can now live long and healthy lives. There is no cure for HIV and there is no treatment for people who do not know their HIV status.

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Kent County Health Department recommend that everyone know their HIV status," says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. "This knowledge is essential for getting helpful therapy and for protecting others from the virus."

Today, the CDC estimates that one in eight people who are infected with HIV do not know that they have the disease. People living with HIV need to make important choices to stay healthy and protect others.

HIV, Human Immunodeficiency Virus, attacks the cells that make up the body's immune system. HIV can make it difficult for an infected individual to fight off colds and other diseases. There are many medications available today that can strengthen the immune system. Left untreated HIV can develop into Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome - AIDS – which can be fatal.

People who are unable to make it to the free walk in testing can still be tested free at another time. Call 616-632-7171 to schedule an appointment. More Information on HIV and AIDS can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/>.

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 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 three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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