



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Public Health

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Free rapid HIV testing during World AIDS Day

The Department of Public Health will be offering free rapid HIV testing with resources, educational information, and incentive items on Dec. 1 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in observance of World AIDS Day. A mobile testing unit will be located at the San Bernardino Transit Center in San Bernardino at 599 W Rialto Avenue in San Bernardino.

"Early HIV diagnosis is critical in being able to receive and fully benefit from available life-saving treatments," said Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare, Health Officer. "Finding out whether you are infected with HIV is the first step to improving your health, and the health of your community."

The confidential rapid test involves a simple oral swab which produces results in 20 minutes. Getting tested is the only way to know your HIV status, and therefore begin treatment immediately if necessary. Taking HIV medication can greatly reduce the chances of transmitting HIV to partners or an unborn child, in addition to slowing the progression of HIV and helping protect the body's immune system.

Being HIV-positive is a chronic disease that is manageable with medication and medical care. As of 2014, San Bernardino County is home to 3,753 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. This number may be greater as 16 percent of infected people do not know their status. A vital part in reducing the rate of HIV cases, is not only by preventing new cases through promotion and awareness efforts, but also in linking people living with HIV/AIDS to medical treatment.

The HIV Prevention Program provides free rapid HIV testing and counseling services every month at set locations and times throughout San Bernardino County and in the public health clinics. All people are encouraged to get tested every year, or every 3 to 6 months if they participate in high-risk behavior such as having unprotected sex or sharing needles with multiple partners.

World AIDS Day is a global health day observed to bring awareness to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and to unite in and support the fight against HIV. For more information on rapid HIV testing and counseling services, or for the monthly rapid testing schedule, please call the HIV Prevention Program at 1 (800) 255-6560.

