



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Alabamians should take advantage of voluntary HIV counseling and testing

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health encourages Alabamians to be tested for HIV at local public health departments and AIDS Service Organizations during the month of June in observance of National HIV Testing Day, June 27. The goal of this outreach event is to encourage individuals to take advantage of free and voluntary HIV counseling and testing.

Approximately 25 percent of the more than 1 million people infected with HIV in the United States are unaware of their infection. There are 40,000 new cases of HIV disease per year in the United States, and 1 out of 2 of those new infections occur in people under age 25. As of December 2006, 14,710 Alabama residents had been diagnosed with HIV.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "Alabama HIV infection rates are a reflection of national trends. We support voluntary HIV counseling and testing for individuals who are at risk. The decision to take the test is the first step in taking control of your health by knowing your HIV status."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends routine HIV testing in all health-care settings. Persons at high risk for HIV infection should be screened for HIV at least annually.

All persons are at potential risk for HIV infection. If you have not been tested please take the test and know your status.

Reasons a person should be tested for HIV:

- partner's HIV status is not known
- had unprotected sex
- injecting drugs or sharing needles
- more than one sex partner
- had or have a sexually transmitted disease
- pregnant women in first and third trimester

For more information call the AIDS Hotline, 800-288-0469, or your local health department for information such as hours of operation and confidential services offered.

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