



County of Yolo

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Health Education

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National HIV Testing Day is Saturday, June 27, 2009

Woodland, CA--Saturday, June 27, 2009 is National HIV Testing Day, a national campaign to increase awareness about the importance of knowing your HIV status by getting tested, and is coordinated by the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA-US). Each year, NAPWA encourages people who participate in activities that put them at risk for contracting HIV to “Take the Test, Take Control” and seek HIV testing and counseling. Early treatment is the key to control of HIV.

While there are no formal events planned for National HIV Testing Day in Yolo County, HIV testing is an ongoing program sponsored by the Yolo County Health Department and its community partners. Several sites in the county offer free, confidential HIV tests. Many do not require a blood sample. Individuals interested in receiving an HIV test can contact the following agencies:

Yolo County Health Department

137 North Cottonwood St.
Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 666-8550, call for appointment

Harm Reduction Services

(916) 456-4849, call for location/times of testing

Safer Alternatives thru Networking and Education

(916) 968-1563, call for location/times of testing

“With funding for HIV/AIDS programs in jeopardy of drastic cuts from the State, it is important for people to know what services are still available; and thankfully we are still able to provide HIV testing services for free to those who need them,” states Dr. Joseph Iser, Yolo County Health Department Director and Health Officer.

Local health departments are still waiting on decisions from the State on how their HIV programs will be impacted. “What the public may not realize is that cutting funding for local HIV programs can severely impact other services in the county,” explains Dr. Iser. Education and prevention strategies employed by HIV educators and outreach workers address a full range

of high-risk behaviors. “When we provide counseling and testing services, we help people identify what puts them at risk for not only HIV, but other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and hepatitis C as well. Our ultimate goal is to help people reduce their risk for these diseases by identifying strategies they can incorporate into their daily lives,” adds Dr. Iser.

Funding for STDs and hepatitis C prevention is virtually non-existent at the local level even though health departments are mandated to provide communicable disease control, and infection rates continue to rise.

Last year, Yolo County had 531 cases of chlamydia, 65 cases of gonorrhea, 22 cases of HIV and 392 cases of hepatitis C. This year, in the months of January through March, Yolo County has tallied 138 cases of chlamydia and 11 cases of gonorrhea. How is this related to HIV? Being infected with an STD puts people at a three to five times higher risk for HIV infection.

Because many of the same risk factors apply to both HIV and STDs for the same people, it is difficult to separate any of the HIV/STD prevention and education programs. It is no wonder that local health officials are anxious about the potential increase in all STD rates if HIV funding is cut, and to see how HIV rates in turn respond to the change in STD rates.

For further information on HIV/AIDS education, prevention, testing, and treatment, contact the Yolo County Health Department HIV/AIDS Program at (530) 666-8645. For further information about National HIV Testing Day, see www.napwa.org or www.hivtest.org

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