



Sarasota County Health Department | Florida Department of Health
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MEDIA NOTE: The Sarasota County Health Department and other community-based organizations that are part of the HIV/AIDS Network of Southwest Florida will offer free HIV testing as part of the local observance of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. A schedule of the free HIV testing sites and dates is at the end of this release.

Local organizations mobilize to reduce HIV/AIDS in the black community

Local organizations working year-round to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS in the black community will offer free HIV education and testing at various locations in early February, as part of the 11th annual National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day observance. This year's theme, "it Takes a Village to Fight HIV/AIDS," focuses on educating, empowering and mobilizing the local black community in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

A local grassroots organization, Second Chance-Last Opportunity, will host "Taking Steps," a free event that will allow people to get free HIV testing as well as education and counseling on how to prevent the spread of HIV infection on Thursday, Feb. 10, from 3-9 p.m. at its office, 1933 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Sarasota. On the same day, Thursday, Feb. 10 from 3-6 p.m., free HIV testing, and food will be available at Newtown Selby Goodwill, 1781 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Thirty minute phone cards will be given as an incentive to every person that gets tested. This event is being sponsored by the Community AIDS Network (CAN), Sarasota County Health Department, Second Chance Last Opportunity, Hedges Pharmacy and the Multicultural Health Institute.

"We are urging everyone to get educated about the way HIV/AIDS is spread, know your HIV status by getting tested, get involved in local community prevention efforts, and get treated if you are currently living with HIV or are newly diagnosed," said Dr. Lisa Merritt, executive director of the Multicultural Health Institute, which developed the Gatekeepers of Community Health Project. Through this effort, community volunteers are trained and equipped to provide HIV testing and education at community events and existing testing sites in the community.

"Working together with the HIV/AIDS Network of Southwest Florida member organizations including Second Chance-Last Opportunity, Community AIDS Network, Sarasota County Health Department, the Multicultural Health Institute as well as community-focused organizations such as Hedges Pharmacy, we can reduce the stigma and help folks to see that HIV infection and AIDS are now viewed by the medical community as a chronic disease, like diabetes or high blood pressure," added Dr. Merritt.

AIDS can be treated with drugs to slow the progression of the disease; however, too often HIV status is diagnosed after the infection has progressed to the point of needing emergency room care. "Knowing your HIV status can help you get into medical treatment earlier, take steps to stay healthy, and keep from spreading the virus to others," said Sarasota County Health Department medical director Dr. William Heymann.

“HIV testing is fast and easy. If you have never been tested, or have had unprotected sex or shared a needle since your last test, now is the time to get an HIV test – it’s the only way to be sure,” said Dr. Merritt.

For more information on HIV testing opportunities, call the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 or visit the HANS Web site www.hivсарasota.org.

Free HIV testing and screening opportunities Feb. 7-16

SARASOTA

Monday, Feb. 7, 9:30 a.m.-noon

Selby Goodwill (Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)

1781 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way

Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000

Sponsoring agency: Sarasota County Health Department

Monday, Feb. 7, 1-3 p.m.

Newtown Estates Park (Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)

2800 Newtown Blvd.

Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000

Sponsoring agency: Sarasota County Health Department

Monday, Feb. 7, 1-4 p.m.

Planned Parenthood – Sarasota Health Center

736 Central Ave.

(Appointments appreciated; walk-ins welcome)

Contact: Jared Wilson, 941-365-3913, ext. 1016

Sponsoring agency: Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida

Thursday, Feb. 10 and 17; 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Salvation Army (Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)

1400 10th St.

Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000

Sponsoring agency: Sarasota County Health Department

Free HIV testing, food and 30-minute phone cards will be given to every person that gets tested.

Thursday, Feb. 10, 3-6 p.m.

Newtown Selby Goodwill

1781 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way

Free HIV testing, food and 30-minute phone cards will be given to every person that gets tested.

Contact: Serena Miller, 941-366-0461

Sponsors: Community AIDS Network (CAN), Sarasota County Health Department, Second Chance Last Opportunity, Hedges Pharmacy and Multicultural Health Institute

“Taking Steps” event – includes free testing, education and counseling

Thursday, Feb. 10, 3-9 p.m.

Second Chance-Last Opportunity Inc.

1933 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way

Contact: Amy Lovejoy, 941-360-8660

Sponsoring agency: Second Chance-Last Opportunity Inc.

Monday, Feb. 14; 9:30 a.m.-noon
Sarasota Housing Authority (Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)
1912 N. Orange Ave.
Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000
Sponsoring agency: Sarasota County Health Department

Monday, Feb. 14
Arizona Multi-Services (Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)
3900 N. Washington Blvd.
Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000
Sponsoring agency: Sarasota County Health Department

LAUREL

Wednesday, Feb. 16; 1-5 p.m.
Laurel U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) food distribution program
Sandra Sims Terry Community Center (Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)
509 Collins Road
Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000
Sponsoring agency: Sarasota County Health Department

NOKOMIS

Wednesday, Feb. 16; 9:30 a.m.-noon
The Community Pharmacy (Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)
225 Tamiami Trail South
Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000
Sponsoring agency: Sarasota County Health Department

VENICE

Tuesday, Feb. 8, 9:30 a.m.-noon
Rialto Goodwill Center (Health in Motion Mobile Medical Unit)
650 S. Tamiami Trail
Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000
Sponsoring agency: Sarasota County Health Department

Tuesday, Feb. 8, 1-3 p.m.
Habitat for Humanity Retail Store (Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)
1400 Ogden Road
Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000
Sponsoring agency: Sarasota County Health Department

NORTH PORT

Wednesday, Feb. 9, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
Walmart Supercenter (Health in Motion Mobile Medical Unit)
17000 Tamiami Trail
Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000
Sponsoring Agency: Sarasota County Health Department

Wednesday, Feb. 9, 1-3 p.m.
Grande Court Apartments of North Port (Health in Motion Mobile Medical Unit)
5203 Greenwood Ave.
Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000
Sponsoring agency: Sarasota County Health Department

ENGLEWOOD

Tuesday, Feb. 15, 9:30 a.m.-noon

Englewood Goodwill Center (Health in Motion Mobile Medical Unit)
410 Indiana Ave.

Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000

Sponsoring agency: Sarasota County Health Department

Tuesday, Feb. 15, 1-3 p.m.

Englewood Helping Hands (Health in Motion Mobile Medical Unit)
700 E. Dearborn St.

Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000

Sponsoring agency: Sarasota County Health Department

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