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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 22, 2017

**For additional information contact:**

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**Health Department Offers One Week of Free Walk-in Testing in  
Recognition of World Aids Day 2017**

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 Friday, December 1, 2017, the agency will be offering free, confidential, walk-in testing during the week of November 27 – December 1. The testing will take place at the Kent County Health Department's Main Clinic, located at 700 Fuller NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan from 8AM until 5PM on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday (closed noon – 1PM) and on Thursday from 1PM- 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 certified HIV counselor will discuss ways to reduce the risk of getting HIV which may include information on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). PrEP is a daily medicine that can reduce the chance of getting HIV. PrEP can stop HIV from taking hold and spreading throughout the body (CDC, 2017).

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."

The CDC estimates that one in seven 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. 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.

If you are living with HIV and need help getting into care, call us at 616-632-7172, or come to the Personal Health Services Clinic and ask to speak with a nurse.

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**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](http://www.accesskent.com/health).**

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