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OFFICE OF
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City of Charleston Recognizes National HIV Testing Day

Charleston, S.C.—Today, in honor of National HIV Testing Day on Sunday, June 27th, Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg and regional healthcare professionals held a press conference encouraging Charleston residents to get tested.

The city of Charleston is now in its second year as a Fast Track City, a designation it received when Mayor Tecklenburg signed the Paris Declaration to End the HIV Epidemic by 2030. The declaration calls on cities to improve local HIV/AIDS responses to achieve identified testing and treatment targets aimed at reducing new HIV infections and ending AIDS-related deaths.

Why it matters: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in seven people living with HIV in the United States doesn't know they have it, and are therefore not receiving the care and treatment necessary to help improve their health and prevent transmission.

The CDC estimates that 90 percent of new HIV infections in the United States could be prevented by testing and diagnosing people who have HIV, and ensuring they receive prompt and ongoing treatment.

Recent medical advancements have led to treatments that help decrease the presence of the virus in an infected person's blood to a level that is undetectable. The CDC has determined that when viral loads are undetectable, the disease cannot be passed to others, as noted by the Prevention Access Campaign U=U, meaning "Undetectable equals Untransmittable."

By the numbers: According to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, as of December 2018, there were 20,166 South Carolina residents with a diagnosis of HIV. Most South Carolinians living with HIV are African American men (47 percent) and African American women (23 percent).

The CDC estimates that 1.2 million people in the United States had HIV at the end of 2018.

Testing opportunities: In support of National HIV Testing Day, the following area service providers will offer free HIV testing to community members:

- On Monday, June 28, Palmetto Community Care is offering a \$25 Walmart gift card to anyone testing at their 6296 Rivers Avenue site.
 - Palmetto Community Care also offers free testing without the need for an appointment from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays; and from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays.
- On Tuesday, June 29, DHEC's Northwoods (2070 Northbrook Boulevard) and Mt. Pleasant (1189 Sweetgrass Basket Parkway) clinics will offer free STI and HIV testing for walk-ins and those with appointments.
 - When not a free testing day, DHEC offers \$10 Fast-Track Testing for HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and Hepatitis C for those with or without an appointment at all clinic sites.
 - DHEC clinic hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Roper St. Francis Ryan White Wellness Center (1481 Tobias Gadson Boulevard) provides free HIV testing during business hours without the need for an appointment
 - Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Wednesday; 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursday; and 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Friday
- MUSC Infectious Disease Clinic (135 Rutledge Avenue, 7th Floor) offers free, walk-in HIV testing during regular business hours.
 - Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday
- Fetter Health Care Network provides free HIV testing without the need for an appointment at the following locations:
 - 51 Nassau Street, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday
 - 130 Varnfield Dr #100 Summerville, SC, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday
 - 1681 Old Hwy 6 Cross, SC, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

What they're saying: "The city of Charleston is proud to be a Fast Track City, and is committed to working with our state and local partners to eliminate the stigma associated with HIV by increasing the availability of prevention resources for citizens and encouraging public engagement in treatment opportunities throughout the region," Mayor Tecklenburg said. "HIV testing is a critical part of this fight, allowing medical professionals to catch positive cases early and provide the treatment and guidance necessary to end the HIV epidemic once and for all."

Learn more: For more information about HIV testing, as well as local HIV testing sites, call DHEC's STD/HIV Hotline at 1-800-322-2437, visit DHEC's website, www.scdhec.gov/stdhiv, or www.thefutureisu.org.

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