



**NIAGARA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
5467 Upper Mountain Road, Suite 100

**Daniel J. Stapleton, M.B.A.**  
**Public Health Director**

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### **NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY – JUNE 27**

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus and an infection that attacks the immune system. Without a strong immune system, the body has trouble fighting off disease. HIV invades and destroys white blood cells. If too many of these white blood cells are destroyed, the body can no longer defend itself against infection.

The last stage of HIV infection is AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). People living with AIDS have a low number of white blood cells. They get infections or cancers that rarely occur in healthy people and these can be deadly.

Having HIV does not mean you have AIDS. Even without treatment, it takes a long time for HIV to progress to AIDS; usually 10 to 12 years. If HIV is diagnosed before it becomes AIDS, medicines can slow or stop the damage to the immune system. With treatment, many HIV positive individuals are able to live long and active lives.

Since 1995, the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA), in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other national and local entities across the country have organized National HIV Testing Day on June 27. This unique initiative sends the message, "Take the Test, Take Control" to those at risk for HIV and from those already living with HIV.

NAPWA was one of the first AIDS organizations to advocate that people at risk of infection should seek out voluntary HIV counseling and testing. As people living with HIV/AIDS, NAPWA members and staff understand that knowledge of HIV status is essential to making informed decisions about their lives.

National HIV Testing Day was developed in response to the growing number of HIV infections in communities of color and other heavily impacted communities. More than one million people are living with HIV in the United States and approximately one in five of are unaware they are infected. HIV testing is a critical first step in taking control and responsibility over one's health.

Fourteen people are diagnosed with HIV each day in New York State. There are 56,000 new HIV cases each year in the United States, approximately one every 9.5 minutes. As of 2007, there were 72 HIV positive individuals and 99 people with the diagnosis of AIDS in Niagara County. Statewide totals, not including New York City, for the same time period were 10,400 HIV positive and 16,860 individuals with AIDS. With early diagnosis, uncertain individuals will know their HIV status and can receive appropriate treatment and care.

The Niagara County Department of Health Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) clinic provides free and confidential HIV testing and counseling. If an individual's test result is positive for HIV, referrals to community agencies can be made, with his or her permission, for follow-up counseling and treatment. Education and counseling about STDs and HIV includes information on various diseases and infections, testing procedures, transmission of infection and diseases, and treatment and prevention.



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Niagara County Department of Health STD clinic hours are Monday and Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Trott Access Center, 1001-11<sup>th</sup> Street, Niagara Falls, NY. For more information, call 278-1960 during clinic hours or 278-1900 from 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday when clinic is not in session.