

Dear RWHAP Colleagues: HRSA Recognizes National HIV Testing Day

June 24, 2021

Dear Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program and Health Center Program Colleagues:

Earlier this month, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) honored HIV long-term survivors and commemorated the 40th anniversary of when the first five cases of what later became known as AIDS were officially reported in the MMWR. This Sunday, June 27, 2021, we recognize another important observance: [National HIV Testing Day \(NHTD\)](#). This day is an opportunity to encourage and emphasize the importance of HIV testing, which is essential to reducing HIV infections, improving health outcomes for people with HIV, and helping to end the HIV epidemic in the U.S.

Through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) and the Health Center Program, HRSA has a leading role in helping to diagnose, treat, prevent, and respond as part of the Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. initiative. HRSA's RWHAP and Health Center Program recipients have been working together to help people across the country get tested for HIV, and then be linked to HIV care and treatment if they test positive.

Health centers serve as a key point of entry for HIV prevention services and the diagnosis of people with HIV. In 2019, health centers provided over 2.7 million HIV tests to more than 2.2 million patients and treated 1 in 5 patients diagnosed with HIV nationally.

RWHAP recipients are continuing to connect people with HIV—who are either newly diagnosed or diagnosed but not currently in care—to HIV care and treatment, as well as support services, so they stay in care and on their medication.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for people to access places where HIV testing is typically provided, including RWHAP and health center sites, there are many ways and places to get tested for HIV. The 2021 NHTD theme, “My Test, My Way,” emphasizes that people should get tested for HIV in a way that works for them, including at home with a [self-test](#). In fact, many local health departments and community-based organizations, as well as CDC, are distributing free HIV self-testing kits.

This NHTD, let's join together to amplify the “My Test, My Way” message and help to raise awareness about the importance of HIV testing, and the support available through the RWHAP and Health Center Program. To learn more about HIV testing and linkage to care, we encourage you to review [these RWHAP resources](#) on the [Target HIV website](#) as well as [these health center-specific HIV resources](#) and the [Partnerships for Care \(P4C\) toolkit](#) available on the [Health Center Program website](#).

We would like to thank our RWHAP and Health Center Program recipients for their continued commitment and dedication to supporting the prevention, care, and treatment needs of people with HIV and helping to end the HIV epidemic. Even in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've been able to make incredible progress toward this goal.

Sincerely,

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