

From: Hopwa <Hopwa@hud.gov>
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To: HOPWA-L@HUDLIST.HUD.GOV
Subject: HOPWA In Focus: National HIV Testing Day 2022

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Dear HOPWA Grantees, Project Sponsors, and Friends,

Each year on June 27th we observe National HIV Testing Day (NHTD), a day to emphasize and encourage HIV testing. This year, we observe NHTD as the COVID-19 and HIV epidemics continue to affect our communities, the nation, public health departments, and healthcare facilities. We understand the exhaustion that is felt from trying to navigate and end these epidemics and know the importance of self-care as we continue this meaningful work.

The NHTD theme for 2022 is “**HIV Testing is Self-care.**” The World Health Organization defines self-care as “the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider.” The topic of self-care has been particularly prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic as the need for individual and community actions to protect and promote physical and mental health have been so critical. **HIV testing is an act of self-care**, and knowledge of status is the gateway to engaging in prevention or treatment services that enable individuals, regardless of their status to live a long and healthy life.

We want to recognize the importance of housing and its role in enabling individuals to focus on self-care and achieve positive health outcomes. Housing is a social determinant of health that has a profound impact on HIV prevention and care. Access to safe, stable housing provides a foundation for people living with HIV to participate in HIV care and treatment and achieve and maintain a suppressed or undetectable viral load. Housing also provides a foundation for engaging in prevention services. Homelessness and housing instability are associated with increased vulnerability for HIV diagnosis. The HOPWA program provides housing assistance and support for people with HIV and their families, but there are other HUD programs available to provide housing assistance for people in need of HIV prevention services. We encourage organizations already engaged in HIV prevention work to consider the housing needs of people seeking prevention services and explore the types of housing assistance available within the community or apply for grant opportunities to introduce housing as a component of HIV prevention.

[The National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States \(2022-2025\)](#) calls for Federal agencies to embrace a status-neutral approach to HIV prevention and treatment services to improve care and service provision and eliminate HIV stigma by offering a “whole person” approach to care and putting the needs of the person ahead of their HIV status. Status-neutral housing is a critical component of our response to the HIV epidemic that will prevent new HIV infections, improve outcomes and quality of life for people with HIV and people who experience risk of HIV, eliminate HIV disparities, and ultimately end the HIV epidemic. Here at the HUD Office of HIV/AIDS Housing, we are exploring ways to elevate and support status-neutral housing.

HIV testing, including self-testing, is the first step in the prevention or care journey, regardless of the test result, and a critical tool to helping us end the HIV epidemic in the United States. [HIV testing](#) can be free, easy, fast, and confidential, and [HIV self-tests](#) can be done when and where an individual chooses. You can search by zip code for testing services or self-test kits provided by local, state, and national programs through locators at [HIV.gov](#) or [cdc.gov](#). We encourage you to choose to take care of you and take an HIV test this NHTD. Now more than ever, self-care is not only important, it is necessary and an HIV test can provide you a direction to continue taking care of yourself.

As always, thank you for your continued support of the HOPWA program and ending the HIV epidemic.

Respectfully,
Rita Harcrow (she/her)
Director, Office of HIV/AIDS Housing



Housing is a structural intervention in ending the AIDS epidemic in the United States. Each year, HOPWA ensures housing stability for more than 100,000 American households that are low-income and living with HIV. Want to know more about HOPWA? Go to https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/hopwa

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