

# SCGOVHEALTHnews

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**MEDIA NOTE:** The HIV/AIDS Network of Sarasota (HANS) and Manatee County Health Department will offer free HIV testing as part of the local observance of National Hispanic AIDS Awareness Day. **A schedule of those testing opportunities is at the end of this release.**

## Hispanic AIDS Awareness Day – Take the HIV Test!

Sarasota County Health Department along with community based organizations that are part of the HIV/AIDS Network of Sarasota County (HANS) as well as the Manatee County Health Department will offer free HIV testing in the community during October as part of the sixth annual Hispanic/Latino AIDS Awareness Day observance. Organizers say that Oct. 15 culminates the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, and this year marks what has become an annual campaign in the fight against AIDS. For many Hispanic/Latinos, it is a day of hope for the future of a world without AIDS. The theme for this year's observance is **Take Control! Take the HIV Test!**

HIV/AIDS is preventable. Yet since the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic 26 years ago, HIV infection has been a fact of life in Hispanic/Latino communities. Hispanics/Latinos comprise 14 percent of the total U.S. population, yet 19 percent of the people living with AIDS in the U.S. are Hispanic/Latino. Even though medications have allowed the onset of AIDS symptoms to be delayed, in 2004 nearly half of Hispanic/Latinos were diagnosed with AIDS in less than 12 months of learning their HIV status.

Knowing your HIV status can help you get into medical treatment earlier, take steps to stay healthy and keep from spreading the virus to others. HANS has adopted "Stop the Spread: Keep the Promise" as the theme for this observance as well as for the upcoming World AIDS Day observance. We hope you will **Keep the Promise** by:

Protecting your baby and your loved ones -- Know your HIV status

Taking the HIV test

Practicing the **ABCs**: **A**bstinence, **B**e in a mutually monogamous relationship, and use **C**ondoms.

HIV testing results are always kept strictly confidential and are not shared with anyone, including family members, significant others, employers or landlords. Those who test positive will immediately be linked to health care and treatment.

You can choose from a variety of testing methods. Community AIDS Network (CAN) offers OraQuick Rapid HIV Antibody testing which provides preliminary test

results in only 20 minutes. Sarasota County Health Department and other HANS agencies offer traditional blood test, and the fast and easy OraSure® HIV test; testing results are available in about two weeks. OraSure® testing does not use needles. Instead, you place a treated cotton pad resembling a toothbrush between your cheek and gums. "It's as easy as brushing your teeth," says Gary Ervin, Health Services Representative with the Sarasota County Health Department's Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) program. If you've never been tested, or had unprotected sex or shared a needle since your last test, now is the time to get an HIV test."

Other community partners who participate in HANS will be offering free HIV testing as part of this observance. These include CAN, Services, Second Chance, Last Opportunity, Planned Parenthood of Central and Southwest Florida.

For more information on HIV testing opportunities, call the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 or visit the HANS website [www.hiv Sarasota.org](http://www.hiv Sarasota.org)

**Sarasota/Manatee County National Hispanic AIDS Awareness Activities Oct. 6–20, 2008**

**Free Rapid OraQuick HIV Testing – Preliminary test results available in 20 minutes**

Monday, Oct. 6 and 20; 1 – 3 p.m.

La Canasta Market – Look for Health In Motion Mobile van in parking lot

2268 Fruitville Road, Sarasota

Sponsoring Agency: Community AIDS Network, and Sarasota County Health Department

Contact: John Perez at Community AIDS Network: 941-366-0461

**Free HIV Testing (free gift to all those who are tested)**

Wednesday, Oct. 15; 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sarasota County Health and Human Services Center

2200 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota 34237

Sponsoring Agency: Sarasota County Health Department

Contact: Gary Ervin: 941-861-2919

**Free HIV Testing**

Wednesday, Oct. 15; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

South County Family Health Center

7820 S. Tamiami Trail, Bldg. B, Venice 34293

Sponsoring Agency: Sarasota County Health Department

Contact: Beth Smith: 941-861-3381

**Free Rapid OraQuick HIV Testing – Preliminary test results available in 20 minutes**

Wednesday, Oct. 15; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Community AIDS Network (CAN)

1231 N. Tuttle Ave., Sarasota 34237

Sponsoring Agency: Community AIDS Network (CAN)

Contact: John Perez: 941-366-0461

**Free Rapid OraQuick HIV Testing – Preliminary test results available in 20 minutes**

Wednesday, Oct. 15; 9:30 a.m. to Noon

Wal-Mart Super Center

17000 Tamiami Trail, North Port 34287

Sponsoring Organization: Community AIDS Network, and Sarasota County Health Department  
Contact: John Perez: 941-366-0461

**Free Rapid OraQuick HIV Testing - Preliminary test results available in 20 minutes**

Wednesday, Oct. 15; 3 to 5 p.m.

Sandra Sims Terry Community Center – Look for Health In Motion van in parking lot  
509 Collins Road, Laurel 34272

Sponsoring Organization: Community AIDS Network, and Sarasota County Health Department  
Contact: John Perez: 941-366-0461

**Free Rapid OraQuick HIV Testing – Preliminary test results available in 20 minutes**

Thursday, Oct. 16; 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Salvation Army – Look for Health In Motion van in parking lot  
1400 Tenth St., Sarasota

Sponsoring Organization: Community AIDS Network, and Sarasota County Health Department  
Contact: John Perez; 941-366-0461

**Free HIV Testing, Condoms and Information**

Thursday, Oct. 16; 2 to 5 p.m.

Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida  
1958 Prospect St., Sarasota 34239

Sponsoring Agency: Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida  
Contact: Marilyn Anderson: 941-955-1860

**Free HIV Testing**

Gillespie Park

1850 Tenth St., Sarasota 34237

Sponsoring Agency: Community AIDS Network (CAN)  
Contact: John Perez: 941-366-0461

**Free Health Screenings and HIV Testing**

Saturday, Oct. 18; 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Location: Pride Park

815 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave. East, Bradenton 34207

Sponsoring Agency: Manatee County Health Department  
Contact: Robert Meriosi 941-748-0747

**Free HIV testing, counseling and linkages**

Saturday, Oct. 18; 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Location: Second Chance-Last Opportunity

1933 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Sarasota

Sponsoring Agency: Second Chance-Last Opportunity  
Contact: April Glasco: 941-360-8660