



MEDIA RELEASE

KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As World AIDS Day approaches, KCHD urges testing, expands services

Knoxville, Tenn. – Observed worldwide on Dec. 1 since 1998, World AIDS Day is an opportunity to commemorate those who have lost their lives to AIDS-related illness, applaud progress made in responding to the epidemic and recommit to eradicating the disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates 1.1 million Americans are living with HIV infection. Of those, 15 percent, or 1 in 7, are unaware of their infection. The CDC encourages everyone ages 13 to 64 to get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care.

“Early detection and care can and does save lives, and that’s why it’s so important that everyone get tested at least once,” said Knox County Health Department (KCHD) Director Dr. Martha Buchanan. “World AIDS Day is an excellent opportunity to not only show your support for those living with HIV but to get tested yourself.”

HIV testing is covered as a preventive service with no co-pay by many insurance plans. KCHD offers resources and local referral information to medical providers who want information on how to start the conversation with patients. Confidential HIV testing is also available at all three KCHD offices:

Main Clinic and Offices
140 Dameron Ave.
Knoxville, TN 37917
865-215-5370

Teague Clinic
405 Dante Rd.
Knoxville, TN 37918
865-215-5500

West Clinic
1028 Old Cedar Bluff Rd.
Knoxville, TN 37923
865-215-5950

Although there is no cure, getting medical care and taking medicines regularly helps those infected live longer, healthier lives and also lowers the chances of passing HIV to others. In addition to testing, KCHD also offers HIV care and case management to those who qualify in Knox and 15 surrounding counties. In an effort to better serve the community, KCHD recently expanded these HIV services, increasing physician time and hiring a phlebotomist and an additional nurse to serve more HIV-positive patients. KCHD also expanded its nutrition counseling services for these patients.

“Tremendous scientific strides offer hope of a brighter future for those living with HIV. Now, more than ever, it is crucial that those infected with HIV get medical care,” said Communicable Disease Services Manager Bill Blomenkamp. “Our patients are our number one priority, and with this expansion we can serve more people facing this disease and get them into care much faster. In fact, we’re now able to get qualifying patients seen by a physician in as little as a week.”

About Knox County Health Department:

The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is a governmental agency dedicated to making every person a healthy person. As the first health department in Tennessee to achieve national accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, KCHD’s mission is to encourage, promote and assure the development of an active, healthy community through innovative public health practices. The organization conducts disease surveillance, prevention and control; emergency preparedness; nutrition and physical activity promotion; tobacco use prevention; health equity promotion; immunizations; and much more. For more information, visit www.knoxcounty.org/health.

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