

February 5, 2015

FREE RAPID HIV TESTING OFFERED FOR NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY

*HIV rapid test provides results in 15 minutes with just a finger prick at two
Marion County locations*



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Ocala, Fla.—Free rapid HIV test testing will be available at two Marion County locations Monday, Feb. 8, in support of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

- Ramah Missionary Baptist Church, 10545 SE 58th Avenue in Belleview, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Free lunch will be served. Contact Janie Love, HIV Ministry director, 352-245-1944 or 352-875-7162.
- Department of Health Ocala facility, 1801 SE 32nd Ave., Ocala, 8–4 p.m. Free condoms are available.

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is an HIV testing and treatment community mobilization initiative designed to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment among blacks.

“One of the most important ways to prevent the spread of HIV is to get tested and know your status,” said Erin Hess, health officer for the Florida Department of Health in Marion County. “We want to transform awareness into action across the community, which is why we ask that our residents get educated get tested, get involved and get treated.”

In Florida, more than 2,300 new AIDS cases were diagnosed in 2015, and there are 114,000 adults in Florida living with HIV/AIDS. Marion County is not immune to the epidemic, with more than 1,000 adults living with HIV/AIDS. Nationwide, while blacks represent approximately 12 percent of the U.S. population, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that blacks account for 47 percent of the nation’s new HIV infections.

During the Feb. 8 free testing events, the trained testers will use a rapid test that uses a small blood sample from a finger prick and provides results in 15 minutes. All tests are free and results are confidential.

Other HIV testing is also available free of charge, using a mouth swab or larger blood samples. For information on HIV testing call the department at 352-629-0137, ext. 2061.

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