

**FORSYTH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH, NIA COMMUNITY ACTION CENTER,
WALGREENS AND GREATER THAN AIDS TEAM UP
TO PROVIDE FREE HIV TESTING
IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY**

**HIV Testing Events at Select Walgreens Locations in 54 Cities
June 27-29**

CONTACT

Jennifer Nall, POSSE Supervisor
Forsyth County Department of Public Health
nalljl@forsyth.cc
(336) 703-3181

Rakesh Singh
Kaiser Family Foundation
rsingh@kff.org
(650) 854-9400

Vivika Panagiotakakos
Walgreens
vivika.panagiotakakos@walgreens.com
(847) 315-2923

Friday, June 14, 2013 – Forsyth County Department of Public Health and Nia Community Action Center are teaming up with Walgreens, the nation's largest pharmacy chain, and Greater Than AIDS, a coalition of public and private sector partners united in response to the domestic epidemic, to provide FREE HIV testing at two Walgreens stores in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The testing events are taking place June 27-29 in support of National HIV Testing Day.

State and local health departments and AIDS service organizations are coordinating the testing and providing results on-site at participating Walgreens locations, as well as supporting outreach. Testing locations include nearly 175 Walgreens stores in 54 cities across 22 states. Hundreds of additional Walgreens stores in the participating communities will help publicize the free testing through in-store marketing and other programs. Walgreens will also help promote National HIV Testing Day with special messages on June 27 on its Times Square digital display in New York City, the largest billboard of its kind in the country.

The Forsyth County Department of Public Health provides free and confidential testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) through a clinic located on-site at the health department and through community outreach. The community outreach is conducted by POSSE (Prevent Ongoing Spread of STIs Everywhere). Nia Community Action Center, a community based HIV organization, also offers free and confidential testing in Forsyth County. The partnership with Walgreens for this National HIV Testing Day event is significant because it will raise greater HIV awareness in the Forsyth County community and make HIV testing more available in the community. Everyone should be tested for HIV at least once in their lifetime and this event is a great opportunity to get tested!

This marks the third consecutive year Walgreens has teamed with Greater Than AIDS and local organizations to help bring free HIV testing to communities. This year, more than three times the number of stores and testing partners are participating compared to 2012.

From 2007 to 2011, Forsyth County has reported at least 50 new HIV infections per year. In 2011, Forsyth County reported 84 cases of HIV disease. The rate of infection was 24.0 per 100,000 population, which ranked fourth among the state's urban counties. This is a 46.3% increase from 16.4

cases per 100,000 population in 2010.¹ Because of these high rates of infection, POSSE provides free and confidential HIV and STI testing throughout the community so that infected individuals can know their HIV status and be connected to care.

Free HIV testing will also be available at select Walgreens locations across the country. For more information, including a complete list of participating Walgreens locations, visit www.greaterthan.org/walgreens.

“Access to testing, education and care are critical when it comes to the treatment and prevention of this complex condition,” said Glen Pietrandoni, senior manager of virology at Walgreens. “We have supported people living with HIV/AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic more than 30 years ago and will continue to be a trusted resource. Through this significant collaboration, we can help even more people get, stay and live well.”

Of the more than 1.1 million people living with HIV in the U.S. today, an estimated one in five, or nearly a quarter of a million people, do not know it.² One third of those who are positive are diagnosed so late in the course of their infection they develop AIDS within one year.³ Early diagnosis and treatment saves lives and is known to reduce the spread of HIV. The CDC encourages everyone to know their status.

“Frequent testing is the first step towards early treatment and preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS,” said Tina Hoff, Senior Vice President and Director of Health Communication and Media Partnerships, Kaiser Family Foundation, a founding partner of Greater Than AIDS. “Greater than AIDS is pleased to once again mark National HIV Testing Day by collaborating with Walgreens and local and state governments to broaden access to HIV tests for people in many of the nation’s hardest-hit communities.”

Throughout the year, Walgreens and Greater Than AIDS distribute HIV informational resources at 700 Walgreens pharmacies in heavily affected communities. Designated by Walgreens as “Centers of Excellence,” these stores have pharmacists on hand to offer one-on-one medication counseling and other support services that provide customers living with HIV/AIDS – and their families – with compassionate, confidential care.

Walgreens

As the nation's largest drugstore chain with fiscal 2012 sales of \$72 billion, Walgreens (www.walgreens.com) vision is to become America's first choice for health and daily living. Each day, Walgreens provides more than 6 million customers the most convenient, multichannel access to consumer goods and services and trusted, cost-effective pharmacy, health and wellness services and advice in communities across America. Walgreens scope of pharmacy services includes retail, specialty, infusion, medical facility and mail service, along with respiratory services. These services help improve health outcomes and lower costs for payers including employers, managed care organizations, health systems, pharmacy benefit managers and the public sector. The company operates 8,096 drugstores in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Take Care Health Systems is a Walgreens subsidiary that is the largest and most comprehensive manager of worksite health and wellness centers and in-store convenient care clinics, with more than 700 locations throughout the country.

Greater Than AIDS

Greater Than AIDS is an unprecedented coalition of public and private sector partners united in

¹ http://www.forsyth.cc/PublicHealth/documents/Surveillance_Report.pdf

² <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/basics/ataglance.html>

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. HIV Surveillance Report, 2010; vol. 22. March 2012. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/reports/>. Accessed May 30, 2013.

response to the HIV/AIDS crisis in the United States, in particular disproportionately affected groups. Through media campaigns and targeted community outreach, Greater Than AIDS works to increase knowledge and understanding about HIV/AIDS and confront the stigma surrounding the disease, while promoting actions to prevent its spread.

The Kaiser Family Foundation -- a leader in health policy and communications -- provides strategic direction and day-to-day management, as well as oversees the production of the media campaign. The Black AIDS Institute -- a think tank exclusively focused on AIDS in Black America -- provides leadership and expert guidance and directs community engagement. Greater Than AIDS is developed in support of Act Against AIDS, an effort by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to refocus attention on the domestic epidemic. Additional, financial and substantive support is provided by the Elton John AIDS Foundation, Ford Foundation and MAC AIDS Fund, among others. www.greaterthan.org

Filename: FINAL_NHTD Release Walgreens-GTA_2013.docx
Directory: C:\Users\spencekt\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\OLK1DFD
Template: C:\Users\spencekt\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
Title:
Subject:
Author: vergarvi
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 6/11/2013 10:38:00 AM
Change Number: 4
Last Saved On: 6/14/2013 1:56:00 PM
Last Saved By: nalljl
Total Editing Time: 2 Minutes
Last Printed On: 6/14/2013 2:01:00 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 3
Number of Words: 1,147 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 6,541 (approx.)