



# NEWS



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CONTACT: Lisa Slater  
(309) 888-5489 (office)  
(309) 838-1599 (cell)

## **Health Department offering free HIV testing June 26th** *Free HIV testing day in observance of National HIV Testing Day*

**BLOOMINGTON, IL-** In honor of National HIV Testing Day, the McLean County Health Department will offer free, confidential HIV testing and counseling on Tuesday, June 26th, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. in room 139. The Health Department is located at 200 West Front St. in Bloomington.

This free walk-in testing opportunity is open to individuals 12 years of age and older on a first-come-first-served basis. Total testing time is approximately 30 minutes and participants will know their test results before they leave. The process includes pre- and post-testing sessions with an HIV counselor. No names are used during the visit to maintain privacy.

“Testing for HIV infection is important because knowing your status allows you to make informed decisions about protecting your health and the health of those closest to you,” says Melissa Graven, Communicable Disease Supervisor. “People who are HIV positive can start HIV treatment and remain healthy for many years; people who are HIV negative can make decisions going forward that will help protect them from getting HIV, including taking Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).”

The McLean County Health Department was one of 11 county health departments in the state to receive grant money made possible through the Illinois Lottery’s sale of Red Ribbon Cash instant tickets. The grant will help further HIV/AIDS education, treatment, and prevention efforts in the county. For more than 25 years, the Health Department has been working to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS in McLean County through counseling, testing, community education, outreach, and surveillance. The Health Department also offers testing, treatment, and follow-up care for gonorrhea, syphilis, and Chlamydia: along with hepatitis prevention measures and pregnancy testing.

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Although there have been significant advances made in the treatment and prevention of HIV and AIDS, there is still no vaccine or cure for these diseases. An estimated one million people are currently living with HIV or AIDS in the United States, however nearly 25 percent of individuals in the United States who are HIV positive do not know they are infected. The Centers for Disease Control recommends that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care.

Outside of the free HIV testing day on June 26th, appointments for HIV testing are available Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, with walk-ins accepted on Tuesdays from 10a.m. to 4p.m. The Health Department accepts most private and public health insurance and there is no residency requirement. For more information about HIV or STI services available at the McLean County Health Department, call (309) 888-5435 or visit the Health Department's website at [www.mcleancountyil.gov/health](http://www.mcleancountyil.gov/health).

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