



Charlie Crist  
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.  
State Surgeon General

**For Immediate Release**  
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**Contact: Adam DuBois**  
**Phone: 941-833-3500 extension 208**  
**Fax: 941-639-8213**  
**Email: [adam\\_dubois@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:adam_dubois@doh.state.fl.us)**



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS FREE HIV TESTING  
AND COUNSELING IN HONOR OF NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY**

**Punta Gorda, FL** — According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is estimated that there are over 1 million HIV-positive individuals living in the United States. Of these, between 252,000 and 315,000 people do not know they are infected, and thus may be unknowingly spreading the virus. Additionally, these individuals are not getting the medical treatment and social services they may need. In order to curtail this problem, decisive action against the disease must be taken. The first step is to know one's status. Are you infected or not? The only way to tell is to get tested.

**Who should get tested:** Anyone who has ever engaged in a high-risk behavior such as unprotected sex or needle sharing.

**Why get tested:** It is the only way to know for sure if you are infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Knowing your HIV status allows you to start life-preserving treatment if needed. It also empowers a person to refrain from behavior that could spread the disease to others.

**When will testing be offered:** HIV testing is offered anytime during normal clinic hours at the Charlotte County Health Department (CCHD). However, on Friday June 27th 2008, CCHD is offering FREE testing at all three of its clinics as part of the National HIV Testing Day initiative.

**Where to get tested:** CCHD Clinics are located in Englewood, Port Charlotte, and Punta Gorda. Directions to the clinics can be found at [www.charlottechd.com](http://www.charlottechd.com).

Appointments should be made in advance by calling:

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| Punta Gorda<br>514 East Grace Street<br>(941) 639-1181 | Port Charlotte<br>1994 Kings Highways<br>(941) 613-0950 | Englewood<br>6868 San Casa Road<br>(941) 474-3240 |
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