
National HIV Testing Day 2008

“Take the Test, Take Control”

June 27, 2008 marked the 14th annual observance of National HIV Testing Day (NHTD) sponsored by the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This national campaign provides an invaluable opportunity for people to **“take the test,”** and obtain personal information which leads them to **“take control”** of their health and lives. Individuals are encouraged to assess their risk for HIV infection and to know their HIV status. Knowing your HIV status is essential because early detection of HIV infection allows for early treatment, which can both prolong and improve the quality of life. Negative test results underscore the importance of rethinking potential risks and modifying behaviors to decrease the chances of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Helping individuals know and understand their HIV status gives them the power to alter behaviors and take steps to protect themselves and their partners from infection.

A wide variety of HIV testing events highlighted NHTD throughout Florida. The Bureau of HIV/AIDS Internet website, “We Make the Change” website, and ManHunt, an MSM social networking website, promoted statewide activities. These various sites offered Internet users their choice of search methods to locate listings of registered HIV testing locations and NHTD events taking place in each county.

This year, the bureau provided LED key chains, stress pens, mini hand sanitizers with a sleeve, carabiners with a strap and key chain, condom compacts and sundry other incentives. The items were inscribed with messages including “Don’t Stress, Take the Test”, “WeMaketheChange.com”, and “1-800-FLA-AIDS” as promotions for NHTD activities and encouragement to be tested and return for results. Local county health departments and community partners provided additional promotional items and/or offered additional medical screenings.

Rapid testing, both oral and finger stick, were common at this year’s venues. Several well-attended health fairs throughout the state created seamless collaboration between HIV/STD/hepatitis and other medical screenings. Organizations offering rapid testing found that the convenience of receiving same-day results was a major incentive for testing.

Participation in National HIV Testing Day was very high and activities were well attended across the entire state. Below is an overview of statewide events.

Event Summaries by Area

Area 1

The inviting atmosphere of live music and health fairs sponsored by area organizations resulted in community outreach. Free HIV testing along with health education messages were readily available.

Area 2A

Radio promotion and fliers throughout the community prompted individuals to access free HIV testing at health department and community locations throughout the area.

Area 2B

Three local organizations, including rural senior centers, conducted community outreach and provided free rapid HIV testing and STD screenings. These organizations collaborated with Walgreen's Drug Store and local media to provide NHTD promotions.

Areas 3 & 13

Nine agencies, along with the county health department and jail, participated in events throughout the area, offering traditional and rapid HIV testing as well as additional testing for STDs. Local media promoted events.

Area 4

Collaboration with various agencies created a wide variety of events from 14 different organizations. These events included community outreach and free HIV and, STD screenings. A health fair event involved 21 vendors and over 100 community participants. Screenings for glucose and cholesterol, blood pressure, oxygen saturation, vision, and glaucoma were also offered.

Area 5

Over a three-day period, nine area organizations collaborated to offer free HIV testing in various locations and with expanded hours. Rapid testing yielded a 7.1% reactive rate over the three days. Local radio and print media offered coverage of activities including gay pride events.

Area 6

Various organizations offered testing during non-traditional and expanded hours. Organizations established partnerships in new venues and offered additional testing for STDs. Correctional staff were included in HIV testing. Jail inmates who normally avoid HIV testing used the date and events as a reason to test with no stigma.

Area 7

Outreach extended into rural and Hispanic communities. Local businesses pitched in to sponsor events. Free HIV testing was provided along with activities designed to offer fun for the whole family and to expose parents and children to various health education messages including dental care and food safety.

Area 8

This year, Area 8 made NHTD a week-long initiative. Agencies in Area 8 conducted over 500 tests. In Collier County, almost 200 people were tested at five locations in Naples and Immokalee over four

and a half days. Years of posting flyers in the community has sensitized the people of LaBelle and Clewiston to anticipate national HIV/AIDS observances and to access free testing. People stated that they came to sites to be tested because they saw the flyers in their community, their friends told them about the flyers, they read the announcement in the newspaper, or they saw the display at the CHD.

Area 9

Area 9 had a billboard this year. There was also collaboration with the local Information and Referral 211 to have the hotline act as a clearinghouse for testing day location and event information. The biggest factor in Area 9's success was the overall collaborations. The Palm Beach County Substance Abuse Coalition collaborated with the PBCHD to form the HIV/AIDS Substance Abuse Task Force. Through this task force, multiple agencies worked together to organize 32 test sites throughout the county. There was significant contribution of staff and time by the STD program. Multiple municipalities issued proclamations and at some sites, city officials participated. Events were widely promoted via newspapers, TV, and radio.

Area 10

Testing sites collaborated with community centers, shopping plazas, parks, clubs, and churches to offer HIV testing. Some testing occurred after hours and on the weekend. Each site tested in excess of 50 people.

Area 11A

National Testing Day was a countywide event in Miami-Dade. Outreach activities included expanded HIV and STD testing, along with additional health screenings. Local organizations collaborated with businesses to offer incentives for testing and to offer testing in non-traditional locations.

Area 11B

Area CBOs collaborated to offer rapid HIV testing throughout the Keys. Outreach was up front and personal as volunteers walked into neighborhoods offering coupons for a free HIV test. Incentives were appreciated. A local GLBT daily gossip column, read by most locals, contributed to the immediate awareness of the events.

Area 12

Twelve community organizations collaborated to offer free rapid HIV testing to the community. NHTD events were very successful in providing HIV awareness, as well as providing accessibility for underserved populations to receive pre- and post-test counseling.

Area 14

Heavy storms did not dampen the efforts of outreach workers who hit the streets to encourage individuals to be tested. Eighty-six tests were conducted on National Testing Day.

Area 15

Ten community organizations offered free rapid and conventional HIV testing during extended and non-traditional testing hours throughout the week of NHTD. The first "Gotta Know" Festival at a local park drew over 400 participants. During the festival, rapid HIV testing and STD testing were offered. Collaboration among organizations allowed the community to become familiar with the services available throughout the area.

Data Overview

According to data collected in the statewide HIV Counseling and Testing System, agencies conducted approximately **3,747** HIV tests on NHTD. This was a **decrease** of 788 tests from the previous year. Of the number tested on NHTD, 46 or 1.2% were positive, down from 60 or 1.3% the previous year. This includes all tests conducted that day by registered testing sites, not only those conducted in conjunction with special events.

A total of **9,108** HIV tests were performed in Florida during the week of NHTD (June 24-June 30), 144 of which were positive (1.6%). There was a **32.2% increase** in testing during the week of NHTD, compared to 6,881 HIV tests conducted during the previous week (June 17-23). In the week following NHTD, the number of tests performed decreased to 6,933. However, this week included July 4. The positivity rate that week was slightly higher (1.7%) than the week of NHTD.

Figure 1. Number Tested and Positivity Rate, by Race/Ethnicity, NHTD Week, 2008

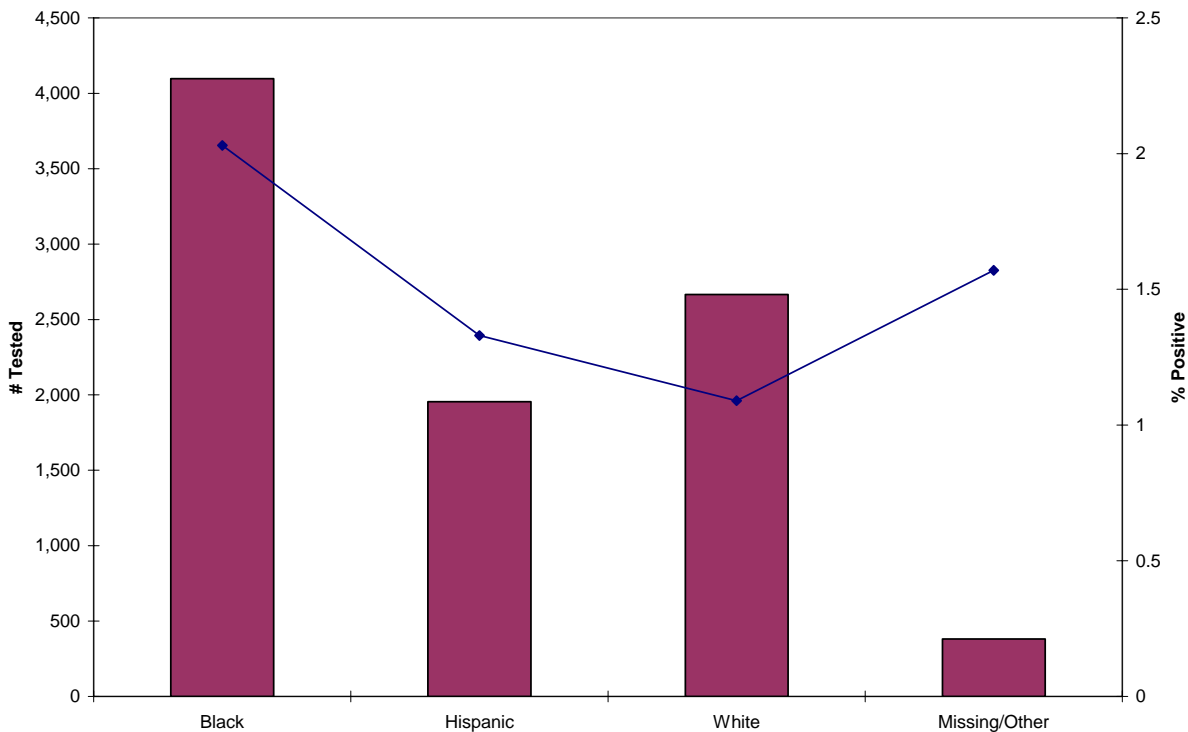


Figure 1:

Of the 9,108 tests administered during the week of NHTD, 45.0% (4,097) identified themselves as non-Hispanic blacks and 29.3% (2,666) as non-Hispanic whites. Hispanics accounted for 21.5% (1,954) of the tests administered. The remaining 4.2% (382) of the tests were missing racial/ethnic data, or were recorded in the “other” category. The positivity rates were 2.0% for blacks, 1.1% for whites, and 1.3% for Hispanics (Figure 1). Blacks accounted for the majority of the positive tests (57.6%), as compared to whites (20.1%), and Hispanics (18.1%).

Figure 2. Number Tested and Positivity Rate, By Age Group, NHTD Week, 2008

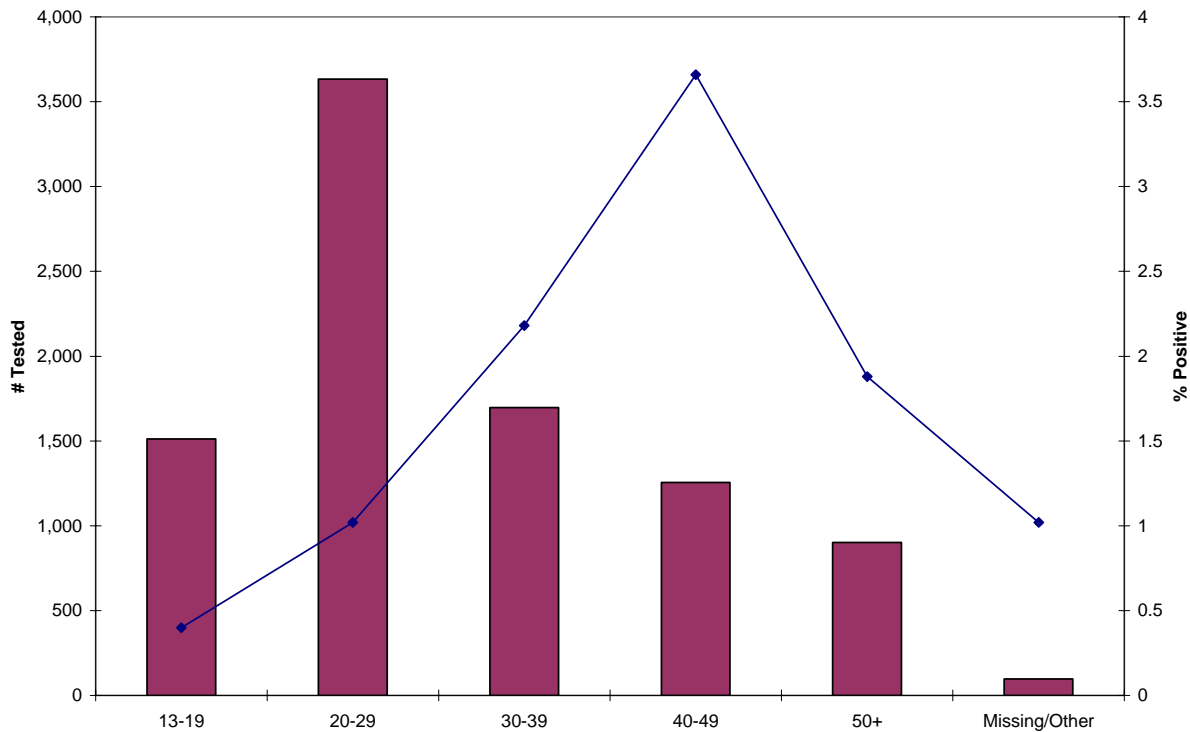


Figure 2:

Persons between the ages of 20-29 represented the largest portion of HIV tests among age groups, and accounted for 37 positive tests. The positivity rate for this age group was 1.0%. In contrast, persons aged 30-39 represented the second largest group tested, and yielded a 2.2% positivity rate. Persons aged 40-49 had the highest positivity rate with 3.7%. The 50+ age group recorded 17 positive tests, yielding a positivity rate of 1.9%. There were 98 tests with missing age data.

During NHTD week, 3,727 blood tests (41.0%), 1,418 oral tests (15.6%), and 3,954 rapid tests (43.4%) were performed. The majority of the tests (57.7%) were administered to females; however, males accounted for the majority (73.6%) of the positive tests (data not shown). The male population had an overall positivity rate of 2.8%, compared to 0.6% for females. There were 80 HIV tests with missing gender data. The majority of HIV tests administered during the week of NHTD were to persons who identified heterosexual sex as their highest risk behavior. The positivity rate of that risk group was 0.6%. The risk group with the highest positivity rate was “MSM/IDU”; that positivity rate was 14.6% or 7/48. There were 260 tests with no identifiable/missing risk exposure data.

Figure 3. Number Tested and Positivity Rate, NHTD Week, 2001 - 2008

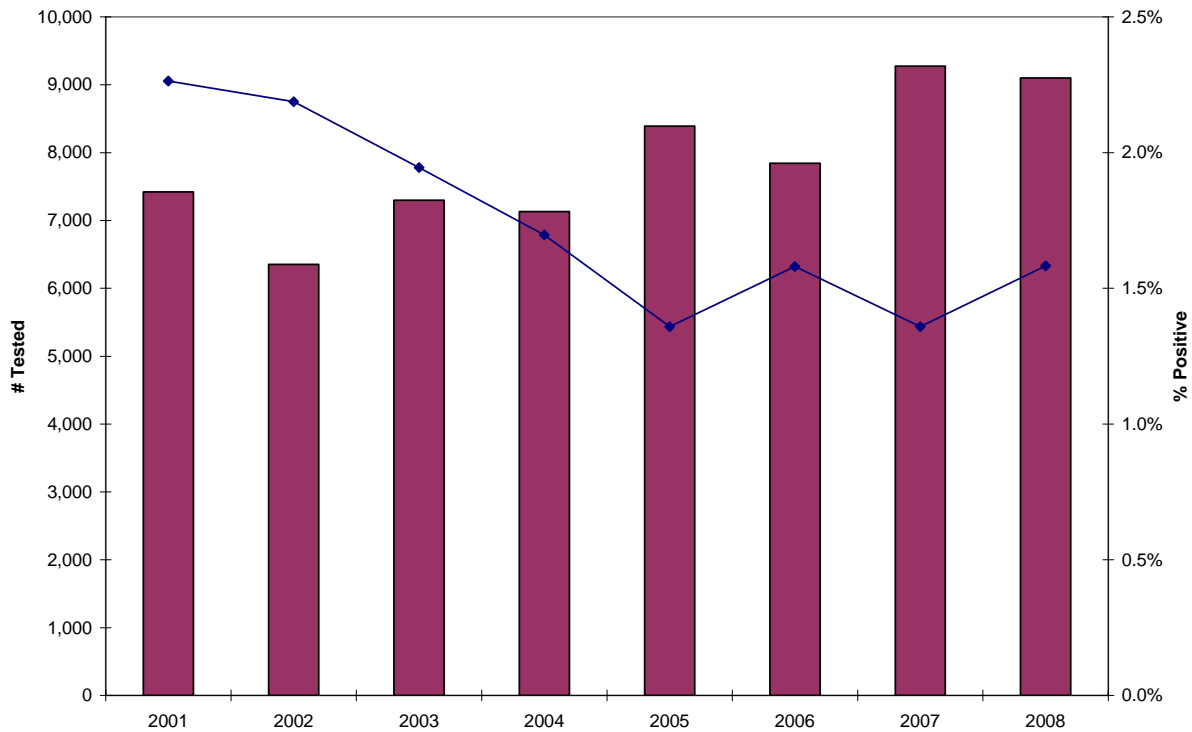


Figure 3:

This shows the number of tests done and positivity rates from 2001 to 2008 for the week of NHTD. Despite the decrease in the number of tests administered from 2007 to 2008, there was a slight increase in the proportion of positive tests.

Table 1:

This shows testing data from 1997 to 2008 for the week before and the week of NHTD. In general, higher numbers of tests have been recorded the week of NHTD as compared to the preceding week.

Table 1. HIV testing the week before, and during the week of NHTD, 1997 - 2008

Time of Tests	Year											
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
June 27, Day of Week	Fri	Sat	Sun	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Fri
June 17-23												
Number of Tests	4,695	4,825	4,694	4,982	5,312	5,657	5,690	6,285	5,846	5,732	6,372	6,881
Number of Positives	105	120	108	109	135	129	126	113	112	86	95	95
Percent Positive	2.2%	2.5%	2.3%	2.2%	2.5%	2.3%	2.2%	1.8%	1.9%	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%
June 24-30												
Number of Tests	5,300	5,409	6,136	6,759	7,421	6,353	7,300	7,131	8,390	7,845	9,273	9,108
Number of Positives	111	94	138	129	168	139	142	121	114	124	126	144
Percent Positive	2.1%	1.7%	2.2%	1.9%	2.3%	2.2%	2.0%	1.7%	1.4%	1.6%	1.4%	1.6%
Comparison between the week of NHTD and the previous week												
Number of Tests	605	584	1,442	1,777	2,109	696	1,610	846	2,544	2,113	2,901	2,227
Number of HIV+ Tests	6	-26	30	20	33	10	16	8	2	38	31	49

Table 2:

This is a comparison of testing for the week of NHTD 2007 and 2008 by area. Area 15 showed the greatest increase in testing, while area 11B had the greatest decrease.

Table 2. Comparison of Testing By Area, NHTD Week, 2007 and 2008

Area	Tested 2008	Tested 2007	% Changed in # Tested from 2007	Positivity Rate 2008	Positivity Rate 2007
1	214	297	-27.9%	1.4	0.3
2A	162	156	3.8%	1.9	0.0
2B	317	367	-13.6%	1.3	0.8
3	360	481	-25.2%	1.4	0.6
4	836	894	-6.5%	0.7	1.6
5	536	505	6.1%	0.9	1.6
6	520	807	-35.6%	1.9	1.2
7	962	874	10.1%	1.0	0.2
8	542	484	12.0%	0.7	0.6
9	782	930	-15.9%	0.8	1.1
10	1,341	1,042	28.7%	2.2	1.9
11A	1,345	1,221	10.2%	3.9	3.6
11B	49	63	-22.2%	0.0	0.0
12	241	256	-5.9%	0.4	0.0
13	304	327	-7.0%	1.0	0.6
14	259	315	-17.8%	0.8	1.0
15	332	250	32.8%	0.3	1.2
Total	9,108*	9,273**	-1.9%	1.6	1.4

- Area 1 Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton
- Area 2A Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Washington
- Area 2B Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla
- Area 3 Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Putnam, Suwannee, Union
- Area 4 Baker, Clay, Nassau, St Johns
- Area 5 Pasco, Pinellas
- Area 6 Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee
- Area 7 Brevard, Orange, Osceola, Seminole
- Area 8 Charlotte, Collier, Desoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Sarasota
- Area 9 Palm Beach
- Area 10 Broward
- Area 11A Miami-Dade
- Area 11B Monroe
- Area 12 Flagler, Volusia
- Area 13 Citrus, Lake, Marion, Sumter
- Area 14 Hardee, Highlands, Polk
- Area 15 Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, St Lucie

*6 tests missing site/county information in 2008

**4 tests missing site/county information in 2007

Once again, Florida conducted a successful National HIV Testing Day campaign. A significant number of people were tested as a result of local community and health department efforts, meeting one of the major goals of the campaign and the Bureau of HIV/AIDS, which is to increase the number of persons in Florida who know their HIV status. Participants in this year's campaign should be commended for their contributions to this success. Lessons learned from this year will be used to strengthen Florida's future NHTD efforts.