
National HIV Testing Day 2009

“Take the Test, Take Control”

June 27, 2009 marked the 15th 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 *know and understand* their HIV status. Knowing your HIV status is essential because early detection allows for early treatment, which can both prolong and improve quality of life. Understanding HIV test results underscores the importance of HIV awareness and modifying behaviors to decrease the chances of HIV and STD infections. Helping individuals know and understand their HIV status gives them power to take steps to protect themselves and their partners.

NHTD is not just a single day observance. Florida communities strive to hold health awareness and screening events during the week leading up to NHTD. Listings of events and testing locations were obtainable on the DOH Bureau of HIV/AIDS, and “We Make the Change” websites. These various sites offered Internet users their choice of search methods to locate listings of events taking place in each county.

Each year, the bureau, county health departments, and community organizations purchase incentive items for distribution at NHTD events. This year, the bureau provided stress pens, reusable tote bags, red flyers (Frisbees), change purses, sling backpacks, bag clips, and other items. Community organizations provided food and drinks, and some provided gift cards and coupons, fans, and water bottles.

Rapid testing and additional medical screenings were common activities at this year’s venues. Several health fairs, pool parties, and food and drink stands created an indistinguishable collaboration between county, state, and community agencies to better offer health education and outreach outlets.

This year, agencies utilized social networking avenues and collaborated with local 211(information and referral services) to advertise their area NHTD events. Common accomplishments from the weeklong activities were agency collaboration, offering health screenings, STD testing, and community outreach. A common barrier was the hot and wet weather, which affected most of the state for several days. Below is an overview of some of the statewide events.

Event Summaries by Area:

Area 1

Agencies were able to collaborate and make the best out of limited resources. ECHD was able to piggyback on events that were already scheduled, limiting the amount of labor and work hours needed by staff. They were able to provide rapid testing to those who wanted it.

Area 2A

Nine agencies distributed 2,500 incentives and offered blood, OraSure, and rapid testing. The Panama City Mall Women's Expo was well attended. Accomplishments were due to "old fashioned hard work" of canvassing rural areas and community outreach. "It was a significant accomplishment to have community participation in 5 of 6 counties for the first time in years," reports the EIC. Although testing space and hot weather were challenges, events were held in various locations with the support of health department administration and the community at large.

Area 2B

Over 15 community partners came together to promote National Testing Day. A local AIDS service organization partnered with the Leon County Health Department to offer a movie night where testing was offered to those in attendance.

Areas 3 & 13

Fourteen agencies, up from nine the previous year, distributed 600 incentives, and offered testing through blood, OraSure, and rapid venues. STD screening was also available. One accomplishment was that the media responded well to public service announcements and event promotions. Hot weather may have slowed participation.

Area 4

A collaborative effort between various agencies distributed 459 incentives throughout the area. Sites offered HIV testing via blood, OraSure, and rapid venues. Sites also offered STD screenings. The health department sponsored a free Bar-B-Q and offered educational information through Safe in the City. Local churches hosted a youth rally. Sponsors were prepared for 50-55 to attend the rally, but over 100 attended. Limited media was a barrier to events.

Area 5

Five area agencies collaborated to provide HIV testing via OraSure and rapid testing and distributed 1,500 incentives. Sites also provided testing for hepatitis B. Local television stations held interviews with a health department administrator about NHTD events. No barriers to events or testing were identified. USF college students were highly motivated to participate.

Area 6

Seventeen community agencies provided blood, OraSure, and rapid HIV testing. Free health screenings including STD, blood pressure, and cholesterol, along with immunizations, were also provided while providing free entertainment.

Area 7

The local Sistas Organizing to Survive (S.O.S.) planning committee held a rally for women on June 20th, complete with a play on HIV and keynote speaker. Hispanic Health Initiatives held their annual health fair on June 27th. Many health screenings were offered including HIV and STD screenings. Hope and Help held a NHTD event in the Goldsboro district of Sanford in Seminole County. Several vendors provided services including health screenings and information.

Area 8

Twenty-six agencies participated in providing blood, OraSure, and rapid HIV testing and distributed 705 incentives. The Sarasota area held a Men's Conference that local media covered. There was also media coverage of a local person living with AIDS, other radio

interviews, and media outreach into rural areas. There was increased testing for seniors. Some counties had limited response. Events included health fairs and canvassing at apartment complexes.

Area 9

Ten agencies collaborated to create fourteen test sites on National Testing Day. Coordinators utilized the local 211 information and referral service as a clearinghouse for testing site information. Social networking strategies were used for promotion of events, as were radio, posters, and palm cards. Sites offered HIV testing through blood, OraSure, and rapid services. One-on-one counseling sessions in Haitian Creole and Spanish were helpful to impart HIV prevention and testing information. Barriers included the number of volunteers, language barriers, long wait times, and the hot weather.

Area 10

Many of the testing locations used multiple marketing strategies to inform and encourage the residents of Broward to get tested during National HIV Testing Day events. The county health department's STD clinic offered HIV testing free of charge to individuals requesting an HIV test. The African American Testing Initiative providers have built a great rapport with many providers in the community, which provided them the opportunity to offer HIV testing in various medical facilities throughout the week. Some sites identified unique locations to offer testing such as Wal-Mart, allowing them to reach their customers and staff. The testing sites involved in the Show U Know concert felt that the incentive of receiving a ticket to a concert contributed to their success of getting individuals tested.

Area 11A

This year, National Testing Day served as the launching of the "Test Miami" initiative in Overtown and Florida City. Weeklong events involved twelve agencies offering HIV testing via OraSure and rapid testing. The goal of these events was to reach people who previously have not sought out HIV or STD screening, bring HIV/AIDS awareness into highly impacted communities, and assist in removing the stigma of HIV testing. The "Test Miami" campaign will continue through 2009 and into 2010.

Area 11B

Eleven agencies collaborated to offer HIV testing from blood, OraSure, and rapid venues. Sites also offered STD screening. Screenings times were extended from 5:00PM to 9:00PM to offer and expanded time for people to be tested. This change in testing time allowed for a substantial increase in the number of people attending events and accessing testing. Barriers included wet, hot weather and some reluctance to be tested.

Area 12

Five agencies, a collaboration of community and faith-based organizations, STD, and Epidemiology staff from the county health department worked together to offer HIV testing in OraSure and rapid venues. Over 300 incentives were distributed.

Area 14

Three agencies offered HIV testing in blood, OraSure, and rapid venues. Sites also offered STD screening. A significant accomplishment was the identification of new street outreach areas. Rain presented the greatest barrier for participation in testing events.

Area 15

Area 15 made great strides in bringing the community together to support NHTD and get people tested. Sites offered rapid and conventional HIV testing as well as STD screening at events throughout the community, drawing diverse crowds. Events were advertised through public service announcements, media alerts, and advertisements. Rain and heat kept crowds small and organizations selected alternative locations for their events, which proved successful.

Data Overview:

A total of 9,728 HIV tests were performed in Florida during the week of NHTD (June 24-June 30), an increase of 629 from the previous year. Of those tested, 115 individuals (1.2%), tested HIV positive. There was a **32.2% increase** in testing during the week of NHTD, compared to the previous week (June 17-23).

During NHTD week, a total of 3,515 blood tests (36.1%), 1,240 oral tests (12.7%), and 4,973 rapid tests (51.1%) were performed. The majority of the tests (56.4%) were administered to females; however, males accounted for the majority (70.4%) of the positive tests (data not shown). The male population had an overall positivity rate of 1.9%, compared to 0.6% for females. There were 52 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 0.4%. The risk group with the highest positivity rate was “MSM/IDU” or men who have sex with men and are intravenous drug users. That positivity rate was 11.4%, or 4 out of 35. There were 285 tests with no identifiable or missing risk exposure data.

According to data collected in the statewide HIV counseling and testing data system, agencies conducted approximately **988** HIV tests on NHTD. This was a **decrease** of **2,759** tests from the previous year. NHTD fell on a Saturday this year, when CHD's were closed, which could explain the decrease. Of the number tested on NHTD, **2** or **0.2%** tested HIV positive, down from 46 or 1.2% the previous year. This includes all tests conducted that day by registered testing sites, not only those conducted in conjunction with special events.

Figure 1:

Of the 9,728 tests administered during the week of NHTD, 46.0% (4,471) identified themselves as non-Hispanic blacks and 28.0% (2,722) as non-Hispanic whites. Hispanics accounted for 21.1% (2,057) of the tests administered. The remaining 4.9% (478) of the tests were missing racial/ethnic data, or were recorded in the “other” category. The positivity rates were: 1.4% for blacks, 1.3% for whites, and 0.5% for Hispanics (Figure 1). Blacks accounted for the majority of the positive tests (55.7%), as compared to whites (29.6%) and Hispanics (8.7%).

Figure 1. Number Tested and Positivity Rate, by Race/Ethnicity, NHTD Week, 2009

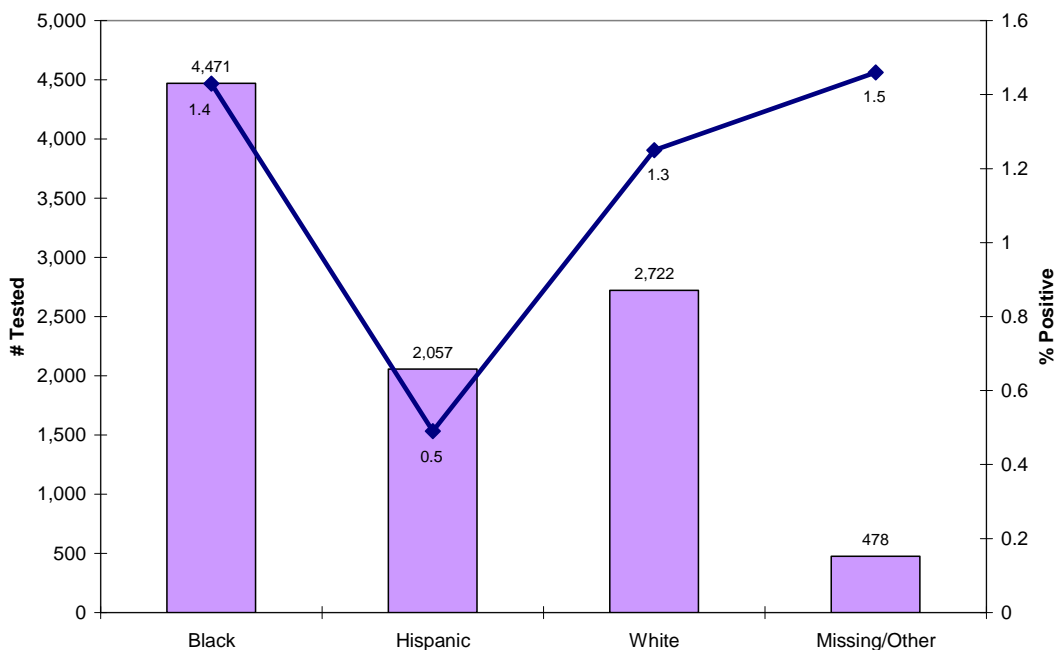


Figure 2:

Persons between the ages of 20-29 represented the largest portion of HIV tests among age groups, and accounted for 31 positive tests. The positivity rate for this age group was 0.8%. In contrast, persons aged 30-39 represented the second largest group tested, and yielded a 1.2% positivity rate. Persons aged 40-49 had the highest positivity rate with 2.6%. The 50+ age group recorded 22 positive tests, yielding a positivity rate of 2.0%. There were 60 tests with missing age data.

Figure 2. Number Tested and Positivity Rate, By Age Group, NHTD Week, 2009

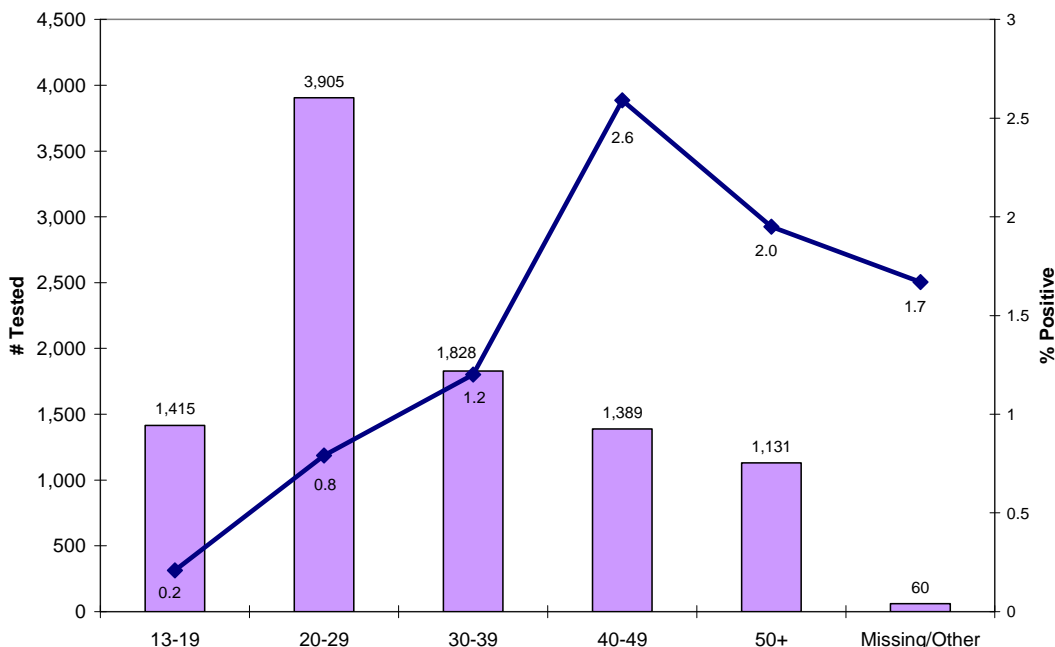


Figure 3:

This shows the number of tests done and positivity rates from 2001 to 2009 for the week of NHTD. Overall, the number of tests has increased over time while the positivity rate has generally declined.

Figure 3. Number Tested and Positivity Rate, NHTD Week, 2001 - 2009

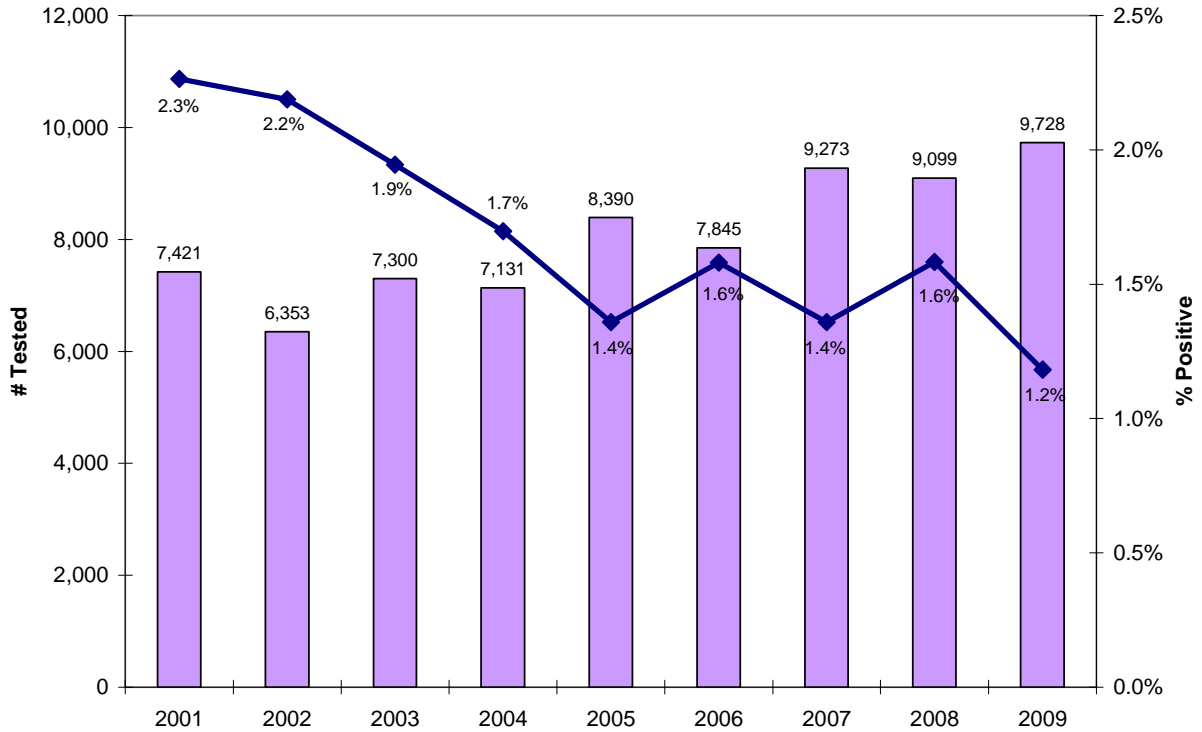


Table 1:

This shows testing data from 1997 to 2009 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 - 2009													
	Year												
Time of Tests	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
June 27, Day of Week	Fri	Sat	Sun	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Fri	Sat
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	7,689
Number of Positives	105	120	108	109	135	129	126	113	112	86	95	95	93
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%	1.2%
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	9,728
Number of Positives	111	94	138	129	168	139	142	121	114	124	126	144	115
Percent Positive	2.1%	1.7%	2.2%	1.9%	2.3%	2.2%	1.9%	1.7%	1.4%	1.6%	1.4%	1.6%	1.2%
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	2,039
Number of HIV+ Tests	6	-26	30	20	33	10	16	8	2	38	31	49	22

Table 2:

This is a comparison of testing for the week of NHTD 2008 and 2009 by area.

Table 2. Comparison of Testing By Area, NHTD Week, 2008 and 2009					
Area	Tested 2009	Tested 2008	% Changed in # Tested from 2008	Positivity Rate 2009	Positivity Rate 2008
1	237	214	10.7%	0.4	1.4
2A	166	162	2.5%	1.2	1.9
2B	290	317	-8.5%	0.3	1.3
3	372	360	3.3%	0.8	1.4
4	888	836	6.2%	0.7	0.7
5	562	536	4.9%	0.9	0.9
6	873	520	67.9%	1.0	1.9
7	1032	962	7.3%	1.3	1.0
8	463	542	-14.6%	0.9	0.7
9	796	782	1.8%	0.9	0.8
10	1,549	1,341	15.5%	2.2	2.2
11A	1,391	1,345	3.4%	1.7	3.9
11B	47	49	-4.1%	0.0	0.0
12	253	241	5.0%	0.8	0.4
13	296	304	-2.6%	0.3	1.0
14	248	259	-4.2%	0.4	0.8
15	258	332	-22.3%	0.8	0.3
Total	9728**	9108*	6.9%	1.2	1.6

- 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, Osceole, 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

**7 tests missing site/county information in 2009

Once again, Florida conducted a successful National HIV Testing Day campaign. As a result of collaborative efforts between county health departments, community organizations, and faith-based organizations, a significant number of people were tested for HIV and other related infections. These efforts help the Bureau of HIV/AIDS meet one of its stated goals - 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.