



Office of Public Health
VA World AIDS Day

Blurbs for messages for newsletters, emails

FOR GENERAL USE

VA and World AIDS Day, December 1, 2011 (100 words)

On December 1, 2011, the Department of Veterans Affairs encourages all Veterans and VA staff to recognize World AIDS Day. The VA joins the global community in acknowledging the strides that have been made in HIV treatment. The virus now known as HIV was first identified 30 years ago, and since then, more than 25 million people have died of AIDS worldwide. But today, HIV infection need not be a death sentence. Because of highly effective therapies, many people with HIV, including some Veterans, are living happy, long, and productive lives. For more information on VA and HIV, go to www.hiv.va.gov.

VA health care providers and World AIDS Day, December 1, 2011 (about 40 words)

On World AIDS Day, December 1, 2011, the Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes all providers in the VA health care system. Their dedication, passion, and commitment to providing care for Veterans with HIV/AIDS allow VA to continue its mission of excellence in health care. For more information on VA and HIV, go to www.hiv.va.gov.

VA and World AIDS Day, December 1, 2011 (30 words)

The Department of Veterans Affairs will recognize **World AIDS Day, December 1, 2011**, with information, education, and HIV testing. For more information on VA and HIV, go to www.hiv.va.gov.

FOR VETERAN PATIENTS

Why get tested for HIV (about 150 words)

Why get an HIV test? An HIV test is the only way to be certain about your HIV status. You can show no symptoms for years, but it is much better to find out sooner rather than later. The earlier HIV is detected, the sooner a person can receive excellent care provided by VA and begin taking steps to remain healthy for many years and even decades.

Your HIV test result will not affect your VA care or your eligibility for VA benefits. You can also refuse HIV testing without losing your rights to VA care or benefits. HIV testing is available to all Veterans in VA care, and it is the Veterans' choice to have the test or not.

Take the test and take control. Even if you do not think you are at risk, you should talk to your health care provider about taking the HIV test. For more information, go to www.hiv.va.gov.

Why get tested for HIV (about 100 words)

Why get an HIV test? An HIV test is the only way to be certain about your HIV status. You may look and feel fine and show no symptoms of being ill. You can only be sure of your HIV status by being tested. The earlier HIV is detected, the sooner a person can receive excellent care provided by VA and begin taking steps to remain healthy for many years and even decades. Take the test and take control. Even if you do not think you are at risk, you should talk to your health care provider about taking the HIV test. For more information, go to www.hiv.va.gov.

Who should get an HIV test? (90 words)

Who should get an HIV test? Public health experts and health care providers recommend that all adults get tested for HIV as part of their routine medical care. Everyone—not just people who think they are at risk—should get tested at least once in their life. For people who engage in high-risk behaviors, more frequent HIV testing is recommended. Take the test, and take control. Even if you do not think you are at risk, you should talk to your provider about taking the HIV test. For more information, go to www.hiv.va.gov.

Facts about HIV (about 80 words)

FACT: There are more than 33 million people living with HIV/AIDS around the world.

FACT: In the United States, there are more than 1.2 million people living with HIV/AIDS.

FACT: 1 in 5 HIV-positive people in the United States don't know they are infected. This means they aren't getting treatment that could help them live longer, healthier lives.

Get checked. Say yes to the test. Getting tested is the only way to be sure about your HIV status. For more information about VA and HIV, see www.hiv.va.gov.

Say yes to the test--HIV testing saves lives (about 40 words)

Say yes to the test. HIV testing saves lives: People who know that they are HIV positive are more likely to take steps to prevent passing HIV to others, and to take care of themselves by beginning life-saving treatments.

FOR VA HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Facts about VA and HIV (about 135 words)

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the largest provider of care in the United States to those living with HIV; currently, VA serves over 24,000 HIV-infected Veterans throughout the United States. VA is committed to excellent care of all Veterans, and provides the highest-quality care to HIV-infected Veterans. In 2010:

- 96% of newly HIV-positive Veterans were linked to care.
- 98% of known positive Veterans who transferred their care to the VA were linked to care.
- 91% of HIV-infected Veterans in care were on potent antiretroviral therapy.
- More than 97% of HIV-infected Veterans in care have been screened for hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C virus infection.
- 93% of infected Veterans in care have routine monitoring of CD4+ lymphocyte counts and HIV viral loads.

For more information on VA and HIV, go to www.hiv.va.gov.

Why HIV is testing so important. (100 words)

Why is HIV testing so important? Early diagnosis of HIV is associated with greatly improved medical outcomes. VA is the largest single provider of HIV care in the United States, providing care to more than 24,000 Veterans with HIV in 2009. Yet less than 15% of Veterans in VA care have ever been tested for HIV. That needs to change. Our goal is to diagnose HIV infection as soon as possible so that Veterans can receive excellent VA care and remain healthy for many years to come. Do your part. Offer the HIV test to all your patients. For more information, go to www.hiv.va.gov.

Ask about HIV testing; excellent care is available (about 70 words)

Talk to your patients about HIV testing. You can provide valuable information about preventing HIV infection if a test result is negative and about treatments for people who test positive. People with HIV can now expect to live longer and be healthier. We want to remind and encourage all Veterans, not just on World AIDS Day but every day, to use the excellent resources available in VA and get tested for HIV. For more information on VA and HIV, go to www.hiv.va.gov.

Which patients should be tested for HIV, and how often? (125 words)

Which patients should be tested for HIV, and how often? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Veterans Affairs recommend that HIV testing should be part of routine medical care. Any Veteran patient without a documented HIV test in his or her health record should be offered a test. All Veterans are encouraged to get tested at least once in their lifetime. Veterans who are documented to be HIV negative but have ongoing risks for exposure to HIV should be offered an HIV test at least once a year. All Veterans who ask for HIV testing should be provided the test. Do your part. Offer the HIV test to all your patients. For more information, go to www.hiv.va.gov.

VA policy on HIV testing has changed. (80 words)

VA policy on HIV testing has changed. In August 2009, VA eliminated the requirement for written consent and scripted pre- and post-test counseling. The new VA policy allows Veteran patients to

provide verbal consent. Veterans must be provided with educational material and given the opportunity to have any questions answered. Do your part. Offer the HIV test to every patient. For more information, go to www.hiv.va.gov.

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