



*The Maryland State Medical Society*

**News: For Immediate Release**

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## **JUNE 27 IS NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY**

BALTIMORE, June 25, 2019 — MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, wants to spread the word about National HIV Testing Day on June 27. National HIV Testing Day (NHTD) was first observed on June 27, 1995 to encourage people to get tested for HIV, know their status, and get linked to care and treatment. HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. It harms the immune system by destroying the white blood cells that fight infection which puts a person at risk for serious infections and certain cancers. AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and is the final stage of infection with HIV.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 1.1 million people in the United States have HIV, and one in seven of them do not know that they have it. The CDC recommends that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care. People at higher risk should get tested more often.

HIV can be spread through body fluids like blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. HIV is passed from one person to another in a number of ways - having sex without a condom with a person who has HIV; sharing needles with someone who has HIV; breastfeeding, pregnancy, or childbirth if the mother has HIV; and getting a transfusion of blood that's infected with HIV (very rare in the United States).

MedChi urges communities and health care practitioners to use National HIV Testing Day to raise awareness about the importance of HIV testing. MedChi CEO, Gene Ransom, states "Under the Affordable Care Act, the health care reform law passed in 2010, insurance plans must cover HIV testing. HIV counseling is also covered for women who are sexually active. People can talk to their insurance company to learn more."

### About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. Formed in 1799, it is still the largest physician organization in Maryland today. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit [www.medchi.org](http://www.medchi.org).