

Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

Statement on National HIV Testing Day

June 27, 2013

Today is National HIV Testing Day, when we encourage people across the United States to get tested. Early detection and treatment for HIV saves lives, and yet over half of adults in the United States have never been tested. Nearly one in five people living with HIV in this country doesn't know his or her status. That delays treatment, increases the risk of transmission, and sets us back in our fight against the epidemic.

Getting an HIV test is easier and faster than ever. And this past April, the United States Preventive Services Task Force recommended that everyone between the ages of 15 and 65 get screened for HIV as part of their routine health care. That means, under the Affordable Care Act, new health care plans will be required to cover HIV testing without any additional out-of-pocket costs.

But more Americans still need to decide to take the test. We know from experience here at home and around the world that HIV testing opens the door to treatment, reduces the spread of the virus, and helps people lead longer, healthier lives. That's why, on a trip to Africa in 2006, Michelle and I were tested for HIV, because there should be no shame or stigma associated with knowing your status. And if we each do our part by getting tested and encourage our friends and family to do the same, then we will move closer to an AIDS-free generation.

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