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**From:** Joint Information Center  
**Sent:** Friday, April 17, 2015 7:58 AM  
**Subject:** MORE HIV CASES REPORTED IN SOUTHEASTERN INDIANA AS TESTING RAMPS UP



**Michael R. Pence**  
*Governor*

**Jerome M. Adams, MD, MPH**  
*State Health Commissioner*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**April 17, 2015**

### **MORE HIV CASES REPORTED IN SOUTHEASTERN INDIANA AS TESTING RAMPS UP**

AUSTIN—The number of cases in the HIV outbreak in southeastern Indiana has now reached 130 (120 confirmed and 10 preliminary positive cases), State health officials reported today. This is an increase of 24 new cases identified in the past week.

“We have seen a significant increase in the number of HIV cases reported this week, but we believe that is because we have been able to offer more testing with the help of additional staff from CDC,” said State Health Commissioner Jerome Adams, M.D., M.P.H. “This sharp increase in the number of HIV-positive cases demonstrates just how critical it is that we are able to locate and test people who have been exposed so that they can avoid spreading it to others and get medical treatment.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began sending support staff last month to assist in the HIV outbreak investigation, following a request by the Indiana State Department of Health. Support staff from CDC are conducting laboratory testing and assisting the State and local health departments with contacting individuals who may have been exposed to HIV.

State, local and federal officials are responding to the outbreak through several other measures, including a One-Stop Shop for services at the Austin Community Outreach Center, a weekly HIV testing and treatment clinic, a needle exchange program and a public awareness campaign called You Are Not Alone.

The Scott County Health Department began a needle exchange program earlier this month at the Community Outreach Center in Austin. Local officials were permitted to do this as the result of an

Executive Order issued by Governor Pence on March 26 which temporarily suspends Indiana Code in Scott County making needle exchanges illegal.

The needle exchange program is for Scott County residents only and allows participating individuals to receive enough needles for one week based on reported drug use. Participants are also provided with thick plastic boxes called “sharps” containers to collect needles after they are used. Participants are asked to bring their used needles to exchange for clean ones.

**Since opening on April 4, the needle exchange program has provided 5,322 clean syringes to 86 participants. Approximately 1,400 used syringes have been returned to the Community Outreach Center by participants in the exchange and other community members.** As participation in the needle exchange program continues, health officials expect the number of needles returned to more closely match the number of syringes provided.

“This community has been dealing with used syringes being tossed in yards and public areas for a long time, but I want to stress that it’s not safe to pick up syringes unless you have received proper training at one of the community cleanup events and have appropriate protective equipment,” said Dr. Adams. “If you see a syringe, I urge you to please call the Scott County Dispatch and let them know exactly where it is located so they can come collect it.”

In an effort to reach more community members, the Scott County Health Department also began operating a mobile needle exchange out of an SUV earlier this week. The mobile unit will be in the community daily from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., staffing and weather permitting. Scott County Dispatch can be reached at (812) 752-5550.

The Community Outreach Center is open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Tuesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Sunday from noon to 6 p.m. Grace Covenant Church is providing free shuttle service to and from Austin by calling (317) 617-2223.

The One-Stop Shop at the Austin Community Outreach Center provides free HIV testing, vaccinations against tetanus, hepatitis A and B, and information about HIV and hepatitis prevention, treatment and resources. Substance abuse referrals are available and individuals can also get assistance in enrolling in Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP 2.0) insurance. The One-Stop Shop Info Line is (317) 605-1480.

Visit the Indiana State Department of Health at [www.StateHealth.in.gov](http://www.StateHealth.in.gov). Follow the Indiana State Department of Health on Twitter at [@StateHealthIN](https://twitter.com/StateHealthIN) and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/isdh1](https://www.facebook.com/isdh1). Use the hashtag #INstopHIV to follow the outbreak response on Twitter.

Hoosiers who do not have health care coverage or access to a doctor are encouraged to check availability for the new Healthy Indiana Plan—HIP 2.0—by visiting [www.HIP.IN.gov](http://www.HIP.IN.gov) or calling 1-877-GET-HIP-9.

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