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HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS TO BE RETESTED FOR HIV

INDIANAPOLIS—State health officials announced today they will begin retesting nearly 300 high-risk individuals who have had contact with people who tested positive for HIV in the southeastern Indiana HIV outbreak.

“The number of people impacted by the HIV outbreak in southeastern Indiana has remained steady in recent months, but that could change as we retest individuals who are at high risk of infection,” said State Health Commissioner Jerome Adams, M.D., M.P.H. “Anyone who has tested negative in the past but continues to engage in high-risk behavior should get retested so they know their status and can receive treatment if they have HIV or start preventive therapy.”

At the request of the Indiana State Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is sending 10 Disease Intervention Specialists to help retest high-risk individuals who have not had a repeat HIV test within the last 30 days. Retesting will begin on Saturday, November 7, and end on November 22.

HIV can take up to three months to diagnose, depending on the test that is used and how long it takes the virus to multiply in a person’s body. Individuals who have engaged in high-risk behavior such as needle sharing and unprotected sex are advised to get tested and then retested every two to three months as long as they are engaging in those behaviors.

“A negative HIV test can create a false sense of security,” Dr. Adams said. “HIV is preventable, and this is the time to be vigilant, not complacent.”

As part of the retesting blitz, care coordinators will be available at the Scott County Health Department’s one-stop shop to link anyone who tests positive to care. The Scott County Health Department also will operate its syringe exchange from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays during the retesting period.

Disease Intervention Specialists will provide education about HIV and information about where to obtain preventive treatment to everyone who is tested.

For HIV testing locations and information about HIV Care Coordination, individuals are encouraged to call the HIV Services Hotline at (866) 588-4948.

To date, 181 people have tested positive for HIV in the southeastern Indiana outbreak.

To prevent HIV infection, avoid:

- injection drug use;
- sharing or re-using needles or works;
- engaging in unprotected sex; and,
- engaging in sex with commercial sex workers.

Individuals seeking help with substance abuse should call the national 24-hour addiction hotline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). This hotline provides confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year information service, in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing mental health and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups and community-based organizations. Callers can also order free publications and other information.

To learn more about the link between HIV infection and drug abuse, visit the National Institute on Drug Abuse at <http://hiv.drugabuse.gov/index.html>.

Visit the Indiana State Department of Health at www.StateHealth.in.gov for important health and safety information, or follow us on Twitter at [@StateHealthIN](https://twitter.com/StateHealthIN) and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/isdh1.

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 or calling 1-877-GET-HIP-9.

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