

**NEWS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Health Department urges residents to get tested for HIV

**(Lawrence, KS)** – In conjunction with World AIDS Day on Dec. 1, the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department encourages residents to get educated about the disease and to get tested.

The Health Department offers free, confidential HIV counseling and testing in its clinic at 200 Maine St. No appointment is necessary. Testing is provided on a walk-in basis during clinic hours:

- Mondays — 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
- Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays — 10 a.m.- 5 p.m.
- Wednesdays — 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

AIDS is a disease that weakens the immune system, gradually destroying the body's ability to fight infections and certain cancers. The human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, causes it. HIV is spread most often through sexual contact, contaminated needles or syringes shared by drug users, infected blood or blood products, and from infected women to their babies at birth or through breastfeeding.

In the United States, 1.2 million people are living with HIV and one in eight of those are unaware of their HIV status, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Kansas, 73 percent of adults reported they've never had an HIV test, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

“Knowing your HIV status is critical. It's important to get tested early to help prevent spread of the disease as well as to help prevent the virus from becoming full-blown AIDS,” said Director of Clinic Services Kim Ens. If you have HIV, getting medical care and taking prescribed medication regularly helps you live a longer, healthier life and also lowers the chances of passing HIV on to others.

The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department provided 1,000 HIV tests during the past year.

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