



Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

MEDIA RELEASE

February 25, 2016

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Health Department Strongly Stresses Importance of HIV Testing

(Mason City) – The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health is strongly encouraging HIV testing for individuals at high risk of contracting the disease.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sent a media release on Tuesday reporting findings that half of black gay men and a quarter of Latino gay men are projected to be diagnosed with HIV within their lifetime. That's 1 in 2 black men who have sex with men (MSM) and 1 in 4 Latino MSM in the US that will be diagnosed with HIV within their lifetime. These findings are terribly alarming.

HIV is a virus that causes AIDS. HIV weakens several body systems and destroys the body's immune system, making it easier for life threatening cancers or infections to invade the body.

"HIV is a preventable disease," said Betty Krones, Disease Prevention Specialist at the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health. "Condoms, testing, and treatment are the best weapons we have against the disease."

HIV testing at the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health is available to anyone age 14 and older. Testing is free to those with qualifying risk factors, or \$25 for those who do not qualify for the free test. Call Betty for an appointment at 641-421-9320.

Qualifying Risk Factors:

- Black or Hispanic.
- A history of trading sex for drugs or money, or have a partner who has this history.
- A history of IV drug use, or have a partner who has this history.
- A male who has sex with other men, or anyone who's partner is male and has sex with other men.
- Received an STD diagnosis in the last 12 months.
- Unprotected sex with someone who had been diagnosed with HIV.

For more information about HIV testing or to schedule an appointment, contact Betty at 641-421-9320, or visit our website at www.cghealth.com.

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**Half of black gay men and a quarter of Latino gay men projected to be diagnosed within their lifetime.* (2016). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention online newsroom. Retrieved February 24, 2016, from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/2016/croi-press-release-risk.html>