



MEDIA RELEASE

July 12, 2016

Contact: Kara Vogelsson, Interim Marketing & Public Information Officer, (641) 421-9343

## Health Department Urges You to Take PRIDE in Knowing Your HIV Status

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

According to the 2016 County Health Rankings and the National HIV Surveillance System, HIV prevalence in Cerro Gordo County is in the top 25% for Iowa counties\*. We also know that people in specific groups have a higher risk than others. Those include Black (African American) or Hispanic (Latino) people, men who have sex with men and people who inject drugs.

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 injection drug use, or have a partner who has this history.
- A male who has sex with other men, or anyone whose 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](http://www.cghealth.com).

###

\*County Health Rankings and Roadmap: Iowa HIV Prevalence. Retrieved from  
[http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/iowa/2016/measure/outcomes/61/data?sort=desc-  
2](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/iowa/2016/measure/outcomes/61/data?sort=desc-2)