

# SCGOVHEALTHnews

Sarasota County Health and Human Services | Florida Department of Health [scgov.net](http://scgov.net) |  
941.861.5000 | TV

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**Media Contact:** Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852; [Dianne\\_Shipley@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:Dianne_Shipley@doh.state.fl.us)

## **National Latino AIDS Awareness Day – Take the HIV Test!**

Free HIV testing is available in Sarasota on Thursday, Oct. 15 as part of the seventh annual Latino AIDS Awareness Day. This observance culminates the celebration of Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month, and marks what has become an annual campaign in the fight against AIDS. For many Hispanics/Latinos, it is a day of hope for the future of a world without AIDS. The theme for this year's observance is "United we can: Stop HIV and prevent AIDS".

Hispanics comprise 15 percent of the total U.S. population, yet 19 percent of the people living with AIDS in the U.S. are Hispanic. Despite the fact that HIV/AIDS is preventable, HIV infection is a tragic fact of life in Hispanic/Latino communities. Even though medications that can delay the onset of AIDS symptoms are available, nearly half of Hispanics diagnosed with AIDS learned of their infection within 12 months of testing positive for HIV.

Knowing your HIV status can help you get into medical treatment earlier, take steps to stay healthy and keep from spreading the virus to others. Protect your baby and your loved ones by taking the HIV test, and practice the ABCs; Abstinence, Be in a mutually monogamous relationship, and use Condoms.

HIV testing results are kept strictly confidential and are not shared with anyone, including family members, significant others, employers or landlords. Health care and treatment options will be made available for those who test positive.

OraQuick Rapid HIV Antibody testing is available with preliminary test results in 20 minutes. The Sarasota County Health Department and other HANS agencies also offer a traditional blood test, as well as the fast and easy OraSure HIV test with results available in about two weeks. "There are no needles involved and it's as easy as brushing your teeth," says Gary Ervin, Health Services Representative with the Sarasota County Health Department's Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) program. "If you've never been tested, or had unprotected sex or shared a needle since your last test, now is the time to get an HIV test."

HIV Testing will be available on Thursday, Oct. 15 at the following locations:

**Free Rapid OraQuick HIV Testing – Preliminary test results available in 20 minutes**

8 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Sarasota County Health and Human Services Center  
2200 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota 34237

**Free Rapid OraQuick HIV Testing – Preliminary test results available in 20 minutes**

9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Salvation Army (Look for the Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)  
1400 Tenth Street, Sarasota 34236

For more information on HIV testing opportunities, call the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 or visit the HIV/AIDS Network of Southwest Florida (HANS) Web site [www.hivsarasota.org](http://www.hivsarasota.org)

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