

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Get yourself tested during STD Awareness Month

Planned Parenthood celebrates National Get Yourself Tested Month with a week of free testing

TRENTON, NJ — One in two sexually active people will get a sexually transmitted disease (STD) in their lifetime. That's half – and most don't even know it.

April is STD Awareness Month, a national campaign to increase awareness about education, treatment, and prevention of STDs. In tandem with STD Awareness Month, Planned Parenthood of Northern, Central and Southern New Jersey (PPNCSNJ) is celebrating **Get Yourself Tested Month (GYT)**, with a week of free STD testing, themed education programs, and community events all across the state.

“Everyone deserves to have their sex life be healthy and pleasurable,” said Triste Brooks, president and CEO of PPNCSNJ. “Getting comfortable talking with your partner about STDs, getting tested, and staying safe are all integral parts of having a smart, empowered, and healthy sex life.”

There are still a lot of myths and misunderstandings about having an STD. Getting an STD or having a partner with an STD is extremely common. What's important is making sure that no matter what your status, you're able to take care of your sexual health. All STDs, even HIV, are treatable, and many are curable. Early treatment can help prevent serious, lifelong health problems that can result from untreated STDs. But you can't get treatment if you don't know your status. And the only way to know your status is to get tested.

To encourage all New Jerseyans to get tested, PPNCSNJ is hosting **Free STD Testing Week from April 16-21**. At all of PPNCSNJ's 17 health centers across the state, individuals can walk in during normal business hours that week to receive free testing for HIV, gonorrhea, and chlamydia. PPNCSNJ always offers free testing for people under the age of 24. For this week, we will be expanding the service to people of all ages.

In addition to our health services, PPNCSNJ's trained educators, as well as Planned Parenthood supporters across the state, will help to get the word out about our STD testing services by engaging the local community. At themed education programs, our educators will share the message that access to safer sex – including tools, testing, and treatment – and education about STDs are the best ways to ensure that people of all ages stay healthy and safe. And on Friday nights throughout April, you might find a group of Planned Parenthood volunteer activists in pink handing out goody bags filled with condoms and STD testing information during “condom crawls” at downtown bars and restaurants. In Asbury Park, New Brunswick, Princeton, and more, activists will make sure people know that Planned Parenthood is here to help you stay safe and healthy no matter who you are or where you live.

All of these activities are taking place just over one month after Governor Phil Murphy signed a family planning funding restoration bill that reinstated \$7.45 million in reproductive health care funding cuts to providers across the state, including Planned Parenthood. After nearly a decade of slashed funding, New Jersey was on the brink of a public health crisis. Cases of bacterial STDs increased by 35 percent since the funding was initially cut by Governor Chris Christie during his first year in office. Family planning providers, such as Planned Parenthood, play a critical role in testing for STDs and providing access to care.

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Planned Parenthood of Northern, Central, and Southern New Jersey, Inc. (PPNCSNJ) provides quality, affordable and accessible sexual health care to the women, men, and teens of New Jersey through reproductive health services and sexuality education. We advocate for the privacy, dignity and right of each individual to control his/her sexual and reproductive health.