

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GYT: GET YOURSELF TESTED

Planned Parenthood, MTV, Kaiser Family Foundation Promote STD Testing Using Multimedia Campaign to Reduce STD Infection Rates in West Virginia

VIENNA, WV — The Vienna health center of Planned Parenthood Health Systems, Inc. (PPHS) is participating in “GYT: Get Yourself Tested,” a nationwide campaign with MTV and the Kaiser Family Foundation to increase testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among those under 25 years of age.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, West Virginia ranks 48th nationally in cases of Chlamydia based upon reported cases in 2007. West Virginia ranks 38th in reported cases of gonorrhea and 47th in reported cases of syphilis. Despite the relatively favorable rankings compared with other states, the rates of STDs in West Virginia remain unacceptably high.

GYT kicks off with a mix of promotions on-air, online and in the real world that will unfold during the month of April in recognition of National STD Awareness Month. The primary on-line headquarters of the campaign, GYT09.org, is providing comprehensive information about STDs and will direct users to the nearest testing location simply by entering a zip code. A mobile companion to GYT09.org, the GYT short code (49809), provides details about local testing locations to mobile phones by texting a zip code.

Throughout April and beyond, the PPHS Vienna health center is offering affordable testing and treatment of STDs. High school students who come in for annual preventive health exams are receiving Chlamydia and gonorrhea testing at no charge.

“Most people would be shocked to hear that, by age 25, one in two sexually active young people will have an STD. This is not just a statistic. It’s the reality that Planned Parenthood health centers face every day,” said David Nova, PPHS Vice President. “The GYT campaign is designed to teach the public what Planned Parenthood already knows — that affordable testing and treatment plus education are the tools teens and young people need to stay healthy and safe.”

An all-star collective of pop culture personalities are carrying the GYT message far and wide, appearing in a series of attention-getting on-air and online promotions on MTV and other

MTV Network properties this month; blasting out GYT on Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms; wearing GYT on their chest and sleeves; and of course, going to health centers in order to get tested for STDs.

From OMG to LOL, the acronyms of young people's everyday vernacular act as common methods of communication. By mimicking mobile and Web slang, GYT encourages young people to talk about sexual health and get tested for STDs. GYT helps internalize the risk of STDs and eliminates taboos and stigmas surrounding STDs and STD testing.

Throughout the GYT Campaign, STD testing and treatment services is available at PPHS's lone West Virginia health center.

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Planned Parenthood Health Systems, Inc. is a private, nonprofit family planning agency that respects and protects the rights of each man and woman to make informed reproductive decisions. Our mission is to provide accessible, high-quality health care and information to clients and to serve as advocate and educator to the community on responsible human sexuality. We have offices in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia.