

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**BE GREATER THAN AIDS: GET YOURSELF TESTED WEEK
PROMOTES FREE HIV TESTING IN 10 CITIES
FROM JUNE 19 – JUNE 27, 2010**

*Ciara, Kelly Rowland, MTV's Sway Calloway and New Boyz Join Effort to Help
Get Out the Word about HIV and STD Testing*

New York, NY, June 15, 2010 – The first [*Be Greater Than AIDS: Get Yourself Tested Week*](#) will kick off on June 19th, calling on Americans, especially young people, to get tested for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the week leading up to National HIV Testing Day (June 27th). The campaign will spotlight 10 cities -- Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Newark, New York, and Washington D.C. --where free testing is available and other special events are taking place.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), one in five of the more than one million Americans living with HIV aren't aware that they have it. HIV and other more common STDs often show no symptoms and thus frequently go undiagnosed. Testing and treatment can save lives and reduce the further spread of HIV and other STDs.

The special week long promotion brings together [*GYT: Get Yourself Tested*](#), a year-round campaign spearheaded by [MTV](#), the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#), the [CDC](#) and [Planned Parenthood](#) to increase testing for STDs, including HIV, among young people, and [Greater Than AIDS](#), a national movement launched last year by Kaiser and the [Black AIDS Institute](#) to respond to the domestic AIDS crisis, in particular the disproportionate epidemic facing Black Americans. Gilead Sciences provided financial resources to support the promotion.

"Testing is about community. We will never get the HIV epidemic under control until everyone understands that we are all in this together," said Frank Oldham, Jr., President and CEO of the [National Association of People With AIDS](#). "Getting tested should be part of every American's routine health care, from adolescence through senior years, and no one should be stopped from getting tested by fear or shame."

Elements of *Be Greater than AIDS: Get Yourself Tested Week* include:

- **Free HIV Testing and events in 10 Cities:** Young people can log on to www.GYTNow.org to find locations offering free HIV testing during the week. Additionally, [Planned Parenthood](#) health centers in select cities will open their doors to offer free and low cost HIV testing on select days during the week. Counseling on other STDs will also be provided. Select Walgreens stores in Chicago will also offer free HIV testing on June 25th and will support the effort with in-store promotions. For more information about locations and times, visit: www.GYTnow.org

- **Celebs Talk Testing:** Ciara, Kelly Rowland, MTV News Correspondent Sway Calloway, New Boyz and other celebrities will urge young people to take action to know their status in a series of new TV and radio public service ads (PSAs) produced by MTV and in some local market interviews and events.
- **Media Partners:** A cross-section of media partners, including MTV, Clear Channel Radio, CBS Radio, and Radio One, among others are providing significant airtime for the campaign's PSAs. Some other ways the media partners are helping to get out the message include:
 - Clear Channel Radio will debut on June 19 "*I Am Greater Than AIDS*," a half hour special radio show hosted by renowned entertainer, author and radio personality Steve Harvey.
 - In Atlanta, HOT 107.9 (Radio One) will kick off the week at its annual Birthday Bash, June 19th, with an on-stage call out by talent and promotions throughout the Birthday Bash arena.
 - In Washington, DC, WPGC – 95.5 (CBS Radio) DJ, Anji Corely will get tested on air as part of the promotion.
- **New Mobile App:** MTV will unveil a new iPhone application based on *Pos or Not*, an interactive game initially launched online with the Kaiser Family Foundation that challenges stereotypes and breaks down the barriers that may prevent people from talking openly about HIV/AIDS, getting tested, and using protection. People from across the U.S. – half of whom are living with HIV and half who are not – share parts of their lives for "Pos or Not" by divulging their HIV status to help dispel myths and misconceptions about HIV and AIDS. Players confront their own HIV stereotypes as they guess whether a profiled participant is positive or negative based only on a photo and a few personal details, such as what they do on the weekends or their favorite kind of music. To date, the game has been played 10.1 million times online.
- **Targeted Online Resources:** In addition, a customized web page at www.GYTNOW.org provides information about free testing and events in each city as well as other informational and community resources. Beyond the 10 cities, users can use the site's testing location finder to identify local resources anywhere in the country by simply entering a zip code. The site also offers a multitude of resources including facts about STDs and talking tips on how to discuss STD testing with partners, parents, and health care providers.

Be Greater Than AIDS: Get Yourself Tested Week is supported by the National Association of People With AIDS (NAPWA), which launched the first National HIV Testing Day in 1995, along the National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) and the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD). State and local health departments identified free testing locations and are helping to support the effort with additional outreach and special events.

For more information about *Be Greater Than AIDS: Get Yourself Tested Week*, visit www.GYTNOW.org.

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An extension of MTV and the Kaiser Family Foundation's Emmy and Peabody-winning "It's Your (Sex) Life" partnership to promote responsible decision making about sexual health, **GYT: Get Yourself Tested** encourages routine STD testing. GYT is developed together with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Gilead Sciences provides additional financial support. For more information visit <http://www.GYTNOW.org>.



The **Greater Than AIDS** movement responds to the AIDS crisis in the United States, in particular to the severe and disproportionate epidemic among Black Americans. Through a national media campaign and community outreach, *Greater Than AIDS* aims to elevate the public's knowledge and understanding of HIV/AIDS and confront the stigma surrounding the disease. It is developed in support of *Act Against AIDS*, a multi-year effort by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention to help refocus attention on HIV/AIDS in the U.S. Major media companies are working together to distribute *Greater Than AIDS* public service ads and related content. Special promotions provide more in-depth coverage. State and local health departments and AIDS offices, AIDS service organizations and other community groups developing targeted efforts to reach priority groups and local populations. Corporate partners are helping to cross promote and extend the reach of the media campaign. *Greater Than AIDS* is overseen by the Kaiser Family Foundation with expert guidance from the Black AIDS Institute. For more information, visit: www.greaterthan.org

Contact:

MTV, Janice Gatti, 212-846-8852, janice.gatti@mtvstaff.com

The Kaiser Family Foundation, Rakesh Singh, 650-234-9232, rsingh@kff.org

Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Diane Quest, 202-973-4882, diane.quest@ppfa.org

Local Contacts and Quotes:

ATLANTA

Planned Parenthood Southeast, Leola Reis, 404-688-9305 x 312; Dominique Doyle, 404-688-9305 x 339

Georgia Health Department, Ravae Graham, 404-651-7774, rgraham.DMA.GA_DMA@dhr.state.us

CHICAGO

Planned Parenthood of Illinois, Lara Philips, 312-592-6820

Chicago Department of Public Health, Michael Hunter, 312-747-9191, Hunter_Michael@cdph.org

"Chicago has been hit hard by HIV and AIDS, but we have seen a great deal of progress and success in HIV testing," stated Christopher Brown, Assistant Commissioner for the STI/HIV Division for the Chicago Department of Public Health. "During NHTD, the Health Department will test hundreds of people in a variety of traditional and non-traditional settings, such as our 'testing villages' during community festivals."

CLEVELAND

Planned Parenthood of Northeast Ohio, Joanne Green, 330-535-2674 x 1304

Cleveland Department of Public Health, David Merriman, dmerriman@city.cleveland.oh.us

DALLAS

Texas Department of State Health Services, Carrie Williams, 512-458-7119, carrie.williams@dshs.state.tx.us

HOUSTON

Planned Parenthood of Houston & Southeast Texas, Rochelle Tafolla, 713-831-6573; Laura Leon 713-831-6525

Houston Department of Health and Human Services, Barry Barnes, 713-794-9129, Barry.Barnes@cityofhouston.net

LOS ANGELES

Planned Parenthood Los Angeles, Sam Wald, 213.284.3200 x3554

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Los Angeles Department of Public Health, True Ann Pawluk, (213) 351-8002, tpawluk@ph.lacounty.gov

MIAMI

Planned Parenthood of South Florida and the Treasure Coast, Judith A. Selzer, 561-472-9940

Miami-Dade County Health Department, Olga Connor, 786-336-1276, olga_connor@doh.state.fl.us

NEW YORK

Planned Parenthood of New York City, Erica Sackin, 212-274-7294

NYC Health Department, Celina De Leon, 212-788-5290, pressoffice@health.nyc.gov

"Nearly 4,000 New Yorkers are diagnosed with HIV each year," said Dr. Monica Sweeney, Assistant Commissioner for HIV/AIDS at the NYC Health Department. "Nearly a quarter of them are already sick with AIDS – meaning they may have gone undiagnosed for a decade or more. Knowing your HIV status is one of the best things you can do for your health and to stop the spread of HIV. People who test negative can learn how to stay that way by practicing safer sex. People who test positive can get the treatment they need and take special precautions to avoid infecting others. We thank the Kaiser Family Foundation and MTV for bringing the GYT campaign to New York City. I've had my HIV test. If you haven't, get yours today."

NEWARK

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WASHINGTON DC

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