

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FREE HIV TESTS & LOW COST STD TESTS FOR ANY ST. LOUIS AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT **Planned Parenthood is Committed to Keeping Teens Healthy and Safe**

WHAT: Free HIV tests and discounted STD tests for any area high school student

WHEN: NOW through June 30, 2009

WHERE: Any of Planned Parenthood's six St. Louis health centers

St. Louis is once again leading the nation in rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea, [according to the most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). This new information, coupled with the fact that one in four teenage girls is infected with a sexually transmitted disease – with rates as high as one out of every two African American teenage girls, reinforces the fact that more must be done to reduce these numbers in St. Louis.

Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region will continue to offer **free HIV testing to any area high school student** with a valid student ID through June 30, 2009. **High school females can also receive free chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis tests while males can receive the tests for \$25.** Normally these services would cost \$65 a person, but through generous new funding, Planned Parenthood is able to offer these services at dramatically reduced prices.

“Half of all teens are sexually active despite our state’s support of abstinence-only sex education,” says Mary Kogut, Vice President of Patient Services. “We need to make a bigger commitment to the teens in our community and it starts by offering tests and treatment at affordable costs and in a confidential setting.”

Also, within the past month, [the National Center for Health Statistics also reported that Missouri’s teen birth rate went up 8% in 2006](#), the most recent year of the report. Planned Parenthood affiliates in Missouri will work with the new governor and legislature to pass the Prevention First Act in 2009. The bill has been introduced in each session for the past four years but it has never passed.

“This Act would ensure access to affordable contraception, require that comprehensive and age-appropriate sex education is taught in public schools and restore critical family planning services that were cut during former Governor Blunt’s term in office,” says Paula Gianino, President and CEO. “These services and programs will improve the lives and health of our teens, and they will save taxpayers millions of dollars. For every dollar we invest in prevention services, we save Missourians nearly four dollars in health and social service funding.”

Planned Parenthood offers all of its services on a sliding fee scale and in a confidential setting. St. Louis area teens are encouraged to call Planned Parenthood for more information about testing, and other sexual and reproductive medical services, including contraception and emergency contraception.

For more information, call 1-800-230-PLAN or visit plannedparenthood.org/stlouis.

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