

STATE SENATOR • HANSEN CLARKE • 1ST DISTRICT

Clarke Press Release

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Senator Hansen Clarke Takes HIV Test at the State Capitol Today to Help Increase Public Understanding, Promote National HIV Testing Day

Clarke: AIDS Awareness Must Start With Self-Awareness

LANSING-In a room off the Senate Floor, Senator Hansen Clarke (D-Detroit) was administered an HIV test today as part of National HIV Testing Day (NHTD).

"I took this HIV test today to show that it's quick, painless and nothing to be ashamed of," said Sen. Clarke, who himself has a fear of needles. "There's a stigma associated with even taking an HIV test, but it's a disease, just like cancer or diabetes, and everyone should get tested. The 'not me' mentality and the fear of taking an HIV test are partly why infection rates in heterosexual individuals, especially women, continue to rise despite increased awareness of the disease."

National HIV Testing Day is an annual campaign produced by the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA-US) to encourage at-risk individuals to receive voluntary HIV counseling and testing. This is the tenth year of National HIV Testing Day. For more information, visit <http://www.napwa.org/hivtestinfo/>.

"A positive test for HIV is not the end of the world, but is the beginning of a new chapter in one's life," Clarke added. "AIDS awareness must start with self-awareness. Not knowing is the deadliest disease of all, and that's why I encourage everyone to get tested, just as I have today."

According to an article in the Lansing State Journal today, the number of people living with HIV and AIDS in the Lansing area is up more than 30 percent, to 493 from 377 in 2003. Statewide, cases are up almost 20 percent. The article also noted that free HIV tests are being offered today as part of National HIV Testing Day.

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