



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 27, 2017

Today, on National HIV Testing Day, we encourage people to take the first step – discovery – in fighting the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the virus that causes Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV has been one of the world’s most significant health challenges since it was first identified 35 years ago. Greater awareness through testing is crucial in defeating HIV and AIDS. Thankfully, because of progress in testing and treatment, we have never been closer to conquering the epidemic.

Today, there are 1.1 million people living with HIV in America, 15 percent of whom do not yet know their HIV status. Among young Americans infected by the virus, only 50 percent know they have contracted it. HIV carriers who do not know they have the virus put themselves and others at risk, missing out on life-saving treatment and possibly, inadvertently infecting others. People who are not currently receiving treatment transmit more than 90 percent of infections, as they do not benefit from treatments that dramatically reduce the amount of virus in their bodies. That is why the key to interrupting the chain of transmission is a simple, routine HIV test.

Thanks to concerted efforts to diagnose and treat more and more people, Americans living with HIV today are living longer, healthier lives than ever before. My Administration is determined to build upon these improvements and continue supporting domestic and global health programs that prioritize testing and treatment for HIV/AIDS.

On National HIV Testing Day, I encourage Americans to learn their HIV status. Together, we can protect ourselves and promote the health and safety of all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be Barack Obama's signature, written in a cursive style.