



**THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

**Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802  
340-774-0001**

**NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY**

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**BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**

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**A PROCLAMATION**

National HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Testing Day (NHTD) is an annual campaign coordinated by the National Association of People with AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) to encourage people of all ages to *Take the Test, Take Control*. National HIV Testing Day reminds us that HIV testing saves lives. This year marks the 18<sup>th</sup> National HIV Testing Day with support from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and [www.AIDS.gov](http://www.AIDS.gov). The Virgin Islands Department of Health, in a collaborative effort with local organizations such as the Virgin Islands Housing Authority, local schools, community based organizations, and the greater community-at-large, will observe National HIV Testing Day on June 27, 2012, to implement strategies which allow people to be diagnosed early for HIV.

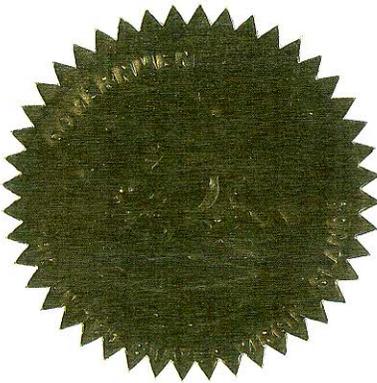
At least 1 in 3 persons in the United States who test positive for HIV is tested too late to benefit from the full advantage of treatment. Forty-five percent (45%) of those living in the Virgin Islands who have tested positive for HIV were diagnosed with AIDS within twelve (12) months of their HIV diagnosis. Early HIV testing reduces the spread of disease, extends life expectancy, and reduces costs of care. Every new HIV infection prevented saves approximately \$367,000 in lifetime medical costs. Early testing and diagnosis is key to prevention as treatment has the most impact when HIV is identified early. Although the importance of HIV testing is undeniable, about 55% of American adults, aged 18–64, have never been tested for HIV. HIV testing and linkage to care are vital parts of a comprehensive strategy to identify all persons with HIV infections and to begin early intervention.

Nearly 1.2 million Americans are living with HIV infection, and approximately one in five do not know it. In the United States Virgin Islands, approximately 563 persons are living with HIV infection. This amount represents 58% of persons ever diagnosed with HIV infection in the Virgin Islands. More than 400 persons or 42% have died from HIV/AIDS in the Territory. CDC recommendations include:

- Everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 should be tested for HIV at least once in their lifetime
- Those at increased risk—such as gay and bisexual men, injection drug users and their sex partners, persons who exchange sex for money or drugs, partners of HIV infected persons, or persons with multiple sexual partners—should be tested at least annually.
- Pregnant women should get tested early in their pregnancy so steps can be taken that will prevent transmission of HIV to their babies.
- Testing is an essential first step to link persons with HIV infection to medical care and ongoing support to improve their health and help them maintain safer behaviors.

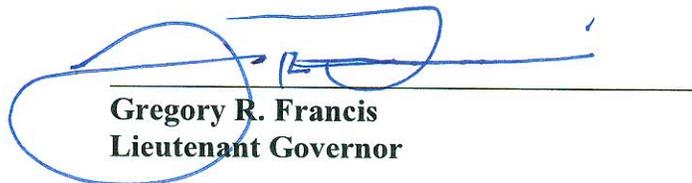
**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, John P. de Jongh, Jr., Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, do hereby proclaim June 27, 2012, as National HIV Testing Day within the United States Virgin Islands. I encourage all residents to take part in activities and observances designed to raise awareness and the level of understanding of HIV/AIDS, get tested and know their status, and to join in the effort to encourage behavioral change to prevent the further spread of HIV.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and cause the Seal of the Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States to be affixed at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, this 11<sup>th</sup> day of June 2012, A.D.



  
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**John P. de Jongh, Jr.**  
Governor

Attest:

  
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**Gregory R. Francis**  
Lieutenant Governor