

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) today recognized the important mission of National HIV Testing Day.

“The Washington Metropolitan area is suffering from an AIDS epidemic and it is critical that we continue to raise awareness about this disease,” Hoyer said. “The federal government should partner with local advocates to encourage testing so we can begin to get a grip on the challenges facing our community.”

“National HIV Testing Day is an opportunity to remind the Washington community that HIV/AIDS is still a threat and that everyone is at risk,” said Donald Blanchon, chief executive officer of Whitman-Walker Clinic, a nationally recognized non-profit health care provider of HIV care and social services. “There are thousands of people in our area who are living with HIV/AIDS and up to one-third of them do not know it. It is vital to your health and to the health of your loved ones that you get tested, know your HIV status and take steps to protect yourself.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now estimate that more than one million Americans are living with HIV. Washington DC has the highest rate of new AIDS cases per 100,000 in the United States—a rate that is 11 times the national average. Regrettably, up to one-third of those infected do not know they are HIV-positive.

Hoyer has consistently fought for increased funding for health care and support services through the Ryan White CARE Act Programs in the Labor-Health and Human Services Appropriations bill. In addition, he has expressed his strong concern that Congress continues to underfund Ryan White, stalling progress in this critical area.

During the last two years, Hoyer has helped secure over \$1.6 million in federal funds for Whitman-Walker Clinic. The funds were used for program support and upgrades to its technology infrastructure, including an electronic medical records system in order to better manage patient care, and upgrades to billing and financial accounting systems. “These investments helped assist Whitman-Walker in its efforts to provide high-quality comprehensive and accessible health care and community services throughout the region.”

Whitman-Walker Clinic marked the 12th annual National HIV Testing Day with free HIV testing in the District of Columbia, Virginia and Maryland.

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