



# spotlight on health

## National HIV Testing Promoted By AmeriCorps

(NAPSA)—The idea of taking control of your own health is a big part of the National AIDS Fund AmeriCorps program. It was the first national AmeriCorps Program focused solely on HIV/AIDS. The program grew out of President Clinton's initiative to encourage young people to serve communities in exchange for educational awards and a small living stipend. The program is funded through a unique partnership between the federally funded Corporation for National and Community Service and private supporters including the MetLife Foundation.

Members provide community-based HIV-prevention education, HIV testing and counseling, and quality-of-life assistance to people living with HIV/AIDS. This contribution directly supports the AIDS service infrastructure—ensuring that individuals and families living with HIV/AIDS get critical services. By providing HIV prevention and care services, members (most of whom are young people) serve as powerful peer educators, administer HIV counseling and testing, and provide case management and supportive services. Each member engages in what the academicians call “service learning” or “experiential learning”—activities that often foster a lifetime of commitment to community service.

During the 2005-2006 program year, six cities host AmeriCorps

**TAKE THE TEST, TAKE CONTROL—HIV testing is a critical first step in taking control and responsibility for one's health.**



members at the following service sites:

- **Charlotte, North Carolina,**
- **Chicago, Illinois,**
- **Detroit, Michigan,**
- **Indianapolis, Indiana,**
- **Tulsa, Oklahoma,**
- **Washington, D.C.**

Every year, the AmeriCorps teams work with community mobilization efforts in these six cities to promote National HIV Testing Day. Because it is so important to both prevention and treatment to know your HIV status, organizations such as the National Association of People With AIDS (NAPWA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health departments join forces with local health advocates and AmeriCorps members to promote the testing campaign. Each year, the day is promoted as a way of getting people who are at risk of HIV infection to learn about their HIV status.

It is estimated that approximately 250,000 Americans are living with HIV but are unaware of it. The campaign for this year shares the message “Take the Test, Take Control” with a diverse group of people and communities nationwide.

Learn more at [www.napwa.org](http://www.napwa.org).