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## COUPLES TESTING SET TO REDUCE HIV

*Two sites launch new project*



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**Lee County, Fla.** – The Florida Department of Health in Lee County and Source of Light and Hope are launching a Couples HIV Testing and Counseling pilot project to reduce the incidence of HIV in Lee County. The project is designed to encourage two or more people who are in or are planning to be in a sexual relationship to receive all elements of HIV testing and counseling together.

“This approach was not promoted in the past, due to privacy constraints,” said Valentino Clarke, regional HIV/AIDS coordinator. “We are excited to try it in Fort Myers. We expect it to enhance couples communication, and improve patient outcomes with early diagnosis and care.”

The couples’ project includes testing, prevention counseling, test results and linkage to follow-up services together. The approach is aligned with the goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and High Impact Prevention program.

CHTC is offered from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. the first and third Tuesday of the month by DOH-Lee staff at St. John the Apostle Church MCC, 3049 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers. CHTC is available from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday at Source of Light and Hope, 3903 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Fort Myers. Appointments are available by calling 239-334-7519.

The strategy has shown improved HIV prevention outcomes in Africa. For more information call Sindia De La Cruz at 239-461-6113 or go to <http://lee.floridahealth.gov>

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