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**For Immediate Release**

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## **QUICK-RESULT ORAL HIV TEST NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH CLINICS**

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. — On-the-spot testing for HIV has gotten much easier: The Butte County Public Health Department Clinics are now using the oral HIV test that gives results in 20 minutes. Until now, rapid HIV testing through the clinics has required pricking a person's finger to test a spot of blood. Now, the person being tested for HIV places an absorbent pad above the teeth and against the outer gum. The person then gently swabs their outer gums. In as little as 20 minutes, the oral HIV test will indicate if HIV antibodies are present.

Why is it so important to know your HIV status? "Testing is one of the most important means of stopping the spread of HIV and getting HIV-positive people into early care and treatment," says Butte County Health Officer Dr. Mark Lundberg. "It is important that individuals know that a positive test result is no longer a death sentence; however, finding out is critical to living a long and healthy life despite the infection and for preventing the spread of HIV to sexual partners."

While survival rates of individuals living with HIV/AIDS have increased over the last 30 years due to improved treatment, little progress has been made in increasing the number of cases diagnosed early. In Butte County, approximately 40 percent of people test very late in their HIV infection and either already have an AIDS diagnosis or progress to AIDS within one year of an HIV diagnosis. Individuals who test early in the course of their disease and are aware of their positive status are more likely to modify their risk behaviors and therefore, less likely to transmit the disease to another. They also have the opportunity to be treated at an earlier stage, which can prevent or delay progression to AIDS and AIDS-related complications. Effective treatment can also significantly reduce the chance of transmitting the virus to another.

About one out of five of the more than one million Americans living with HIV don't know it, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The medical community can help if individuals know their HIV status. For some people, signs and symptoms of HIV can remain hidden from a few months to many years. Even

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without symptoms, an individual could spread the infection without knowing it.

Oral HIV testing is available by same day or next day appointment at our Public Health Clinics in Chico or Oroville, Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm. Testing is FREE if you have Medi-Cal/CMSP or are Family PACT eligible. Private pay testing is also available. For more information or to schedule an appointment in Chico call: 879-3665 and in Oroville call: 538-7341.

To learn more about HIV/AIDS testing and/or any questions on how to protect yourself, please visit the Butte County Public Health website at [www.buttecounty.net/public health](http://www.buttecounty.net/public%20health) or call 1-877-STD-INFO.

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### **Butte County Public Health Department**

Our Mission: To protect the public through promoting individual, community and environmental health.