

For Immediate Release:

Boston Press Conference, Wed., Sept. 4th at 5:30 pm.

“Live” HIV Testing of Youth coming to Boston, Cambridge, Worcester and Fitchburg beginning Wednesday, Sept. 4th. Guinness World Record for “Largest Number of Youth Tested Publicly at One Time” Sept. 7th.

The first and only group in the U.S. that is conducting live HIV testing of youth in public venues is bringing its nationwide campaign to Massachusetts after pilot programs in Washington, D.C. and Virginia and will be setting a new Guinness World Record on Sept. 7th (www.teenaids.org).

Dr. John Chittick director of the 501 c 3 non-profit TeenAIDS-PeerCorps and former lecturer at Harvard, started public testing of young people 17 and older in late 2012. While controversial among some adults, youth embrace the free testing and live demonstrations. For most, it is the first they have heard about the OTC sale of home HIV Test Kits.

There will be a press conference on Wednesday evening, Sept. 4th starting at 5:30 at “The Living Room,” 101 Atlantic Ave., (Mercantile Wharf Building), Boston. Complimentary appetizers for press will be served. Mayor Menino’s Proclamation will be read.

“One out of every four new cases of HIV / AIDS now occurs among youths 13-24. This is an epidemic,” stated Chittick. “Traditional testing sites like hospitals and clinics are not attracting young people. 90% of teens refuse or choose not to get tested which means unsuspecting sexual partners are potentially getting infected.

To break the stigma surrounding testing, TeenAIDS is providing free testing of teens 17 and older using the HIV oral swab, home test kits that the FDA has mandated be sold OTC without a doctor’s prescription.

- On Saturday, September 7, a new Guinness World Record will be set in Fitchburg, Massachusetts: “The largest public HIV testing of youth at one time” using the FDA-approved home test kits and oral swabs. At 1:30 pm on Saturday in Riverfront Park, youth will volunteer to be tested in front of a live audience. Dr. Chittick counsels them and helpers demonstrate the simple test kits. Then teens self-administer the tests themselves. Tests require saliva taken by an oral swab and takes 20 minutes for results. No “HIV-positive” results are publicly released and youth are given a

confirmatory test and taken to a clinic to get on medications.

"We want to encourage groups everywhere to break the first record so that the number of youth getting tested grows exponentially to counteract the spreading HIV epidemic among sexually active youth," said Chittick. "AIDS no longer has to be a death sentence when discovered early on. Using public testing attracts curious youth and acts as a reality check that unprotected sex has consequences."

Chittick is a recognized expert in the youth AIDS field (Boston TV reports in the past have discussed his Global AIDS Walks to 86 countries).

- Thursday, Sept. 5th - TeenAIDS will be testing at Clark University (Red Square) in Worcester on 11-1 pm; in front of City Hall on Main Street 1:45-3:30; and at the Boys and Girls Club.
- Friday, Sept. 6th - Testing demonstrations will be conducted on the Boston Common (near Park St. T Stop) on from 11-1 pm – and in Harvard Square (Out of Town News T Stop) from 1:45-3 pm.
- Saturday, September 7th - There will be a 5K Road Race to raise funds to buy the Test kits on Sat., morning starting at 9 am at Cogshall Park in Fitchburg preceding the Guinness World Record event.

Dr. Chittick states, "Too many young people and adults don't understand that a serious problem exists and is growing. Parental denial that their children are at risk is unfortunate. We know that the majority of young people are sexually active by age 16 and most do not use condoms every time. With the new school year beginning, the spread of HIV transmission will be greater."

"National campaigns regarding testing youth by government agencies have failed for a variety of reasons," said Dr. Chittick. "90% of youth have never been tested -- either refusing or choosing not to go to formal testing centers despite official pleas to do so. As a result, at least 25% of young people with HIV do not know it and are spreading the virus to unsuspecting partners and future babies. When traditional methods no longer work well, a new model is needed and that is what we have begun."

He stated, "Adults are surprised when they see young people willingly consent to be tested in front of their peers including the news media."

For further information: Attend the press conference on Wed., Sept. 4th at

5:30, "The Living Room" 101 Atlantic Ave., Boston.

Dr. John Chittick, 978-855-1668; Matt Hawkins, 978-798-0037 or
teenaid@gmail.com

On a disturbing note, TeenAIDS has tried unsuccessfully to get local community testing organizations in the Fitchburg area that receive public funding to bring their mobile vans to test those youth that might choose a private test. The common argument against helping is that it is a Saturday and the overtime cost for two personnel is prohibitive and that funding is inadequate to cover more testing at outside events.

Dr. Chittick asks, "Isn't this the reason they have a mobile testing unit funded in large part by taxpayers? We are bringing them youth that are agreeable to getting tested."