



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Could YOU have an STD? Get Tested** *“Get Tested for STDs” Campaign kicks off in North Georgia*

Dalton (GA) January 11, 2008 ~ Anyone who is sexually active can be infected with a sexually transmitted disease (STD). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Georgia ranks third in the nation for the number of syphilis cases and is among the top 10 states for cases of gonorrhea and Chlamydia.

So, could YOU have an STD? Most people *do not know* they are infected with a sexually transmitted disease because they may not have any signs or symptoms. The only way a person *can* know they are infected is if they get tested for STDs by a healthcare provider. Therefore, the North Georgia Health District, part of the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) Division of Public Health, will officially begin a 3-month “Get Tested for STDs” campaign on Monday, January 14 in Cherokee, Fannin, Gilmer, Murray, Pickens and Whitfield Counties. “Get Tested” billboards have been strategically placed in the region, and public service announcements and posters in both English and Spanish urging people at risk to get tested for STDs [*link to posters: [www.nghd.org](http://www.nghd.org)*] are being distributed throughout the district.

Testing is vital. Certain types of STDs are easily treated and cured with antibiotics when detected early. If untreated, STDs can cause infertility, loss of pregnancies, blindness, and paralysis, and can even be serious enough to cause death.

When detectable, some common signs and symptoms of STDs include unusual discharge from the penis or vagina; pain in the pelvic area (below the stomach); burning

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*Cherokee: Canton (770) 345-7371 / Woodstock (770) 928-0133      Gilmer (706) 635-4363      Pickens (706) 253-2821*  
*Fannin (706) 632-3023      Murray (706) 695-4585      Whitfield (706) 279-9600*

or itching in or around the penis or vagina; pain during urination; pain during sexual intercourse; frequent urination, sores, bumps or blisters around the genitals, rectum or mouth; and rash on the palms of hands or bottoms of feet. Anyone with these signs or symptoms should seek immediate testing and treatment from their healthcare provider or from the local health department.

Individuals can take a five-minute survey to assess their STD risk by logging onto the website [www.stdwizard.org](http://www.stdwizard.org), developed by Expert Health Data Programming, Inc. (EHDP) and The Medical Institute for Sexual Health. The results are generated by an internet-based expert system and can be printed out to take to a healthcare provider. It also has links to state STD websites, STD testing locations and CDC fact sheets.

To get tested for sexually transmitted diseases, please contact your local health department [*phone numbers are listed below*] or your healthcare provider. More information on STD prevention and education is also available through your health department or healthcare provider, or you may call the National STD Hotline at 1-800-227-8922 or visit DHR's website at <http://health.state.ga.us/programs/std>.

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