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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NEW RAPID HIV TEST TO BE INTRODUCED IN HEALTH DEPARTMENT DISTRICT OFFICE**

Beginning April 20<sup>th</sup>, the Westchester County Department of Health will cut the waiting period for an HIV diagnosis from weeks to minutes by using the new HIV rapid test in its Yonkers District Office.

“While we have made tremendous strides in treating HIV disease and related infections, these advances mean little to someone who does not know that he or she is infected,” stated Westchester County Health Commissioner Joshua Lipsman, MD, MPH. “The new HIV rapid test will be performed on site from a fingerstick sample of blood and will provide a test result in as little as twenty minutes.”

“If a individual learns he or she is infected with HIV,” Dr. Lipsman continued, “our staff can immediately begin counseling the patient on necessary treatment to delay the onset of symptoms of AIDS. In the past, the opportunity for one-on-one counseling often was lost once the patient left the office, coming in weeks later for their results, if at all. If the use of this test in our Yonkers office is well-received and we can identify additional resources, we will expand availability of the HIV rapid test to our other sites.”

The Department of Health will continue to provide free HIV counseling and testing at its clinic sites in White Plains, New Rochelle and Yonkers through conventional testing, requiring a blood sample sent to an outside laboratory with a result provided in two to three weeks. As with all sexually transmitted diseases clinical services, HIV counseling and testing is provided free and on a walk-in basis at the three district office locations. HIV testing is offered both anonymously and confidentially.

For more information about HIV testing locations and times, please call the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000 or visit the website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).

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