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'Mad Hatter' festival offers free HIV testing Saturday

By Press Staff

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MIDDLETOWN >> In honor of National HIV Testing Day, the a city health center will offer free HIV testing this Saturday afternoon.

The Oasis Wellness Center and Community Health Center will host "The Mad Hatter's Testing Party" Saturday from noon until 4 p.m. at the South Green off Main Street.

In a prepared statement Wednesday, Eliza Cole, a CHC spokesperson, said Oasis would offer completely confidential testing.

"The family-friendly event will offer a relaxed, festival atmosphere with the goal of de-stigmatizing HIV testing," said Cole. "The event will include a local art show, live music and dancing. Guests are even encouraged to come dressed as their favorite Alice in Wonderland character."

AIGS.gov reported that, of the roughly 1.1 million Americans living with HIV, [one in six do not know they are infected](#).

"Getting tested is the first step to finding out if you have HIV," said Cole. "If you have HIV, getting medical care and taking medicines regularly helps you live a longer, healthier life and also lowers the changes of passing HIV on to others."

CHC offers "behavioral intervention programs," said Cole. Specifically, HIV Prevention Counseling and Comprehensive Risk Counseling & Services have earned CHC a certificate of commendation from the HIV Prevention Services Division of the state Department of Public Health.

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