

MEDIA RELEASE

Red Scarves Mark World AIDS Day

For Immediate Release — Tuesday, November 24, 2020

Timmins, Ontario — The Porcupine Health Unit will be highlighting the availability of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) testing and other blood-borne illnesses during AIDS awareness week November 24 to December 1 on World AIDS Day. HIV remains a provincial concern among people who use drugs, men who have sex with men (MSM), and people with multiple sexual partners. The Porcupine Health Unit encourages people who may be at risk to get tested and take measures to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV and other blood-borne illnesses.

“Testing is the only way to know if one has HIV. Testing can be done through a blood draw or a rapid finger prick test,” says Patrick Nowak, Harm Reduction nurse, “Learn more about prevention, testing, and treatment of HIV and other blood-borne illnesses such as Hepatitis C, testing could be indicated for you.”

For a second year, the Porcupine Health Unit will be distributing scarves in downtown cores across the region. According to Nowak, a northern spin on the symbolic red ribbon will help commemorate World AIDS Day in the area. “There was good feedback on last year’s initiative with the scarves,” says Nowak. “Each scarf will include an information card that highlights HIV prevention and some information on testing. Testing for HIV is fast, anonymous, and free.” He added that any remaining scarves will be gathered and given to community members in need.

The Porcupine Health Unit is located in Northeastern Ontario, serving the entire Cochrane District and Hornepayne, in Algoma District. The main office is in Timmins, Ontario, with branch offices in Cochrane, Hearst, Hornepayne, Iroquois Falls, Kapuskasing, Matheson, Moosonee and Smooth Rock Falls.

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