



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### Contact:

Mike Mullet

Community Relations Director

(770) 265-4250

[michaelmullet@highlandrivers.org](mailto:michaelmullet@highlandrivers.org)

### **Highland Rivers offering free HIV and Hepatitis C testing, Saturday, February 13**

*Rapid tests will provide results in approximately 30 minutes*

ROME, Georgia – January 28, 2016 – Highland Rivers Health will offer free testing for HIV and Hepatitis C, Saturday, February 13, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., at its Floyd clinic, 6 Mathis Drive in Rome. The rapid tests will provide same-day results in approximately 30 minutes.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 50,000 new HIV infections are diagnosed each year in the U.S. Although men who have sex with men (MSM) bear the greatest burden of HIV infection, African Americans and women also have an increased risk of infection. Many people with HIV may not know they are infected, which increases their risk of transmitting it to others.

Like HIV, many people with Hepatitis C are unaware they are infected because they currently have no symptoms. However, the CDC reports some 3.5 million Americans have chronic Hepatitis C infection, which can cause serious health problems including cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) or liver cancer. People who have injected drugs, even one time, or have HIV, can have an increased risk for Hepatitis C infection.

“Knowing your HIV and Hepatitis C status is one of the most important things you can do to protect your health, and equally important, the health of those you care about most,” said Mike Mullet, Highland Rivers Health community relations director. “We wanted to make it simple for people to learn their status by providing tests at no cost with results available while you wait.”

Highland Rivers’ testing day falls between two related health observances: National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on February 7, and National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on March 10. Everyone is welcome at Highland Rivers’ testing day, however you must be 18 or older to be tested. There will be light refreshments and those tested can enter to win one of three \$25.00 gift cards. The Rome Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will be assisting Highland Rivers at the event.

### **About Highland Rivers Health**

Highland Rivers Health provides comprehensive treatment and support services for adults, children and families affected by mental health disorders, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and addictive diseases. One of the state’s largest public safety net providers, Highland Rivers operates 28 treatment facilities across a 4,400-square mile area of Northwest Georgia that includes Bartow, Cherokee, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Haralson, Murray,

Paulding, Pickens, Polk, and Whitfield counties, and serves nearly 16,000 consumers annually. Highland Rivers is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and is a Core Provider for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. For more information, visit [www.highlandrivershealth.com](http://www.highlandrivershealth.com).

###