Press release 01/12/24

MORE THAN 17 PERCENT OF KAZAKHSTANIS HAVE BEEN TESTED FOR HIV THIS YEAR

December 1 marks World AIDS Day, which was first proclaimed by WHO in 1988. The purpose of this day is to raise global awareness of HIV infection and demonstrate international solidarity. This year, the motto of the Day, which was determined by the Joint HIV Program/AIDS – "Choose the right path – the path of human rights." Respect for the rights of everyone is the basis for an effective response to HIV. This World AIDS Day is a call to action to protect everyone's health through the protection of everyone's rights.

One of the rights is the opportunity to know your HIV status. This right has already been used by more than 17 percent of Kazakhstanis this year. Over the past 20 years, the coverage of HIV testing in the country has increased almost fivefold.

- "For citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan, HIV testing in regional HIV Prevention Centers is carried out on a voluntary and free basis, anonymously if desired. The laboratories of the centers are equipped with the most modern equipment for high-quality, reliable testing. This allows timely detection of HIV infection, counseling and, if necessary, a set of preventive measures, including treatment with antiretroviral drugs (ART)," said Acting Director of the Kazakh Scientific Center for Dermatology and Infectious Diseases Ulugbek Medeubekov.

Pregnant women are tested for HIV infection twice: when they are registered in women's clinics and when they are 28-30 weeks pregnant. In the first nine months of this year, the coverage of pregnant women with HIV testing exceeded the target of 98% in the Republic of Kazakhstan and amounted to 99.7%.

In order to expand the availability of testing for key population groups, in accordance with international recommendations, rapid HIV testing can be performed in non-governmental public organizations.

Another type of HIV testing that is already becoming a trend is self–testing. It is an effective tool for expanding testing coverage among key populations: men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, sex workers, transgender people. The tests are carried out on a near-gingival fluid, they are easy to use and do not require complex manipulations, they are also highly sensitive and accurate enough. The result is ready in 20 minutes. If one strip appears in the control area, it means that the test is negative, there is no HIV infection. If there are two stripes, it means that antibodies to HIV have been detected in the body.

You can order tests for free and anonymously through the special online service HIVTEST.KZ, they are also available at HIV Prevention Centers and NGOs. Such an opportunity already exists in Astana, Almaty, Karaganda, Pavlodar and Ust-Kamenogorsk. Anyone who orders receives a set with a self-test and information materials. Delivery takes place at the request of the customer through tastamats and the Sadyhan pharmacy network - for free, Yandex taxi - at the expense of the customer. If you have any questions, there is customer support and advice, both from peer consultants and specialists from HIV prevention centers.