

## THE INSTITUTE OF WOMEN'S HEALTH OF NORTH AMERICA TO OFFER FREE CHLAMYDIA TESTING AT ALL AFFILIATED CAMPUSES

Given the rising number of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), the Institute of Women's Health of North America will be offering free testing for Chlamydia at all six affiliated [campuses](#) in the State of Florida. This service will be available as of Monday, December 14, 2009.

Chlamydia, which is caused by *Chlamydia trachomatis*, is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the United States. In 2006, over a million cases of Chlamydia infection were reported in the U.S.; a number, generally believed to be grossly underestimated since most individuals infected with Chlamydia are not aware of their infection nor do they seek testing and treatment. Based on the U.S. National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, an estimated 2,291,000 non-institutionalized individuals between the ages of 14-39 years are infected with Chlamydia in this country.

Chlamydia infection is found in both men and women and can be transmitted during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. It can also be transmitted by an infected mother to a newborn during vaginal delivery. Due to relative immaturity of the cervix, sexually-active teenage girls and young women are most susceptible to this infection. Unlike prevailing dogma, men having sex with men are also at increased risk for Chlamydia infection due to the fact that it can be transmitted by anal and oral sex.

"Many people with Chlamydia exhibit no symptoms of infection and do not know that they are infected" said [Dr. Abdul Rao](#), CEO and Chief Research Officer of the Institute of Women's Health of North America (IWHNA). "If untreated,

Chlamydia infections can cause serious reproductive and other health problems with both short and long-term consequences".

In untreated women, Chlamydia infection spreads into the uterus or fallopian tubes and results in pelvic inflammatory diseases which can cause permanent damage of these organs and surrounding tissues resulting in chronic pelvic pain, infertility, and ectopic pregnancy. If exposed, women infected with Chlamydia are shown to be five times more likely to become infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This is particularly disconcerting given the fact that Chlamydia infection can be easily treated with antibiotics if diagnosed in a timely manner.

"As the largest women's healthcare provider in the State, we are obligated to offer this test free-of-charge to women" said [Abdul Sohail Rao](#), CEO and Chief Research Officer of IWHNA. "Along with HIV counseling, testing and referral services which are available free to both men and women at all our affiliated campuses, this is an attempt on the part of the Institute to create a comprehensive preventative program for STI in both men and women in our State".

To learn more about this program and to get a free test, please visit our [website](#) or call Jessica Loren at 1-877-966-3672.

[The Institute of Women's Health of North America, Inc.](#), is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization established in the State of Florida in 1997. Its mission is to improve women's health through outstanding clinical care, cutting-edge clinical and behavioral research, education and community outreach. It has affiliated [campuses](#) in six cities in Florida and is planning to extend its services to other underserved areas in the state and the nation. It depends on the benevolence of its donors for accomplishing its mission and vision. We encourage you to visit our website and donate generously to our cause – BRIDGING THE DISPARITY IN WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE. To learn more about IWHNA, please visit our website: [www.iwhna.org](http://www.iwhna.org)