Hip-Hop Concert to Spur HIV Testing in Houston

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In recognition of National HIV Testing Day, June 27, The Houston health department and community health agencies are using free tickets to a hip-hop concert, featuring former Destiny's Child member LeToya Luckett among other performers, to entice thousands of young adults to get tested for HIV and syphilis, the *Houston Chronicle* reports. The initiative aims to test a record 15,000 people during the next three weeks.

After participants take part in an hour-long educational session, get tested and learn their results, they will receive tickets to the July 11 concert courtesy of local radio station KBXX-FM (97.9 The Box). Last year, about 2,700 young adults were screened at hip-hop testing sites during a two-week period, while 7,500 were screened over a seven-week period in 2007.

According to the article, HIV/AIDS is especially prevalent among Houston's youth and African-American community. One in every 46 black residents in Harris County is living with the virus. In 2008, black youths accounted for 65 percent of new HIV cases among county residents ages 13 to 24. In 2007, data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed that Harris County ranked second in new syphilis cases (behind Los Angeles County) with 454 cases reported.

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