

Episode 3 – Breaking Down PrEP and PEP, and Of Course, a Few More Things

Details: Welcome back to Real Issues, Real Talk: For Students, By Students! This week join the students from the University of South Alabama as we sit down and discuss the PrEP and PEP services offered by AIDS Alabama South with Dr. Sharpe, Medical Director, at AIDS Alabama South. For more information regarding all of the services offered by AIDS Alabama South, please feel free to follow this link: <https://www.aidsalabamasouth.org/>

Transcript

00:00:00 Podcast Host - Connor

Hey, everyone. Welcome back to real issues real talk for students by students. We are so excited to be back for another season and can't wait for you guys to hear every single episode that we've recorded for season four of the podcast. We are so happy that you guys have been listening, that you've been following us on social media.

00:00:20 Podcast Host - Connor

And that you wanted us to come back this season. We have some amazing episodes planned for you guys with incredible guest speakers from AIDS, Alabama S to not only talk to us about relevant issues that college students might face, but also discuss all of the amazing things that they do at their organs.

00:00:37 Podcast Host - Connor

Just like you're about to hear in this episode. Thank you guys for tuning in and we'll catch you in the next one too.

00:00:43 Podcast Host - Connor

Hello, everyone. Welcome back to real issues, real talk. My name is Connor and I am joined today with yet again another amazing guest from AIDS, Alabama cell. Today we are joined by no other than Doctor Thomasina Sharpe.

00:00:57 Podcast Host - Connor

Now, without further ado, Dr. Thomasina Sharpe, how about you go ahead and introduce yourself and tell our audience a little bit about who you.

00:01:03 Podcast Host - Connor

Are and what you do?

00:01:05 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Sure. So I'm doctor thomasina.

00:01:07 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Sharp. I'm a board certified family practice doctor. I trained at University of South Alabama. That's my alma mater and I did my residency in rural Tennessee and Bristol, did a lot of work in Appalachia and.

00:01:23 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Came back to mobile to practice. I've been in practice for about 33 years and I'm currently the medical director of the Prep and Pep Clinic at AIDS Alabama South. We call ourselves Shell Health. The only all inclusive

00:01:43 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Sexual health clinic in mobile, Baldwin County, in fact, probably in southern Alabama.

00:01:48 Podcast Host - Connor

Wow, that is. That's pretty impressive. Just out of curiosity, what brought you from rural Tennessee back to mobile, AL?

00:01:56 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

So I had family down here. That's what brought me back, I think.

00:02:01 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

I would have probably.

00:02:02 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Stayed up there. If it hadn't been for family, so I loved it. I've I have a I have a really good friend. I really always saw myself practicing in rural Tennessee, up in Appalachia somewhere like.

00:02:07 Podcast Host - Connor

Downshift.

00:02:13 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

I have a. My best friend's still there so, but I've worked at Indian Reservation down here. I've worked in health department Franklin. I've worked at the homeless clinic, so I've done a lot of. I learned a lot about health disparities when I was there and I grew up in Okinawa, Japan. And so when I came.

00:02:34 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

To Alabama, as a senior in high school, got it? Got a scholarship to South. You know, I was kind of new to the whole social situation in, in the US and things were very different than in Japan and so.

00:02:47 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

I when I went to Tennessee, it was a stark, you know, contrast. And so I became very interested in health disparities pretty quickly, but also one of my very first days on call I became interested. There was this thing when I was a student and.

00:03:07 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

They didn't have a name and you?

00:03:09 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Know people were.

00:03:10 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Dying from it and you know, it seemed like maybe Haitians got it more than other people and and, you know, they started calling it the gay aids. And they started saying that, you know, we started, maybe it was a type of hepatitis.

00:03:23 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

You know, and I remember when we first started wearing gloves, having to apologize to people, but one of the first days I was on call by myself as a physician is an intern. I had a young man come in 21 years old and he.

00:03:37 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Thought he had strep throat.

00:03:39 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

And he uh.

00:03:40 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

He said looked terrible. He had been treated a couple rounds of antibiotics. He's having trouble swallowing, thought he had an.

00:03:45 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Abscess and I.

00:03:46 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Just started looking at him. I was like.

00:03:48 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

You. He just had so many when I looked in his mouth and start and I was like, this is like.

00:03:55 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Some of the patients I treated.

00:03:56 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

At South, when you know when we search started seeing these patients that had this thing that we were calling you know.

00:04:02 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Autoimmune disorder and.

00:04:04 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

So yeah, so I started, so I decided to do a.

00:04:08 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

We couldn't do HIV tests at that time. We did CD4 and CD8 counts.

00:04:12 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

And I just, you know, admitted him to the hospital and started him on some medicine and within about 12 hours, I got a call from the lab saying that they had a CD4 count and it was 4. And I said, yeah, the CD 4 count. That's what I want, not the eight. I don't care what the eight, the.

00:04:29 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

4 is good and they said no. His CD 4 count is.

00:04:32 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

4 which?

00:04:33 Podcast Host - Connor

Oh my gosh.

00:04:33 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Qualified him for full blown.

00:04:35 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Aids. And so he was my first patient.

00:04:36 Podcast Host - Connor

Yeah.

00:04:37 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

And I became quite interested and I was very lucky because we had a provider up there who, had he done a lot of research in HIV and did a lot of treatment, HIV and so.

00:04:53 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Our little rural.

00:04:56 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Appalachia of Johnson City, Bristol, Kingsport area became quite a Mecca for HIV patients and so I got a really early introduction to it and always kind of kept it near and dear to my heart and so.

00:05:10 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

About 10-11 years ago I was approached and maybe almost 13 now by somebody who a friend of mine.

00:05:17 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Who said, you know, we're thinking about.

00:05:18 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

We need some sort of.

00:05:19 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Clinic. You know, we need to do.

00:05:21 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

We need something and and I said count me in. I don't care what it is. I don't know if I have to do it after work, whatever. And so we worked on it.

00:05:31 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

And Shay, who you mentioned? Shay Thorne is awesome. He wrote the grants and he made it a reality. And so we open.

00:05:39 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

And April 2020, if that tells you anything, we immediately closed. We never got to have our grand opening until October and we started opening Wednesday.

00:05:43 Podcast Host - Connor

Oh gosh, yeah.

00:05:51 Podcast Host - Connor

Did were you guys even open for like a full month at that point or?

00:05:54 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Yeah, we're not. We were.

00:05:56 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Not even open like a.

00:05:57 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Full week and so we.

00:05:58 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Ended up having a really.

00:06:01 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Great soft opening in October of that year and started doing one day a week of HIV prevention and very quickly began doing post exposure prophylaxis and and became and we've grown from there. We're now open five days a week.

00:06:20 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Week we have one day a week that we're open late. We have a van now. It's like a big giant RV that we can bring to social events. If any of your listeners would like us to come to one of their social events, we do. We have a full lab, we have full exam rooms. We can do anything we do in the clinic out of the van and.

00:06:40 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

So yeah, but we have just begun doing some more like gender affirming care and.

00:06:46 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Reaching out to a little bit more sexual health, we just saw we just got into an agreement with the same nurses, which are the sexual assault nurses to provide them with medicines for their sexual assault victims. So it's really growing by leaps and bounds for sure there's a need.

00:07:03 Podcast Host - Connor

Yeah, absolutely. And I mean, it's just extremely impressive how you were able to relate your desire and passion to work with this affected patient population and translate that into everything that you're doing now. And with the rapid expansion of shell health, I mean, just huge kudos to you. That's extremely.

00:07:22 Podcast Host - Connor

Now for a lot of our listeners, we have had other episodes on Prep and PEP, but just in case they haven't heard those, could you go into a little bit more detail about what exactly Prep and PEP is?

00:07:33 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Sure, absolutely. So prep we'll start with Prep. So Prep is actually HIV prevention. Honestly, I have actually been doing HIV prevention for probably 20 years before it was ever called that. So it used to be this cocktail of medicines that you would give to someone if their partners.

00:07:53 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Condom broke and their partner was HIV positive because in in in those days we didn't have.

00:08:00 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

You know people who are undetectable. We didn't have great medicine. So you give them this or maybe someone was sexually assaulted. And but the primary people who got prep were people who were exposed to HIV in a more medical way. So people who had a blood splash or blood exposure.

00:08:20 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

A needle stick. And so I was writing for those people. And a lot of what we know about Prep actually has come from using these medications.

00:08:30 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

That then became through the, you know, through so many wonderful pioneers, a lot of which out out on the West Coast and up in in New York that.

00:08:44 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

As the research got better and the medications got better, we were.

00:08:46 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Able to come.

00:08:47 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Up with one medication, the first one being Truvada, a medication you could take every single day, and it could keep you from getting HIV. And I tell folks all the time it's kind of like birth control, you know?

00:09:01 Podcast Host - Connor

Hmm.

00:09:03 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Birth control from getting pregnant? It's not 100%, but it's pretty good, you know, and there are other things you can use, but probably birth control pills being the gold standard or probably the best option, and they're the most effective right at 99% effective, sometimes more than that prep is the same thing, 99% maybe a little bit.

00:09:25 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

In certain populations of preventing you from catching HIV. But just like birth control it has, it has morphed even over the last, you know, probably 8 years that we've been using the Truvada to where now we have shots and we have intermittent you can take.

00:09:44 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

The medication just if you need it, just if you're going to have sex, we have once every other month injection and.

00:09:54 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

So HIV prevention is grown by leaps and bounds. I went to a conference in the spring and in Africa they're already testing combinations of birth control and HIV prevention that is available in shots, implants, topicals, as well as pills.

00:10:13 Podcast Host - Connor

Wow. OK, there's.

00:10:14 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Yeah. So we got a lot coming up.

00:10:16 Podcast Host - Connor

Yeah. Now, in regards to your clinic, Shell healthcare specifically, are there any specific forms of prep that you guys only offer? Like do you only do pills or do you do the entire game?

00:10:28 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

We actually do the entire thing, so if you come to see us and and I think you can get the traditional Truvada, which is the first one that is also generic and actually you know your listeners need to know, they don't have to come see us. It's available from the US government for free. If you go to.

00:10:48 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Healthcare.gov. Or if you go to the CDC web page, you can actually get these medications from the government. You don't necessarily have to see a provider, but having said that, the medications are free through us. So we have to.

00:10:56 Podcast Host - Connor

What?

00:11:03 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Data we have this Kobi. The difference between this Truvada and Descovy they made by the same company. Discovery's a little newer, it's a little smaller. It's harder to be a little safer just as effective. It can only be it has often tested in women or people who cisgender women or people who are genetically female, and so.

00:11:24 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

It is a little limited to only cisgender men and people who are genetically male. So then we also have opportunity, which was approved in February of this.

00:11:35 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Here, that is the HIV injection prevention injection. So it is every other month you start with two shots and one month apart and then every other month and it is.

00:11:50 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Right at the same effectiveness as a Truvada and Descovy and what's really great about these medicines we're talking about medications that are 99% effective in preventing you from getting.

00:12:01 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

HIV, regardless of what your your exposure is. So these are medications that are pretty simple to take. They have very few if no side effects, maybe a little nausea. They're very safe. They they, you can take them with other medicines and other medical problems and.

00:12:22 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

And just recently, now it's not FDA approved, but there's also the ability to do something they call to 211, which a lot of people, you know this kind of like the emergency kind and then but 211 is.

00:12:35 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Ah.

00:12:36 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

The way you take Truvada, if you're having Internet and sexual exposure, so people who, for example, are maybe in a long distance relationship or who are are maybe deployed and maybe they're they're they're only they're deployed or they're.

00:12:56 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Spouse is deployed, and maybe they're only getting together from time to time. It's a it's a way to take Truvada.

00:13:02 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

That seems to.

00:13:03 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

The even in initial against placebo, at least 80% effective in preventing HIV, you take 2 pills two hours? Yeah, 2 to 12 hours before you have sex 124 hours later and 148 hours after that. After the first dose. And it was so effective.

00:13:21 Podcast Host - Connor

OK.

00:13:24 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

They stopped the placebo, and they're actually it's ongoing trials right now. So we're trying to find out the very, very effective.

00:13:32 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Seems to be similar rates of effectiveness getting close to every day. So we have lots of things like I said on the horizon.

00:13:37 Podcast Host - Connor

Mm-hmm.

00:13:41 Podcast Host - Connor

Yeah, I mean, that's all extremely promising, especially the two on one now talking about like the two on one method, how does that differ from PEP, which is this post exposure prophylactic, right?

00:13:45 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Yeah.

00:13:56 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Right, right, exactly it. Actually it doesn't differ a lot because what we know with post exposure prophylaxis and that's where the two women one a lot of the thought and the research behind it came from hey, if it works as a prevention, right.

00:14:12 Podcast Host - Connor

MHM.

00:14:12 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Why wouldn't it? You know mean works as a post exposure. Why couldn't we? Maybe dose it around that time, you know, for somebody.

00:14:20 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Who has maybe a little bit of notice that they're gonna have sex and want to be a little?

00:14:24 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Safer, So what?

00:14:26 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Pep is post exposure prophylaxis, which is incredibly effective if started in the 1st 36 hours right at 96 to 98%, effective loses some effectiveness, but is even in the.

00:14:40 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

80s of effectiveness, even up to 72 hours later. So 80% effective. Yeah. So you want to start it as soon as possible, but if someone has a condom break, I always tell folks you have condom break or, heaven forbid, if you're sexually assaulted or if.

00:14:45

Ohh wow.

00:14:56 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

That person you met on Tinder just seemed a little bit itchier than you really thought they were. Post exposure. Powerful access is something that I recommend to everyone. So what it is is it's a little bit longer course of medication. If you take it for 28 days, it's two medications as actually.

00:15:01 Podcast Host - Connor

Yeah.

00:15:16 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

3 medications, but what I haven't mentioned is traumatic. Actually has two medicines in it, so it's 2 pills that you take for 28 day.

00:15:24 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

And it is incredibly effective. It also most of the research on pet has been done in people who were exposed to needle sticks, blood splashes, that kind of stuff. And so. But we feel like it is, it seems to be just as effective.

00:15:44 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Uhm.

00:15:45 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Whether the exposures through blood from a needle stick or whether it's from.

00:15:50 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Having sex so.

00:15:52 Podcast Host - Connor

Absolutely. And once again, I seem pet just like Prep is available at your at your clinic.

00:15:58 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

So we are, yeah. So at Shell Health, we offer PAP, it is free.

00:16:03 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

We do the.

00:16:04 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Post exposure medications for or for free. If you go to our website, which is shahab.org or you go to our Facebook page, our Twitter or any of our accounts social media.

00:16:18 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Accounts or even go to the age Alabama S you can get to us from there. There is a contact where you can get to us 24/7. Someone you can get some information to someone and someone will get with you within the 36 hours or as quickly as we can to get you the medicines. And we have the medications on hand to start.

00:16:39 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

We also do pregnancy testing. We have Plan B for the post exposure patients we have, we treat all.

00:16:48 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

PDS, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, trichomonas and the medications are all free here and can be given to you for free if you have insurance and you want us to write you a prescription, we're.

00:16:59 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Happy to do that, our.

00:17:01 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Pharmacy. If your insurance covers the medications.

00:17:05 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

For Prep or pep.

00:17:08 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

It's really helpful because we actually the pharmacy we use actually allows us for.

00:17:15 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Like an estimate of for every patient who has insurance, it pays for like 2 patients who don't have insurance to get free medicine. So it's been a really great collaboration and it is a it is a way people do this and and fund these kinds of medications in other places.

00:17:21 Podcast Host - Connor

Oh wow.

00:17:33 Podcast Host - Connor

Yeah. Now you've mentioned all these amazing services prep pep, gender affirming care, STD and STI testing, STD and STI treatment pregnancy tests, so on so forth. We know the medications are free, but what about long term care? You know, the follow up visits that have to be.

00:17:50 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

So.

00:17:53 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

So there's the services at our clinic are all free. So we do Pap smears, we do blood tests. You know, if you want to come and get prepped from us, we'll happily refill your blood pressure medicine. Those medicines aren't free, but can be gotten at a discount if you should have, say, you come for us for Prep.

00:18:13 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

And you would like to have your thyroid checked or maybe you're on a medication and you want to to get a level or something. We can take care of that. Maybe you have cholesterol issues. We know all of these things do impact. And so we do offer.

00:18:28 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

All of those health services as well.

00:18:29 Podcast Host - Connor

Yeah.

00:18:30 Podcast Host - Connor

That's incredible. Now we know that all these services are offered, but I'm going to kind of ask you a double question here. Number one, why is it important that they're offered at a separate clinic and #2?

00:18:36 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

OK.

00:18:44 Podcast Host - Connor

Are these actually being utilized? Are people coming into the clinic? Are you seeing, you know, a patient population that desperately needs care?

00:18:52 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Ohh absolutely.

00:18:53 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

So I'm gonna. I'm gonna say the reason we need a separate clinic is.

00:18:58 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Not enough providers are offering this care. I think it's unfortunate because it's so doggone simple. I mean, you know, it's much harder to treat diabetes and there are a lot more medications to treat diabetes than there is for HIV prevention or HIV, PEP or prep. And so I think that.

00:19:18 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

UM.

00:19:19 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

It's unfortunate that these services aren't offered, you know, on every street corner, at every CVS. You know, there are some telehealth companies now offering it, so that's wonderful. But in the state of Alabama, access is.

00:19:35 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Pretty sketchy and we get a lot of patients from Mississippi and Florida as well coming over. So having having we felt like it was really important for visibility to have a clinic that encouraged it. But I ideally would like all of my colleagues that are physicians or nurse practitioners or providers.

00:19:56 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Healthcare to offer this in their clinic.

00:19:59 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Regardless of what their specialty is, but until we get to that place, we really are on a mission to end HIV. I mean, if I could prevent 121 year old guy from ever having to go to the emergency room with a bad sore throat, thinking he had strep throat and finding out he had.

00:20:18 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Aids and then.

00:20:20 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

You know, having at that time he had such a horrible quality of life, he.

00:20:24 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Didn't live, but a few months.

00:20:26 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

But having said that, if we can prevent people from getting this and tell people look, there's not another human being on this planet that has to get HIV, we can prevent this. And if you pair this with HIV testing, where we're picking up, if you think about one in two people who have HIV.

00:20:45 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

No, in they have gone 3. Excuse me one and two people who test positive for HIV.

00:20:53 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

They have not known that they had HIV. If they hadn't got a test. Most of our about 80% of the new cases come from people who don't know they have HIV, giving it to someone else. So it's really important for us to pair that testing and that knowledge with the prevention. Then if the person knows they have HIV.

00:21:13 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Well, we can give them medicine to make them undetectable if we give them that medication and they become undetectable, undetectable. There is no virus in their body. It can't make them sick. They can't give it to anybody. They can have a baby. They can go to college and get a degree and live their dream life and do whatever it is they want to.

00:21:32 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

You and live with this.

00:21:35 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

As healthfully as they would with they with high blood pressure or diabetes. It's it's becoming a treatable disease and we need to get the word out that we need people to know this and we need people to to know where to go and get on these medications because.

00:21:52 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

There's not another reason. There's no reason why I should ever have to tell anybody they have HIV again.

00:21:58 Podcast Host - Connor

Absolutely. And you know that is an incredible statement. And such a powerful thing to leave on. Just again confirm medications are free. How are they free?

00:22:14 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

So the medications are free because we get grants.

00:22:18 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

And we have multiple grants and that's where Shay Thorne comes in.

00:22:21 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

And where he is the.

00:22:22 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Master because he writes all the grants. So we have multiple grants that pay for our medical.

00:22:27 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Then we partner that money with a pharmacy that also allows, if you have no insurance for the medications to be free or you can use your insurance to buy the medications. And because of that and we also have partnerships with the drug companies.

00:22:46 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Or they they also if for some reason somebody for example.

00:22:51 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Needs a medication like aptitude, so aptitude isn't something we can get for free for everyone, but we can get it from the company for free if patients don't have insurance. And so it's just a little bit of paperwork. Jump through a couple of hoops and the.

00:23:07 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Medication gets shipped to.

00:23:08 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Us so all of our services are free.

00:23:11 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

My care. Rachel. Miners practitioner Rachel Carter. We are paid for through.

00:23:17 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

We have nobody has to ever pay to.

00:23:22 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Come see us.

00:23:24 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

You know, we do women's care. I haven't even said anything about that. We do, you know, Pap smears and and full female care, and we're trying to partner with the health department to start getting some mammograms for people.

00:23:35 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

For free so.

00:23:37 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

All of our services are free and if we need for someone, if we find something that someone needs to go and see a specialist for, we do have resources. We use our Community resources, our indigent care resources to get people in to see.

00:23:52 Podcast Host - Connor

Yeah, that is absolutely incredible, especially with the fact that as you stated, if you guys don't have it, you will find out how to get someone connected to that resource by utilizing other things that you have at your disposal. Now, just in case anyone needs to come see you to take advantage of any of these services, where are you guys located?

00:24:12 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

So we're at 4321.

00:24:15 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Downtown or loop N it's all right around the corner from Turkey cheese. If you know who that is.

00:24:22

Go.

00:24:22

OK.

00:24:23 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Also pretty close to Planned Parenthood, but we're right there and we're on the backside of the building. The Big White Age Alabama building right here in mobile, AL. Now we do have outreach to Baldwin County. If people live in Baldwin County and want to.

00:24:42 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Get their STD testing HIV testing then it is available that they can actually go to our website and we will ship them free test.

00:24:53 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

And then we will contact them and we're actually expanding our care to start trying to outreach further. So that maybe do more telemedicine. We have a grant right now that's pending for potential telemedicine to be able to get people that maybe physically can't like maybe they go to school, Baldwin County.

00:25:13 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Your listeners or some.

00:25:14 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

We actually serve the whole southeast of and southwest of Alabama, so we yeah, all the way, yeah, probably from Montgomery down, you know? And so so we're trying to reach out to those people who can't physically get into our office, but we do draw. You asked me a question about whether or not the services are.

00:25:21 Podcast Host - Connor

Oh wow, that's no small feat right there.

00:25:36 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Yes, our STI testing services are incredibly active and we see a lot of patients every day. We have outreach providers that go from mobile where we're here in mobile, AL, but they'll go, they come to South, they go to Baldwin County, they go to Etowah County, they go.

00:25:56 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

They go north, you know, to Monroe and and and. And Britain and Atmore and do testing as well as teaching. And so we have patients who drive as far as at Mormon.

00:26:13 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Down here to get care, Mississippi and and the gulf.

00:26:18 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Coast of Florida as well.

00:26:19 Podcast Host - Connor

Oh gosh, so you guys really are aiming to provide care to just about anyone and everyone you can reach. And that is incredible. Now, unfortunately, we are reaching the end of the episode. So for any of our listeners that have not paid attention at all.

00:26:31

Sure.

00:26:36 Podcast Host - Connor

During this, maybe they had their headphones in, they were walking the class, they stopped to chat with a bunch of friends, they maybe popped in to grab a coffee somewhere and they're just now coming back.

00:26:46 Podcast Host - Connor

To the episode.

00:26:47 Podcast Host - Connor

What is the one thing you want them to know?

00:26:50 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

You do not have to get HIV. No one in 2022 ever have to get HIV. We can prevent it and it is easy. It is safe. It is effective, and all you have to do is ask. And if you go to shellhealth.org, you can even register online.

00:27:11 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

And talk to us or call us on the phone if you.

00:27:13 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

Have any other questions?

00:27:15 Podcast Host - Connor

Absolutely incredible. And on that note, I will be sure to link every single one of those resources in our description below. So people in the community can utilize those services offered by your clinic.

00:27:27 Podcast Host - Connor

Thank you so much for coming on the podcast and taking the time out of your busy day to not only talk about your work with AIDS and myself, but also all the services offered by Shell Health. We really, really appreciate it.

00:27:37 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

I appreciate you having me on because we want to end HIV by 20-30. We want to make sure that there are no new cases by 20-30 and this is how we're going to do it. Getting the word out.

00:27:49 Podcast Host - Connor

Absolutely. And that's the goal. Well, thank you so much. Once again, have a great day and I look forward to talking to you in.

00:27:52 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

You're welcome.

00:27:55 Dr. Thomasina Sharpe

OK. Thank you.