HIV Self-Testing Implementation Planning Tool
Considerations for Program Managers about Equipment and Resources Needed to Provide HIV Self-Testing

Identifying your Priority Population

Choose whether you will target your HIV self-testing (HIVST) program to particular populations. Consider the client-base served by your agency, the HIV epidemiology in your agency's location, and your agency's funding sources. Identifying your priority population early will allow you to tailor your HIVST program to those individuals.

Determining Eligibility Criteria

You need to decide if you will restrict who is eligible to receive an HIV self-test. This may be due to staff and/or financial resource limitations or your grant's priority population. Consider determining a client's eligibility at the same time they are requesting an HIV self-test (via phone call, online survey, etc.).

How Clients Request an HIV Self-Test

Clients can request HIV self-tests by contacting your agency via phone calls, emails, or social media messages. They can also request tests through an online survey using a HIPAA-compliant survey platform. Additionally, clients may not need to contact your agency to make a formal request for an HIV self-test; rather, HIV self-tests can be distributed during outreach and "drive-thru" events, by peers, and via the agency's mobile van. Consider staff capacity and clients' access to broadband internet or electronic devices when deciding which method to use.

Type of HIV Self-Test

Rapid HIV Self-Test
The *OraQuick In-Home HIV Test* is the only FDA-approved rapid HIV self-test. It is an antibody test using an oral swab. Results are ready in 20-40 minutes. The window period for detection of HIV infection with this oral fluid test is estimated at three months.

Mail-In HIV Self-Test
Mail-in HIVST uses self-collected dried blood spots (DBS) from a fingerstick. The DBS sample is sent to a laboratory for HIV antigen/antibody testing, a more sensitive test than the rapid HIV self-test. The window period for the mail-in HIV self-test is estimated to be smaller than the window period of the rapid HIVST. Mail-in self-testing has the ability to test for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and Syphilis.

Distribution of HIV Self-Tests

Rapid HIV Self-Test
The *OraQuick In-Home HIV Test* can be mailed in a discreet package by your agency, delivered to the client by a staff member, or picked up by the client at an agreed upon location. If mailing the test, make sure it will not sit outside in temperatures >80° F or <36° F.
You also have the option of purchasing and distributing coupons, which would be redeemed online by clients for a free test. The tests are mailed in discreet packaging by the manufacturer.

Mail-In HIV Self-Test
Mail-in HIV self-tests are distributed via mail. Tests come in discreet packaging and can be shipped to the client's address or another address, including a pharmacy or a bathhouse. After the client completes DBS collection and ensures they have adhered to the instructions that came with the mail-in HIV self-test, they mail the DBS card back to the laboratory using the pre-paid return label.

Additional Materials Included with the HIV Self-Test

It is important to include additional materials with the test. Think about the materials your agency provides during in-person testing. Consider including informational handouts on HIV, PrEP, and PEP, local resources for testing and care, condoms and lubricant, and harm-reduction kits. Tailoring the materials included with the test based on the client's zip code or county of residence ensures they are receiving referrals to organizations that are accessible to them.

How to Obtain Test Results

Rapid HIV Self-Test
If your agency decides to obtain the results from distributed rapid HIV self-tests, there are many ways to do so. The client can self-report their result via a phone call or an online survey, or a staff member can have a video call with the client as they test to view the result. Similarly, if staff deliver the test, they can wait in their car for the client to bring the swab out after they have read their result (and if they are comfortable with staff viewing the result).

Mail-In HIV Self-Test
Results from mail-in HIVST are reported to the client by the laboratory or a healthcare provider. Your agency can then obtain those results from the client or through the laboratory with the client's consent.

Linkage to Care

It is important to link your clients to either follow-up or supplemental testing and HIV care or PrEP care after they complete HIVST. This linkage should occur as soon as possible (preferably within 24 hours) if the client is amenable. It may be helpful to be on a phone or video call while the client is testing to rapidly link them to care and assess their emotional response to the test result. It is advantageous to provide care at your agency or to leverage existing partnerships with clinics and organizations that can deliver that care, including mental health care. Some clients may not be ready or want to be linked to HIV or PrEP care and other services, and program staff should respect their decision.

Data Collection Platform

To collect, manage, and store important data about your HIVST program, you can use a variety of HIPAA-compliant platforms. Some common software used by other agencies with HIVST programs are REDCap®, SurveyMonkey®, Microsoft Excel®, and CDC's Evaluation Web. Online surveys before and/or after testing can be a useful way to collect the client's demographic information, their HIVST results, and client satisfaction and other evaluation questions. If your agency does not use online surveys, staff will need to collect this data via a phone or video call with the client and enter it into a data management software. Not all clients will return their test results and/or survey responses, and your agency should not coerce or pressure the client to return that information.

Marketing

Advertising your agency's HIVST program on social media, websites, dating apps, bus stops, flyers, radio stations, and more can spread the word about your new testing option being offered. Targeting your advertising towards your HIVST program's priority populations is an effective strategy. It would be useful to host a focus group with individuals from your priority populations to receive feedback about your marketing materials and where to disseminate them.

Incentives

Incentives can be an effective way to encourage clients to use, complete, and/or report the results of an HIV self-test. Commonly, gift cards are provided as incentives, but incentives can also be agency-branded items, such as a water bottle or cum rag. If your agency has limited financial resources, incentives can be raffled off, rather than provided to each client.

Staff Training

After your HIVST program has been developed, it is important to create materials that train staff on the process. The degree of training is up to your agency, whether it is a one-time training for new program staff or it is reoccurring trainings throughout the year. Training materials can include a protocol, online modules, and pre- and post-test evaluations.