

Two-Pronged Attack: HIV Testing in a South Florida Healthcare System

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The Miami-Ft Lauderdale metropolitan area is at the epicenter of an HIV hotbed, leading the nation in new HIV diagnoses. In response, the Memorial Healthcare System (Memorial; the public healthcare system of south Broward county and one of the largest public healthcare systems in the nation), in collaboration with the Florida Department of Health and Gilead Sciences' FOCUS program, implemented a 2-pronged approach to HIV testing: 1) opt-out 4th generation HIV testing for all patients seen in the emergency department (ED), and 2) opt-in point-of-care testing (POCT) for patients seen in the 9 primary care clinics, aboard the adult mobile health center (AMHC), or for partners/caregivers/family members of patients seen in the clinics or ED. The AMHC provides scheduled medical services at several sites, including community centers, homeless shelters, halfway houses, churches, and outpatient substance abuse rehabilitation centers. Memorial's large-scale HIV testing program aims to identify patients who are undiagnosed, or diagnosed and not retained in care, and link them to medical services, including our Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program-funded multidisciplinary hospital-based clinic's rapid ART initiation program. Our testing program has demonstrated tremendous success.

In the past 12 months, 22,067 patients were tested in the ED using an opt-out approach, with 121 patients' test results yielding a confirmed HIV diagnosis (0.5% reactive rate); 104 of these patients (86%) were linked to and retained in care. In the same time frame, 11,389 persons received a POCT in one of the primary care clinics or on the AMHC, with 31 patients' test results yielding a reactive result (0.2% reactive rate) and 30 of these patients (97%) linked to care. In addition to the large-scale HIV testing program described, Memorial has also routinized age- and risk-based hepatitis C screening in the primary care clinics, expanded preexposure prophylaxis prescribing in the primary care clinics, implemented an HIV test-and-treat program in the Ryan White clinic, and spearheaded an inpatient antiretroviral stewardship program. HIV testing programs can be rapidly expanded within healthcare systems and can serve to increase testing in communities. Knowledge of serostatus is the first step in accessing HIV treatment, reducing transmission, and mitigating public health challenges. The Memorial Healthcare System HIV testing program demonstrates an effective HIV testing initiative designed to end the HIV epidemic.