# Implementing HIV Self-Testing in 6 California Counties: Outcomes for Youth

# Background

This poster describes and evaluates the TakeMeHome program of the California Consortium – a new HIV testing intervention for priority populations identified in Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) plans, including youth (age < 30 years).

- In September 2020, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Office of AIDS (OA) implemented the Building Healthy Online Communities (BHOC) TakeMeHome (TMH) HIV self-testing program in the six counties of the California EHE Consortium.
  - CA Consortium: Alameda, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties
- This Diagnose Pillar of the federal EHE initiative aims to increase testing options for people at risk for HIV infection.



# Methods

## Self-Testing Process

- BHOC advertised TMH on popular dating and sex partnering apps
- Test kits mailed to eligible participants at no cost
- OraQuick In-Home HIV Test (OraSure Technologies, Inc), a rapid oral fluid HIV test, available starting September 2020
- Self-collected, mail-in, lab-based test kits available beginning December 2021, with options for:
  - HIV, syphilis, Hepatitis C dried blood spot; 3-site gonorrhea and chlamydia; PrEP panel
- Optional, anonymous post-test survey sent 1 week after ordering

## Analysis

- We examined post-test survey data to describe participant characteristics, and to assess reasons for ordering tests
- We calculated odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals to test for differences between youth vs older participants using SAS v9.4

## Implementation Support

- CA Consortium group formed to support the implementation of the EHE Initiative
- Monthly technical assistance meeting between counties, CDPH OA staff, and consultant group

300

200

100

Age Group (y
Under 18
18-19
20-24
25-29
30-39
40-49
50-59
Over 60
Gender
Man
Woman
Trans wor
Trans mar
Genderqu
Non-bina
Another g
Unknown
Race/Ethnicit
Hispanic/
Asian
Black
White
Another r
Multiple r
Unknown

## Disclaimer

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Results



## Table 1: Select characteristics of individuals completing the TakeMeHome post-test survey (N=490)

Figure 3: TakeMeHome advertisements. Get tested for HIV without leaving bed **50.8%** are 22.5 youth (<30) 19.6 28.2 10 Obten una prueba de VIH gratis sin moverte de tu cama. ORDER NOW | PIDE AHORA TAKEMEHOME.O 59.2 10.0 participants, by age (N=490)\* Figure 4: Post-test survey participants who would recommend TakeMeHome to a friend (N=490) leer Non-Youth 1% 4% 1% 0.2 gender 25.3 35.9 Youth 94% 32.2 ace races Yes ■ No ■ Maybe ■ Missing

Acknowledgements

CDPH OA: Angelique Skinner, Jessica Heskin, John Keasling

BHOC: Jen Hecht CA Consortium: Alameda, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, and San Diego County staff Facente Consulting

TakeMeHome Participants

Building Healthy Online Communities. Social Media Toolkit. 2022. tmhtest.me/social-partners

## Figure 2: Reasons for participating in the TakeMeHome Program among post-test survey participants, by age (N=490)



\*Statistically significant, p<.05





# Figure 5: HIV test history among TakeMeHome post-test survey



## **References:**

- 490 (11%) of participants completed the post-test survey.
- Tests reached a diverse population, with about half (50.8%) being youth.
- Most participants ordered TMH tests because it was free and convenient; youth were more likely to order TMH because they are *uncomfortable seeking care in their area* (OR=2.3, 95% CI=1.6-3.3) or didn't know where else to receive an HIV test (OR=3.0, 95% CI=2.0-4.6). (OR=6.1, 95%
- CI=3.8-9.7).
- (OR=6.1, 95% CI=3.8-9.7).
- participants of all ages:
  - 72.2% were men who have sex with other men
  - 63.3% reported multiple sex partners within the past year
  - 9.4% had been diagnosed with an STI in the past year
  - 4.5% had sexual partners previously diagnosed with HIV
  - 5.3% reported using injection drugs
  - Youth and older participants reported these risk factors in similar proportions.

## **Implementation Support:**

- CA Consortium model of multiple large counties working closely to implement a common HIV testing intervention allowed participants to share information and receive technical assistance from peers and capacity building providers.
- Early adopters of lab testing shared lessons learned with other Consortium members.

- ordered test kits.
- testing.

- Advertising on dating websites does impact health seeking behavior.
- <sup>,</sup> More lead time is required for developing a program for lab-based testing.
- Expanding testing options to include STI tests was popular and resulted in high demand for all tests offered.
- improvements.

- HIV self-testing reduces barriers and improves access to first-time testing among youth. Making testing easy improves testing behavior.
- Self-testing is an integral part of the California EHE plan, providing an essential opportunity to increase HIV testing for those who may not know where else to seek it.
- Leveraging the successful implementation of the TMH pilot in the CA Consortium, CDPH OA scaled up the program to cover all CA counties in early 2023.



# Results

• 4,453 test orders; most (3,147, 70.7%) were for rapid, non-lab-based tests.

Never having tested for HIV previously was higher among youth than older participants

• Participants reported a variety of risk factors for HIV. Below are self-reported risk factors for survey

## Limitations

Those who completed the post-test survey are not necessarily representative of all those who

• Tests were only advertised to users of dating and sex partnering apps.

• HIV self-testing is just one aspect of a complete testing program, and not meant to solve all gaps in

## Lessons Learned

Good communication between partners (CA Consortium, OA, BHOC, lab) was essential. Iterative evaluation strengthened process implementation and prompted strategic program

# Conclusion



