

## Northern Health Community Based HIV Point of Care Test Site Guidelines

The purpose of HIV Point of Care (POC) testing is to increase uptake of HIV testing in the North by providing an acceptable and accessible alternative to standard HIV testing.

### Applicability

Northern Health (NH) aims to improve access to HIV POC for communities across the North, including those on First Nation reserves. These guidelines are applicable to the following types of settings eligible to become an HIV POC site:

- NH community and outreach services
- Community-based agencies
- Northern First Nations Health services and other Aboriginal health agencies
- Primary and Community Care
- Community health fairs only under the following circumstances; when it is offered as an outreach service of an existing, pre-approved HIV POC site, provided all of the responsibilities outlined below can be met.

These guidelines are not eligible to the following settings:

- Research initiatives.
- Acute care and residential settings, including detox.
- Private for profit industry settings such as occupational health and safety programs in industrial work camps.

### Application pathways

Eligible sites wishing to access publically funded kits for HIV POC must be approved by the NH HIV POC Committee to become an HIV POC site. Contracted community health services may apply to offer HIV POC testing:

- a. As part of their service contract for community-based services. There is no other avenue within NH to receive funding for HIV POC in community settings.
- b. Apart from their service contract without receiving additional funding from NH.

Agencies or companies that purchase kits independently do not need to submit applications to NH, but are encouraged to contact BCCDC to obtain support with training, quality control, and data-collection.

### Site Selection Process

1. Following discussion and approval with local NH responsible Community Services Manager (CSM), applicant contacts a NH HIV POC committee representative to obtain a HIV POC site application. Clarification and guidance in completing the application is provided as needed.
2. Applicant submits the completed application either electronically to the [CentralCDhub@northernhealth.ca](mailto:CentralCDhub@northernhealth.ca) or by fax to **250-649-7071** Attention : Chairperson HIV POC Testing Committee.
3. HIV POC Committee will review and deliberate on the application.

4. The applicant will be contacted with the results of the committee's deliberations. If the application is:
  - a. declined, the applicant will be offered guidance for reapplication as needed; or
  - b. approved, the following additional steps will occur:
    - i. The committee representative will contact the applicant to plan for training;
    - ii. Applicant to reach out to BCCDC for instruction about Quality Assurance etc.;
    - iii. BCCDC ships HIV POC kits as needed to site; and
    - iv. HIV POC Committee Chair (or designate) will notify:
      - BCCDC,
      - The responsible Community Service Manager, and
      - FNHA for Aboriginal communities.

### Costs

Agencies, Aboriginal communities, NH programs offering HIV POC services will be responsible for the costs of travel, accommodation and meals to attend the training and for costs associated with staff time and delivering HIV POC in outreach settings.

### Education

BCCDC offers two online courses, free of charge and recommended for testers.

1. **The HIV point of care testing online course.** The course consists of two 30 minute modules that cover the INSTI test and the quality assurance elements that support the test. It is available on the PHSA Learning Hub. There is a practicum portion of this course which may require the tester to travel within Northern Health to demonstrate INSTI test performance and interpretation skills. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/education-development/hiv-point-of-care-testing-online-course>
2. **The HIV Testing Online course.** This is a facilitated 4 week online course that consists of 5 modules that each take approximately an hour each to complete. It is offered twice a year; there are limited spots available. Preference is given to learners who are supported by the Health Authority and are planning to use the HIV testing skills upon course completion. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/education-development/hiv-testing-online-course>

BCCDC also offers in-person 2-day training in Vancouver twice a year.

On occasion, similar training may be offered by Northern Health. If there are any planned training sessions, current and prospective site leads will be advised.

On top of the above training there is a practical portion, which will be arranged on a site by site basis.

### Responsibilities

#### 1. BCCDC

- Provide guidance and policies
- Provide Health Authority HIV POC Committee with quarterly (and/or as requested) summaries of POC kit use
- Provide training and support to HIV POC sites regarding procurement, distribution, training for quality improvement, trouble-shooting

- Follow-up with sites on positive and uncertain HIV POC test results
  - Report problems / concerns with test kits to Northern Health, Program Director and suppliers as applicable
- 2. Health Authority HIV POC Committee**
- Role of Chair: To prepare the agenda and facilitate meetings
  - Role of Admin Support: To book meetings, take and distribute minutes
  - Assume overall responsibility for coordinating and evaluating community based HIV POC services in NH and for reporting requirements
    - Monitor and allocate the distribution of HIV POC kits
    - Approve new sites, evaluate existing sites and identify when HIV POC services in a community should be discontinued
    - Identify nurse-trainers in each Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA) who might assist with training site staff
    - Develop and implement a framework for monitoring and evaluating sites
- 3. Site Lead**
- Provide a confidential space for discussion/ testing
  - Ensure necessary equipment is available
  - Ensure site staff comply with testing policies
  - Report any problems, additional staff training or support needs to the committee contact
  - Participate in evaluation of site
  - Be accountable for quality assurance
  - Report reactive results to the CD Hub at 250-565-2990
- 4. Tester:**
- Explain HIV POC before testing and offer post-test information
  - Perform client testing and interpret results
  - Deliver test results to client
  - Report reactive results to the site lead
  - Obtain or facilitate the clients' access to venous blood sample for confirmatory testing
  - Participate in HIV POC-related Quality Assurance activities
  - Record usage/results of tests on client testing log
  - Follow policies re: confidentiality of records
  - Report problems / concerns with the test kit to site Lead / BCCDC
- 5. HIV POC Trainers**
- HIV POC training may be provided by designated NH and First Nation (FN) HIV POC trainers
  - BCCDC provides online training, and in person training twice a year at BCCDC
  - NH will strive to have one trainer in each HSDA. Responsibilities may include providing POC practicum observations, and occasionally offering initial and ongoing training to staff

### Changes in use of HIV POC kits

1. Sites' ability to increase their allocation of HIV POC kits is contingent upon having their request reviewed and approved by the Committee. If approved, the Committee Chair will notify BCCDC.
2. When BCCDC reporting indicates a significant reduction in a sites' use of HIV POC kits, the Committee Chair (or designate) will contact the site lead to explore potential barriers or difficulties in the use of kits and determine if additional training and support is needed. **Sites should not redistribute kits without first consulting with BCCDC.**

### **Evaluation**

All sites approved by NH are required to comply with BCCDC quality approval and monitoring processes. Within NH, The Committee will annually review the viability of all sites and reserves the right to discontinue service.

### **Reference**

BCCDC Point of Care (Rapid) HIV Testing Program <http://www.bccdc.ca/our-services/programs/point-of-care-rapid-hiv-testing>

BCCDC Communicable Disease Control Manual, Chapter 5, Point of Care HIV Test Guidelines for Health Care Settings (May 2014) <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/communicable-disease-control-manual/sexually-transmitted-infections>