



## HIV POC Test Providers

Each Health Authority has a team responsible for the implementation of HIV testing across their region. Each Health Authority sets their criteria for determining whether or not HIV POC testing should be offered in a specific setting, and who may do the testing. These decisions include discussions with Indigenous communities. Factors such as cost/benefit and the infrastructure and resources available to support this type of expansion are part of these decisions.

At the time of this update, in Canada, there is a single Health Canada licensed HIV POC test provider for use in community health care settings for testing by healthcare providers. A Health Canada approved over-the-counter HIV self-pay, self-done test is not available.

The Health Canada licensed test is simple to do but requires some training and ongoing competence checks to ensure that test providers are using the test correctly, providing accurate HIV test information and supporting each client being tested. Each organization supporting this testing in BC identifies who is qualified to do the test, and assumes total responsibility for the results and the skills needed to provide this test.

Most HIV POC testing in BC communities is still done by nurses. Organizations wishing to accept responsibility for different test providers or test provider categories should consider the following as they assess the suitability of the candidate:

- Testing requires tasks and safeguards that mean additional work for the test provider or for the organization.
- The number and category of test results and kit usage data is sent to Public Health. (Client identifiers and denominator data are not part of this report.)
- Test providers are expected to supply the client with sufficient information that they make an informed decision on whether a HIV test is appropriate for them at this time, that they are not pressured to make a decision, and which HIV test is most appropriate for them.
- HIV is only one of many sexually transmitted or blood-borne diseases, so discussions should include any risks for these diseases. The test provider should be able to directly engage (or refer) testing protocols for these diseases as needed.
- Based on the result of the test, clients may need additional clinical, emotional or social support.
- Blood is used for testing, so testers require training, practice and resources to meet biohazard safety and waste disposal standards.