

## Rapid HIV Testing Program

**PURPOSE:** According to the Centers for Disease Control, an estimated 1,000,000 people in the US are living with HIV or AIDS. About one quarter of these people do not know they are infected; not knowing puts them and others at risk. As part of our mission to empower the adults and youth we serve, our Rapid HIV Testing program helps people begin to take better care of their health. This impacts not only the individual, but our community as a whole.

**WHOM WE SERVE:** The adults and youth we serve share the circumstances of poverty, loneliness, and the inability to afford and access essential services. Many of the people we see either exhibit or encounter high-risk behaviors.

**SERVICES:** In addition to our Rapid HIV Testing Team, all of our Outreach Professionals are trained and qualified to offer Rapid HIV Testing. Because the set-up to perform the test is minimal, requiring no lab equipment, we can administer the test in all kinds of settings.

Additionally, our nurses and rapid HIV testing professionals provide education and testing for gonorrhea, chlamydia and Hepatitis C. Individuals who test positive are referred to treatment clinics when The Night Ministry is unable to treat the disease.

**HOW RAPID HIV TESTING WORKS:** Our staff provides pretest counseling, including written consent. Then the client wipes the inside of their cheeks with an Oraquick oral swab to collect the test sample. The test device, which looks similar to a pregnancy test, is inserted into the developer solution. While awaiting test results, our professional and the client discuss high-risk behaviors and harm reduction solutions and techniques. The results appear 20 minutes after the test device is inserted into the developer solution: one line will appear if the test is non-reactive, two lines will appear if the test is reactive. If the test is reactive, a confirmatory test must be performed immediately. The OraSure confirmatory test consists of using another oral swab, which gets sent to a lab for analysis, with results returning in about one week. Clients who test reactive will be referred into care upon receiving the OraQuick reactive test result. 99% of all people who get tested stay for their results.

### **The Night Ministry's History of Involvement with Rapid HIV Testing**

In the summer of 2003, The Night Ministry became part of the City of Chicago Rapid HIV Testing Pilot Project and employees were trained in performing the test. In the fall of 2003, the Centers for Disease Control awarded us an Advancing HIV Prevention Grant to conduct rapid HIV testing in a non-clinical setting with a mobile unit, which we also used to help further our Rapid HIV testing.

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