# COMMUNITY BASED STBBi TESTING EVENTS

AN EVENT PLANNING TOOLKIT FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

THIS PROJECT IS A PARTNERSHIP OF THE MB HIV-STBBI COLLECTIVE IMPACT NETWORK AND THE MANITOBA HARM REDUCTION NETWORK. (2021).

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REACH Nexus is a national research group working on how to address HIV, Hepatitis C and other STBBIs (sexually transmitted and bloodborne infections) in Canada. Their focus is on reaching the undiagnosed, implementing and scaling up new testing options, strengthening connections to care, improving access to options for prevention (PrEP and PEP) and ending HIV stigma.

THIS IS VERSION 1.0 VISIT HTTPS://MHRN.CA/ TESTING-TOOLKIT TO DOWNLOAD THE LATEST VERSION

We'd like to thank everyone whose expertise and experience contributed to the development of this toolkit.

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This guide is for community-based organizations, peer groups, and event organizers who are not healthcare professionals but want to increase access to STBBI\* testing in their communities. If you're a healthcare provider who wants to partner with the community this guide has lots to offer you, too! This toolkit can be used to plan any sized event, big or small, with its own budget or just the resources you have on hand and in-kind support from partners.

The Manitoba Harm Reduction Network has been planning participant-led testing events in our communities since 2017, starting with the Swan River Peer Advisory Council, and providing testing at other events for much longer. In 2018 Two Spirit People of MB Inc, Our Own Health Clinic, the JC Wilt Lab and Ka Ni Kanichihk partnered to do testing at the Two Spirit Gathering. Since then there have been many great partnerships across Manitoba to bring STBBI testing to community events.

We've seen the effectiveness of doing testing in the community and have drawn on the experience and input of community-based event organizers, healthcare providers, and most importantly, the groups of participants who have planned, attended, and gotten tested at these events to put together this guide.

# WHY DO COMMUNITY EVENT—BASED TESTING?

Testing at community-based events is an effective way of doing outreach to members of the community who are already engaged with your organization and their friends, families, and extended social networks.

Testing days and access events have seen high rates of testing, connection and facilitated contact to local resources. There are many people who don't get regularly tested for STBBIs and others who never get tested at all, for a wide variety of reasons.

Providing STBBI testing in a community-based setting can be an excellent way to reach people who might not otherwise get tested and to start a conversation about testing in your community. Bringing testing out of a clinical setting and into the community meets people where they're at and can be an effective way to address barriers, as well as link people to primary care and other health and social services.

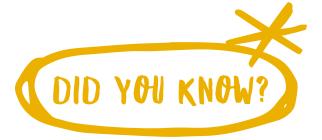
The positive impact of testing at an event can reach far beyond just those who choose to get tested at your event, and beyond the day of your event, increasing access to care and ensuring everyone in our communities have access to the best care possible.

#### STBBIS IN MANITOBA

All STBBI have been steadily increasing in Manitoba since 2017, and STBBIs are found in all health regions in the province. Testing is essential in addressing rising numbers, and in 2020 we saw a decrease in testing in response to the pandemic.

For a detailed overview of STBBI data in Manitoba check out the Manitoba HIV Program Report, Manitoba Epidemiology and Surveillance reports, or talk to your local public health nurse to get a more up to date picture of what's happening in your community.

The bottom line is that STBBIs are in Manitoba and impact all of our communities, and community based testing provides community members with resources to meet their sexual health needs.



SYPHILIS RATES IN MANITOBA INCREASED ALMOST 650% BETWEEN 2017 AND 2019.

IN 2019 MANITOBA HAD 8280 CASES OF CHLAMYDIA.

IN 2018 MANITOBA HAD THE THIRD HIGHEST RATE OF NEW HIV DIAGNOSES IN CANADA.

# "I TRUST YOU. I'D NEVER GO IN TO REQUEST THIS KIND OF TESTING BEFORE."

- PINE FALLS PEER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER

The Powerview-Pine Falls-Sagkeeng Harm Reduction Network, Pine Falls
Peer Advisory Council, and IERHA Public Health nurse partnered to organize
a mobile testing event in September of 2020. The participant-led model and
strong relationship between participants and service providers created a space
where people felt comfortable enough to get tested for the first time.

# A NOTE ON PLANNING EVENTS DURING COVID:

A lot has changed since the beginning of 2020, particularly the ways in which communities connect, people gather, services are accessed, and events are planned. The pandemic has forced us to get creative when it comes to what an event looks like and how to plan one.

For many people, the pandemic has severely limited access to services and has created even greater barriers to getting STBBI testing, treatment, and connection to care, but we know that people are still having sex, using drugs, and getting STBBIs. The need to make testing safe and accessible is greater than ever.

We'll offer ideas for planning more typical events, where people get together in groups, because the pandemic won't be here forever. We'll also offer ideas for planning events that are small, asynchronous, or more focused around time than bringing groups of people together at a specific location, because the pandemic is here now and so are STBBIs

# THINKING ABOUT REASONS FOR TESTING

#### Why DO people get tested?

People may choose to get tested; as part of their routine healthcare; when they start a new relationship; when they have a possible exposure; when they've been identified through contact tracing; when they have symptoms.

If someone is ambivalent about testing or they don't consider it a high priority at the moment, making it really easy, fast, accessible, comfortable, and convenient, (plus pairing it up with other incentives) may motivate them to get tested now, instead of maybe someday later.

Consider the personal and social reasons why people may choose to get tested or to take other actions in their life:

- Feels Valuable (Important, Rewarding, Empowering)
- To feel safe
- Thinking about my future
- To take care of my needs
- To feel in control of my life
- Recommended by someone I trust
- Someone I love asked me to
- To feel accepted
- Social conventions and expectations.

By considering all of the different things that might motivate people, we can factor these into our event planning and communication, and do our best to meet people's needs.

#### Why people DON'T get tested?

There are many barriers to getting tested! Some are very significant and systemic, but even seemingly small barriers can be significant to an individual or group, and barriers add up.

People don't get tested when the risks, costs, or challenges to getting tested feel like they outweigh the benefits. The risks, costs, and challenges can feel very certain and immediate and the benefits can feel distant or uncertain.

How can you address some of these barriers when planning your event?



#### SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

Our healthcare system was not designed to be accessible, safe, and welcoming for everyone. While there are many healthcare providers who work hard to be kind, compassionate, and fair to everyone; racism, colonization, and other forms of discrimination are built into the healthcare system - into all of our systems, in fact.

This results in policies, professional norms, and assumptions that erode dignity, are coercive, and result in inappropriate or insufficient care or even abuse when people try to access healthcare.

Our systems also create circumstances that make it difficult or impossible for people to access the care they want and need, such as poverty; communities with no public transportation, no clinic, or only one healthcare provider; limited service hours; or inflexible ID requirements.

#### STIGMA

Individual, social, cultural and religious attitudes about sex, drug use, and disease impact peple's decisions around testing. They may not get tested to avoid shame and judgement, or out of fear that their privacy will be violated.

Healthcare providers may avoid talking about sexual health or offering STBBI testing, or downplay the importance of it, because of their own discomfort or their assumptions about what kind of people have sex, use drugs, or are at risk for STBBIs.

#### MISINFORMATION

Stigma makes it difficult to talk about STBBIs, ask questions, share information, or even think about STBBIs.

This creates an environment where it's very easy for myths, assumptions, and misinformation to spread, and difficult for people to access accurate and up to date information. Some people may be basing their decisions around testing on misinformation and make different choices with new information.

"LAST TIME THE NURSE WAS RACIST TO ME"

"THEY NEVER TAKE ME SERIOUSLY THERE"

"NO ONE WHO WORKS THERE SPEAKS MY LANGUAGE"

"DOCTORS CAN'T BE TRUSTED, THEY CALLED CFS ON MY COUSIN FOR NO REASON."

"MY GENDER ISN'T REPRESENTED ON THE INTAKE FORM"

"THEY CALLED THE POLICE ON ME WHEN I COMPLAINED ABOUT HOW I WAS BEING TREATED"

"THEY ASSUME I'M STRAIGHT, ASK THE WRONG QUESTIONS AND GIVE ME BAD ADVICE"

"I WORK TWO MINIMUM WAGE JOBS, WHEN WOULD I HAVE THE ENERGY?"

"I CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE TIME OFF WORK"

"I NEED TO ARRANGE CHILD CARE"

"I HAVE NO WAY TO GET TO THE CLINIC"

"I LOST MY HEALTH CARD SO THEY WON'T SEE ME"

"THE ONLY NURSE IS MY AUNT"

"SOMEONE MIGHT SEE ME THERE AND GOSSIP"

"THEY MADE ME FEEL DIRTY, SO
I'M NOT GOING BACK"

"IF I HAVE HIV EVERYONE WILL SHUN ME. IT'S BETTER TO NOT KNOW"

"MY DOCTOR SEES MY WHOLE FAMILY"

"I DON'T WANT ANOTHER LECTURE ABOUT CONDOMS"

"MY DOCTOR TOLD ME I DIDN'T NEED TO BE TESTED"

"PEOPLE LIKE ME DON'T GET STBBIS"

"THERE'S NO CURE SO WHAT'S THE POINT?"

"I HAVEN'T HAD VERY MANY PARTNERS"

"I'M IN A MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIP"

"WE ONLY HAD ORAL SEX SO THERE'S NO RISK"

"I CLEANED MY NEEDLE WITH BLEACH SO IT'S SAFE TO SHARE"

"I ONLY SHARE MY COOKERS, NOT MY NEEDLES SO IT'S OKAY"

"I DON'T HAVE SYMPTOMS AND I WOULD KNOW IF I HAD AN INFECTION"

> "I ALREADY HAD HEP C AND GOT CURED, SO I DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT IT AGAIN"

# PRIORITY POPULATION VS GENERAL PUBLIC

Throughout this guide we will be referring to the general population and priority populations.

Priority populations are specific groups of people who your organization may work with or who may disproportionately experience barriers to accessing services and getting tested. In this guide priority populations are whoever you are working with or want to reach through your event.

#### PRIORITY POPULATIONS IN PUBLIC HEALTH

When it comes to STBBIs in Canada, these groups are typically considered priority populations by public health. These groups are considered more at risk for STBBIs due to the social and structural determinants of health, such as discrimination, colonization, and lack of access to healthcare.

- Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples)
- Gay, bisexual, two-spirit, and other MSM (men who have sex with men)
- People who use substances, including injection drugs
- People who are or have been in prison
- Youth at risk
- Women at risk
- People from African, Caribbean, Black (ACB), and other countries where HIV is endemic, including newcomers
- People who are living with HIV/AIDS
- Other population groups, such as those without legal status in Canada or without health insurance and people without a family doctor

#### **YOUR EVENT**

Depending on the priorities of your organization, the nature of your event, and other factors, you may decide to focus on reaching the general population or a priority population.

We know that for the general population STBBI testing rates are much lower than recommended. Testing Guidelines recommend that everyone age 18-70 get tested for HIV every five years, but only a small percentage of the population has ever received an HIV test. And from the general population, people who are sexually active, even in long term relationships, should be getting routinely tested for STBBIs once a year, but most don't.

However, in our experience, events that have focused on reaching a priority population have had much higher positivity rates and a more meaningful positive impact than those that target the general population. You can use this guide to plan an event for a priority population or the general public, but we'll be focusing more on planning with priority populations.

# A TESTING EVENT? OR AN EVENT WITH TESTING?

You can plan an event with STBBI testing at its centre, or bring STBBI testing to an event with a different focus.

You may partner with an event organizer to bring a testing booth to a bigger event, like a street party, health or wellness fair, sporting event, cultural festival, or music festival. It doesn't have to be a big event either; you could bring testing to a bar night or bingo. Or testing can be added on to an activity like delivering holiday hampers or other regular outreach. If something is already being planned, you may be able to partner up and offer STBBI testing.

You may also plan an event that centres testing and then build other services, activities, and incentives around that.

#### When deciding which direction to go, first consider who you want to reach:

For connecting with the general population it may be more effective to bring testing to a bigger event where people are already going to be - much like testing in a clinical setting, enticing people to come to an event focused on STBBI testing through passive marketing can be a hard sell.

#### When planning a testing event with a priority population there are a broader range of considerations to take into account:

- Which format is more likely to make participants feel safe and comfortable?
- What type of event will participants show up to?
- What type of event better reduces barriers created by stigma and fears around confidentiality?
- What kind of marketing or outreach is needed for each format?
- Which format will not only get people to show up but also to meaningfully engage and get tested?

When putting on a testing event for a priority population, you'll be able to answer these questions, make good choices, and plan a successful event by making sure that the participants are equal partners in the planning process from the early ideas stage, right through running the event, and then debriefing and evaluating.

# ABOUT US WITHOUT US

This slogan was popularized in English by disability activists and has been adopted by many other marginalized groups since.

# BY US + FOR US PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT IN PLANNING

The best events create connections between service providers, community members, elders, and others who are trusted by the priority population and community you are planning with. Brainstorm with the participants about what kind of event they are interested in. You can share ideas from this guide to get started!

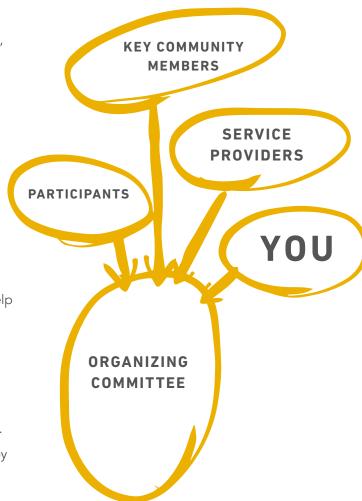
Participants may identify an upcoming or existing event that they want to partner with, or may want to plan an event focused on testing.

#### BUILDING AN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

If you're planning your own event, have participants identify who they want to come help and what they could offer. Then invite all those folks to join your organizing committee! The organizing committee should consult regularly with the wider community to build the kind of event that they want to attend.

The other way people will be engaged is through service provision and tables or booths.

The organizer will contact services requested by the community.



For communities that may have difficulty accessing services or transportation, there is great value in bringing together a variety of resources in a one-stop-shop. This may include offering services and/or information and referrals to service such as:

- Primary health
- Pap tests
- Prenatal care
- Women's Health
- Men's Health
- Diabetes and glucose testing
- Nutrition
- Dentist
- Vaccinations & flu clinics
- Drug checking
- Harm reduction supplies
- Naloxone distribution
- Forms and support for getting identification/applying for programs
- Food banks
- Veterinary services

This isn't just an opportunity for a one-off interaction, but a chance to start a relationship and link people to health services including primary care in a space they feel safe and comfortable. Healthcare providers and service providers who participate in an event can provide a safe connection to services that some folks might never otherwise connect with.

#### PARTICIPANT-LED MODEL

A participant-led model is an effective way to have successful events. In a participant-led event participants plan the event, help run the event, and also bring their friends, family and other members of their community to the event.

Populations that experience discrimination and barriers to services often have good reasons to distrust service providers, particularly when it comes to sensitive and stigmatized topics like STBBIs. The best way you can get people to

your event and have them feel safe participating is for the event to be by and for the community. When participants are part of planning and do outreach and spread the word, the relationships, trust, and credibility they have in their communities and social circles will bring people out in a way that an invitation from a service provider or community organization, a poster, or a social media ad can not.

# AFTER THE EVENT: HOW WILL PEOPLE GET THEIR RESULTS?

Some of the barriers that prevent people from getting tested will also prevent them from getting their results and connecting with treatment.

#### **PLAN A FOLLOW UP EVENT**

Plan an event two to three weeks after your testing event, where participants can connect with a nurse about their results or ask questions in the same location and welcoming environment where they got tested.

#### **TAKE MESSAGES**

Participants may not have a phone number where public health can reach them, but might come into your organization or be reachable through other channels like social media. Consider offering to take messages at your organization with the consent of the participant.

Make it clear to the participant that the message will not contain any personal health information or mention of STBBI testing, and will simply be a message asking them to call back.

# PARTNERING WITH HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

In most cases, you will need to partner with a healthcare provider, usually a nurse, to offer testing at your event. Your local public health office, community health office, health centre, or nursing station is a great place to start when finding a healthcare provider to partner with.

Your healthcare provider partner will be responsible for handling patient care and personal health information, collecting samples and getting them to the lab, and then notifying participants of their test results.

Other organizations that work directly with priority populations, sexual health, or harm reduction and have nurses on staff may also be good partners in your event.

Participating in a testing event can be an effective way for a healthcare provider to build relationships with the participants, but also build a reputation as a safe provider with the participants' extended networks of friends and family. Clinics that partner on testing events may see an increase in testing and an influx of new patients after an event, as participants refer others there.

#### OFF-RESERVE:

YOU CAN FIND THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICE AT HTTPS://WWW.GOV.MB.CA/HEALTH/ PUBLICHEALTH/OFFICES.HTML

#### ON RESERVE:

YOU CAN FIND THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR NURSING STATION OR HEALTH CENTRE AT HTTPS://WWW. GOV.MB.CA/HEALTH/PUBLICHEALTH/ DOCS/FIRSTNATIONSOFFICES.PDF

#### IN WINNIPEG:

KLINIC

NINE CIRCLES

OUR OWN HEALTH CENTRE

WRHA HEALTHY SEXUALITY & HARM REDUCTION, STREET CONNECTIONS

## EVENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

During COVID-19 it has often not been safe or possible to bring people together in groups and host typical events. Public health restrictions may limit us to very small groups, and participants may not feel comfortable coming to group events even if they are allowed. It can be tempting to say that we'll just wait until the pandemic is over to do STBBI testing, but both STBBIs and barriers to testing are on the rise.

STBBI TESTING IN A COMMUNITY SETTING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

#### FOCUS ON "COMMUNITY-BASED" MORE THAN "EVENT"

Get creative with ways to bring testing into the community. Think of ways you can bring testing to folks and provide additional benefits outside of what is regularly available in your community.

- A day of home visits for testing
- Offer testing with your regular outreach activities
- Schedule drop in slots to keep groups small throughout the day
- Partner with key participants to plan very small events in their homes

#### **PLAN FOR CHANGE**

Things can change quickly and planning events in advance can be challenging. When possible, build in backup plans to accommodate increased restrictions, people changing their minds about what feels safe, and event organizers getting sick or having to quarantine. Sometimes you might just need to cancel completely - healthcare staff may be redeployed suddenly and you may have no one who can do testing.

Have a plan for communicating changes to folks who might attend, and make it clear how and where they can get up to date information about your event. Social media is an effective way to reach many people, but in communities with poor access to the internet communicating changes might be done by word of mouth.

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Provide masks
- Hand washing/sanitizing stations
- Plan outdoor events when possible
- Individually packaged food and drinks instead of serving from shared dishes
- Disposable or individual items like pens, eating utensils
- Fun activities while physical distancing
- Screening for symptoms and exposure at the door

We won't be in this pandemic forever, but the creativity, flexibility, and infection control practices we've all had to develop can be applied to future flu seasons and broadly in our regular service provision and event planning. Let's try to keep things fun; laughter is medicine.

# PLANNING A WELCOMING EVENT SAFE, FUN, AND RELEVANT

Event-based testing needs to feel safe for participants. In line with the principles of harm reduction, this means it needs to meet people where they are at, free of judgement, and talk openly about risk factors, current trends, and sex and substance use in a destigmatizing way.

#### **WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT**

There are a multitude of things that can contribute to a welcoming environment, your organizing committee should decide what this means to them and put those ideas into practice! At a minimum the space should include:

- Food and drinks (snacks are good, meals are better)
- Comfortable places to wait and socialize
- Bathrooms
- Harm reduction supplies including condoms and safer drug use supplies
- A private place to be tested or talk

#### **FUN**

Having fun activities at your event can increase engagement and encourage more people to attend and get tested. If you're offering testing at a larger event making your booth fun will help attract attention and get people curious. At an



#### WELCOMING SIGNALS

Coming to an event for the first time can take courage for people who are used to experiencing discrimination in healthcare. They should feel welcome before they even talk to anyone.

You can do this through visuals like signs or t-shirts with welcoming messages, or decorating with recognizable symbols, colours, or cultural images. Volunteers at MHRN events wear I <3 Someone Who Uses Drugs t-shirts. You could decorate with rainbows to welcome LGBTQ+ folks or red umbrellas to welcome sex workers.

DON'T JUST LIMIT IT TO VISUALS!
SOUNDS LIKE MUSIC OR DRUMMING,
OR SMELLS LIKE TRADITIONAL
FOODS OR SMUDGE CAN TELL PEOPLE
THAT THIS SPACE IS FOR THEM.

event not focused on sexual health and harm reduction, attendees may not be expecting to be offered testing or may not be thinking testing is for them. Fun activities are a good way to start a meaningful interaction and make people comfortable enough to stick around and learn more.

At a testing-focused event, providing fun activities will encourage people to stick around, bring their friends, and can be important for giving people things to do while they're waiting for or are deciding on a test. Family, children, or friends may also need something to do while waiting for the person they came with to get tested.

#### Check out these ideas or think of your own!

- Workshops on STBBI transmission, relationships, consent, naloxone
- Tables from community partners
- Carnival or sexual health games
- Bingo
- Cards and cribbage boards
- Prizes!
- Collaborative art projects
- Crafting table
- Make it look like a party with music and decorations

Make sure to include space for folks to sit, relax, and socialize - having a good time is as much about connection as activities.

#### WELCOMING PARENTS AND PREGNANT PEOPLE

It's easy and common for event planners to overlook the needs of parents and pregnant people, or make it an afterthought. Anyone who has had small kids knows there are extra challenges to attending events, and if there's any question about accessibility it can be easier and safer to just not go.

Congenital syphilis has made it more important than ever to make testing available to parents and pregnant people.

You can offer specific services, activities, and accommodations to make your event more

welcoming. And don't forget to say that kids are welcome when advertising your event!

#### Childcare

It's hard to get blood drawn and watch your kids at the same time! Organizations that work with families in your community may be able to provide childcare at your event or refer you to trained child minders. In Winnipeg: https://wcwrc.ca/

#### Activities for children

When planning activities to make your event fun, make sure to include some that are kid friendly. If kids aren't engaged parents probably won't stick around. Make sure you have kid-friendly food options too.

### WHAT IS CONGENITAL SYPHILIS?

If you've never heard of congenital syphilis, it's probably because until very recently it was so rare that healthcare providers could go decades without seeing a case.

When a pregnant person has syphilis that isn't treated, they can pass it on to their baby.

IN 2015, MANITOBA HAD THE FIRST CONFIRMED CASE OF CONGENITAL SYPHILIS IN 38 YEARS. CASES HAVE BEEN RAPIDLY INCREASING SINCE THEN, WITH 64 BABIES BORN WITH SYPHILIS IN 2020.

Congenital syphilis is serious pregnant people should be tested and treated while pregnant to prevent miscarriage, stillbirth or severe health problems for the baby



#### Prenatal Care

STBBI testing is part of routine prenatal care, but many of the barriers that prevent people from getting STBBI testing also result in people not accessing prenatal care. It's particularly important for pregnant people to be treated for any STBBIs they might have, as some infections can be serious in infants. Timely treatment during pregnancy can prevent transmission to the baby.

Have a service provider at your event who can support people in accessing prenatal care for the first time, connecting with programs like Families First, STAR FASD, Zaagi'idiwin and Wiijii'idiwag Ikwewag and accessing other prenatal services such as applying for the Manitoba Prenatal Benefit.

#### **Supplies**

Is there a service provider you can partner with to provide formula or free diapers for participants to take home? What about donations from a manufacturer or local store? If not, consider having a small amount of supplies at your event to address any immediate needs that might arise.

#### Private spaces for physical needs

Make sure that the physical needs of parents and babies are met. Do your bathrooms have baby change tables? Is there a private space where people can nurse or pump?

#### **WELCOMING PEOPLE WITH ANIMALS**

People may need to keep their animals with them for a variety of reasons. They may not have a safe home to leave their pets, they may be travelling, or need an emotional support animal. Spaces that don't allow pets can be a big barrier to accessing services. Pets can be an important source of meaning, support, and stability for people. Yet the value of these relationships is often dismissed and people with limited financial resources or options for housing are often pressured to give up their pets or are judged as irresponsible for keeping them. Welcoming animals can provide dignity to their owners.

#### Pet friendly space

Does your venue allow pets inside? If many of your participants keep their animals with them, look for a pet-friendly space or plan an outdoor event. If your event welcomes pets don't forget to put out water.

#### Vet Care

There are few opportunities to access free vet care, so offering it at your event can be a big draw and make a meaningful difference for participants.

In Winnipeg: Community Veterinary Outreach is a non-profit that partners with healthcare and social service providers on pet and health fairs.

Outside of Winnipeg: Reach out to your local vet or animal shelter and see if they will partner with your event.

#### Pet supplies

Pet food and supplies like cat litter can be costly, and people may go without to make sure their pet is cared for. Is there a service provider that distributes pet supplies or can you get donations to give out?

SERVICE ANIMALS AREN'T PETS AND PEOPLE WHO USE SERVICE ANIMALS ARE PROTECTED FROM DISCRIMINATION UNDER THE MANITOBA HUMAN RIGHTS CODE.

# COMMUNICATING ABOUT STBBIS

"JUST SAY NO"

"CLEAN" TO REFER TO A NEGATIVE STBBI TEST OR NOT USING DRUGS

CLOSE UP
PHOTOS OF INFECTIONS
BLAMING LANGUAGE
STEREOTYPES

How we talk about STBBIs, sex and substance use, and what we focus on matters. When we reduce stigma we reduce barriers. Your event is a great opportunity to share information through presentations, printed resources, or educational activities, like sexual health pictionary or harm reduction bingo.

When talking about STBBIs keep the focus on activities that can result in transmission and how to prevent transmission. Focusing on activities provides information that is useful to participants who are deciding whether or not they want to get tested, and it is less stigmatizing.

Think about what information you're sharing in your presentations, resources and activities. Avoid resources and sharing information in a way that is scary or makes people feel ashamed.

And remember, you don't have to share everything you know about STBBIs in this one interaction! Pick a few key messages, make other information available for folks who want it, and focus on building relationships. If people feel safe and comfortable you'll have more opportunities to share information in the future.

TEENTALK HAS A FACILITATION GUIDE WITH DOZENS OF ACTIVITIES, WHICH ARE DESIGNED FOR YOUTH BUT CAN BE ADAPTED TO OTHER AUDIENCES. HTTPS://TEENTALK.CA/SERVICE-PROVIDERS/TOOLS-AND-ACTIVITIES/

Bring printed and interactive resources to your event that participants can take away to review later or share with others. Great resources can also be a good way to start conversations at your event. Choose resources that are relevant to your audience and will be age and culturally appropriate.

You can order free information resources about STBBIs and harm reduction in a variety of languages at https://orders.catie.ca/ - they'll even ship them to you for free.

#### These are some of our favorites:

Flip book: https://orders.catie.ca/book/put-on-something-sexy-condom-flipbook/

HIV foldable chatterbox: https://orders.catie.ca/book/hiv-chatterbox/

Safer Sex Guide booklet: https://orders.catie.ca/book/safer-sex-guide/

# LOGISTICS

#### **PICKING A DATE**

The date and time you choose can make or break an event. It's important to choose a date and time that works well for the folks you want there.

Many services keep regular business hours and are not available when people need them. You may need to plan your event on an evening or weekend even if it means adjusting your own schedule.

Other factors that might impact the date and time:

- Holidays and cultural events
- Childcare
- Work or school hours

#### **VENUE AND PHYSICAL SPACE**

Choosing your venue and setting up your physical space are an important factor in a successful event.

#### Will participants go there?

A spot might seem like the perfect space - a nice layout, easy to get to, affordable to use, great amenities - but some spaces that look great on paper may not be a place that your priority population is willing or able to go. The participants on your planning committee will know if the experiences and perceptions about a place make it a bad choice.

- Not enough privacy
- Bad experiences
  - Rude staff
  - Discrimination

WE PLANNED TESTING EVENTS FOR THE SAME PRIORITY POPULATION BUT IN DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES. MANY OF THE PARTICIPANTS ARE ON EIA, SO IT WAS IMPORTANT TO THINK ABOUT WHEN EIA PAYMENTS ARE MADE WHEN CHOOSING A DATE.

IN ONE COMMUNITY THE PARTICIPANTS CHOSE TO PLAN THEIR EVENT ON "CHEQUE DAY" BECAUSE FOLKS HAVE THEIR BASIC NEEDS MET, THEY'RE FEELING GOOD AND ARE OUT AND ABOUT. THEY'RE INTO GOING TO EVENTS!

IN THE OTHER COMMUNITY THE PARTICIPANTS AVOIDED PLANNING THEIR EVENT ON "CHEQUE DAY", BECAUSE PEOPLE HAVE MONEY AND ARE BUSY DOING OTHER THINGS, SO NO ONE WILL SHOW UP.

THE SAME FACTORS CAN MEAN VERY DIFFERENT THINGS!

- "If I'm seen going there people will assume I have HIV/use drugs"
- Restrictions on who can enter
  - Quick to ban individuals for past behaviour
  - Probation or parole restrictions

#### **Physical Accessibility**

Keep accessibility in mind when choosing a venue. Does your venue have stairs and no elevator? Is there a wheelchair accessible washroom? Do you have to walk long distances or over uneven surfaces to get there? Are there gender neutral washrooms or can you negotiate with the facility to put up gender neutral signs for your event?

#### Geography

Transportation is one of the most significant barriers to getting tested and accessing services in general. Know your participants and choose a location that is convenient for them - ideally one that is walkable.

If your community has public transportation choose a location that's close to major routes and offer bus tokens to participants. Partner with neighbouring communities to arrange transportation to your event via medical transport.

#### SETTING UP YOUR TESTING AREA

Your testing area should be clean, organized, and set up to provide some privacy. The specifics of your testing area will vary depending on what types of testing you're doing. For all types of testing you'll need an area set up to do consultation and intake, and deal with personal health information and paperwork.

- Table
- Two chairs
- Secure storage for documents with personal health information
- Pens
- Blank forms
- Hand sanitizer
- Privacy screen (optional)
- Laptop (optional)

#### **Urine tests:**

- Bathroom access
- Storage for samples
- Provide paper bags for participants to place their samples in and a drop off area.

**Blood Draws:** If you're doing blood draws and have multiple healthcare providers you might need a second, separate area with:

- Gloves, tourniquets, needles, and other sample collection materials
- Sharps containers
- Garbage bins

Your healthcare provider partner who will be doing the testing will be responsible for bringing supplies for collecting personal health information and samples. Others on the organizing committee should plan to be responsible for other items like chairs or garbage bins, and manage set up and clean up.

### UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS OR ROUTINE PRACTICES

Doing testing for STBBIs means possible exposure to blood and bodily fluids. UP/RP are practices that help prevent the spread of infection between service providers and clients.

This includes things like handwashing, wearing gloves, cleaning surface, and proper disposal of sharps.

Your healthcare provider partner will be well versed in these practices. Have them take the lead on ensuring that these practices are followed in your testing area.

# OUTREACH AND MARKETING YOUR EVENT

Encourage your organizing committee and participants at your organization to promote the event to their friends and networks - word of mouth and recommendations from trusted individuals are the most powerful way to bring people out.

Support your word of mouth advertising with flyers or handbills that participants can give out to the people they invite with all the important event information.

Think about who you want to reach and where you might connect with them. Some other marketing ideas:

- Flyers, handbills or posters at partnering organizations
- Posters in public spaces
- Radio ads
- Newspaper ads
- Bar or festival advertising
- Social media posts
- Targeted social media ads (some social media platforms may conflate sexual health and harm reduction ads with adult content. Keep this in mind if social media ads are an important part of your marketing strategy,)

If you're hoping to reach a wide audience and connect with the general public, consider planning your event around a regional, national or global day or event. These events have broad reach and many of them will use their websites or social media accounts to advertise local events that are planned around the same theme.

#### HAVE GOOD TIMING

GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT YOUR EVENT WITH THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF ADVANCED NOTICE. SO THAT PEOPLE SHOW UP.

THINK ABOUT WHO YOUR PARTICIPANTS ARE AND WHAT TYPES OF OUTREACH AND MARKETING YOU'RE DOING.

Some priority populations may have busy schedules or need to plan transportation/childcare. They may need lots of advanced notice to attend.

Some priority populations may have schedules and circumstances that change rapidly. They may prefer to invite their friends and networks closer to the event date.

You can post on social media far in advance and share many times leading up to your event.

Flyers or handbills may be discarded and forgotten about if they're distributed too early.

Paid advertising should be timed strategically to make the most out of your budget.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH
AWARENESS WEEK - MID FEBRUARY
NATIONAL TESTING DAY - JUNE 27
WORLD HEPATITIS DAY - JULY 28
WORLD AIDS DAY - DECEMBER 1
ABORIGINAL AIDS AWARENESS
WEEK - DECEMBER 1-5

# TYPES OF TESTS

In Manitoba, routine STBBI testing is available for HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis. There are other STBBIs that are not part of routine testing, some of which can be tested for when there are symptoms present.

We won't go in-depth about each STBBI in this guide, but you can find information about symptoms, transmission, and treatment online or by talking to the public health nurse in your area.

- https://serc.mb.ca/
- https://ninecircles.ca/
- https://www.catie.ca/

There are a variety of different types of tests that can be used to diagnose STBBIs. The types of tests you offer at your event will depend on a variety of factors, from the facilities available at your venue, to which tests are available, to what type of staff are working your event.



#### HPV (HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS)

HPV is the virus that causes warts and some cancers. HPV is not routinely tested for directly but may be diagnosed when there are symptoms or an abnormal Pap result.

If your event venue has appropriate private space and you have enough nursing staff, consider offering Pap tests, too!

#### HERPES (HERPES SIMPLEX VIRUS)

The herpes virus causes cold sores commonly found around the mouth and face, as well as genital herpes.

Routine testing for herpes is not recommended and not offered in Manitoba. Herpes infections are diagnosed when someone has symptoms, by swabbing the lesion/sore.

#### **TRICHOMONIASIS**

This is a common STI but not part of routine testing. It can be added to the lab requisition for a vaginal swab.

#### BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS AND YEAST

These are not considered sexually transmitted infections, but can be added to the lab requisition if you are offering swab tests at your event.

# LAB TESTS

BLOOD

# DRIED BLOOD SPOT

**BLOOD DRAW** 

# How does it work? How does it work?

A blood sample is collected on a

This is your standard then it is sent to the blood test. Using arm and into vials, is drawn from the a needle blood ab for testing.

## Who can do it?

collect the blood and health care provider regular intravenous Individuals who do injections at home themselves, but a is still required to insert the needle send it to the lab. may prefer to **Phlebotomist** 

# does it test for?

Syphilis Hep C Hep B

# How does it work?

How does it work? The individual being

> urethra. Swabs can also be taken from A swab is used to collect a sample from the throat, anus, vagina or a lesion/sore. piece of special filter

paper. This only requires a finger

## Who can do it?

Most individuals can swab themselves!

> DBS can be done by a healthcare provider,

Who can do it?

trained volunteer

or by the person being tested.

blood from a vein. poke, not drawing

# does it test for?

throat or anus, and can also live in the

a urine test will

(These infections

Chlamydia Gonorrhea

not detect them!)

With symptoms: Chlamydia Gonorrhea Syphilis Herpes

does it test for?

Нер С  $\geq$ 

What do I need?

bathroom

# What do I need?

Access to a bathroom for self swabbing or private room

# \* RAPID TESTS

# How does it work?

This test uses a few drops of blood collected from a finger poke.

# POINT OF CARE TEST

tested urinates into a sample collection

cup then tightly

closes the lid

## Who can do it?

Trained volunteer Nurse

# What do I need?

does it test for?

support, and a plan for confirmatory lab testing and When doing rapid testing at an event it's important to be prepared to provide information, emotional connecting that person to care should someone receive a positive result.

# How do I offer this test?

These tests are not widely available through the health authorities, though some sites may have regular access to them. Talk to your local public health office or community health clinic to see if they have access and can offer rapid testing at your event.

Testing Day in previous years. These tests can also distributed free tests to organizations for National be purchased directly from the manufacturer. You can find out more about the HIV rapid test here: for specific events. The Canadian AIDS Society National organizations may provide free tests https://www.insti.com/how-to-use/

### SELF TEST

## Who can do it?

being tested. It can be distributed by volunteers for people to take home. This test is done by the individual

# What do I need?

share! This should include how to get their home test is reactive (positive). support and a confirmatory test if Just the tests and information to

# How do I offer this test?

governments at this time. We hope 2020 and is currently only available funded by the federal or provincial to purchase - these tests are not The HIV self-test was approved for use in Canada in November that will change soon! Tests can be purchased from Insti, but are quite expensive, and cost may be a barrier to distributing them. https://www.insti.com/

> You'll need a registered healthcare professional at your event to provide lab tests, for doing requisitions and handling personal health information, and ensuring that samples are properly handled and delivered to the lab.

A rapid test for Hepatitis C is approved for use in Canada but is not available in Manitoba.

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# JURISDICTIONAL AND TECHNICAL ISSUES

Jurisdictional issues can create significant barriers to people getting tested. When putting on your event you may have participants from a variety of different jurisdictions. By being aware of jurisdictional issues ahead of time you can ensure that you don't turn away anyone who wants to get tested at your event.

#### **OUT OF PROVINCE HEALTH CARD**

In Manitoba anyone with a health card from any Canadian province or territory can get tested. The person's test results will be sent to the testing nurse as the care provider no matter where their health card is from for follow up and to review the results with the client. If they are positive for any reportable infection the result will also be sent to their home province by the province's surveillance system.

#### NO HEALTH CARD

In many primary care settings an individual is required to show their health card to access care. Many people attending your event may not have a physical copy of their health card with them or at all. Don't turn them away! Using their birthday and full name it's usually easy to find an individual's information. Even if it's not possible to look up the individual's information at your event their sample should be held and every effort should be made to look up their information if they've ever had a Manitoba Health card.

#### **BORDER COMMUNITIES**

If you are planning an event in a border community be mindful of where the event is located - nurses can only provide one-on-one care in the province they're licensed in.

The person's test results will still come to the healthcare provider who did the testing no matter where their health card is from so that the results can be reviewed with the client. If they are positive for any reportable infection the result will also be sent to their home province by the province's surveillance system.

#### ON AND OFF RESERVE

If you're planning an event that is off reserve, think about how to engage with neighbouring Indigenous communities. This may include recruiting their nurse or wellness coordinator to the organizing committee or inviting them to bring folks to the event via the medical van.

# PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

People often cite concerns about privacy and confidentiality as reasons for why they don't get tested for STBBIs.

#### PHOTOS AT EVENTS

Be sure to get written consent from any individuals who participate in your testing event or visit your testing booth at a bigger event before taking photos. Even if you're providing STBBI information in a public space it's important to err on the side of caution - asking permission is important for making individuals safe and building trust with your community.

If you want to take photos of your event consider doing so once setup is complete but before people arrive, and stick to only having staff and volunteers in your photos. This eliminates the risk of using a participant's image in a way that they're not okay with and you can use your event photos on social media, in reports, or promotional materials without concern.

#### PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

By partnering with a healthcare provider for events, you, your organizing committee and volunteers can avoid handling personal health information entirely. Personal health information for participants should be handled with care and only seen by those who need to see it.

You should be aware of regulations governing personal health information and your responsibilities around personal health information, particularly the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA). You can access free training on PHIA here: https://trainingtodo.com/mbhealth/secure/index.asp

#### **GETTING TEST RESULTS**

Anyone who gets tested at your event will be contacted directly by the Regional Health Authority if their test comes back positive or any other follow up is needed. As organizers you should not be asking for or receiving test results for individuals, as this is confidential information.

You may need to support healthcare providers with connecting with the event participants after the event but this should never involve results or personal health information being shared with you. Think about planning a post testing event and offering to take messages for participants who don't have a phone.

#### REPORTABLE INFECTIONS

Under the Public Health Act, when these infections are diagnosed the healthcare provider must notify the chief public health officer. Reporting infections helps with keeping accurate statistics, making good public health decisions, and contact tracing. STBBIs including HIV, syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and hepatitis B and C are reportable, but so are many other infections, like influenza, rabies, and tetanus.

Having a reportable infection doesn't reduce your right to privacy and confidentiality!

# TRACKING AND EVALUATION

#### **EVALUATION**

Have people evaluate the event and track statistics. Talk with your organizing committee about this before the event and make a plan! We've included a sample evaluation form in this guide, but a paper evaluation may not be a good fit for the nature of your event or your participants.

Other evaluation tools you may use could include having a poster where participants can write comments during the event or having a focus group with participants after the event is over.

Evaluation is important to organizers and funders but may not be a priority for participants. Consider providing an incentive for participating in the evaluation process, such as a prize draw or honorarium for people who complete a paper evaluation, or an honorarium and food for joining a focus group.

After the event, bring together the organizing committee to do a thorough review of stats collected, what went well, and what challenges were encountered. All this great info can be used next time!



#### USING TESTING CODES TO COLLECT STATS

#### What is a testing code? Why use one?

A testing code is added to a lab requisition form which is then sent to Cadham Provincial Laboratory, along with a blood, urine or swab sample for testing. Using a testing code allows the lab to track which tests were performed at your event. Using a testing code makes it easy to know how many tests were performed and what the positivity rate for your event is. Testing codes are only used to aggregate data - they won't reveal confidential test results for any of the individuals who were tested at your event!

The total number of tests and the positivity rate is valuable data for evaluating your event and requesting funding to put on additional events. Having this data in a timely manner will also support your community in identifying and responding to any outbreaks or trends that are identified through testing at your event.

By using the testing code in this guide you can get data for your specific event and we will also be able to see data for all events that this guide supported. Collecting this information helps support the development of best practices when it comes to testing people outside of a clinical setting.

#### How to use the testing code

When doing tests at your event the testing nurses will need to:

- 1. Include the Medical Officer of Health for your health authority in the "report copy to" box on the CPL req.
- 2. Add the investigation code to the "Outbreak Code" box on the CPL reg.

The 2021 testing code for Community event-based testing is: Si21\_013

Testing codes and this process will be renewed periodically by the lab. If you're using an old copy of this guide please visit https://mhrn.ca/testing-toolkit for the most up to date information on using testing codes to track and evaluate your event.

#### **HOW TO GET RESULTS?**

Contact David Alexander at Cadham Provincial Laboratory within a few days of your event. David.Alexander@gov.mb.ca

Once test results are in you will receive information about the total number of tests done for each STBBI and the positivity rate. You will not receive the names of individuals tested or their results.

#### Medical Officers of Health as of January 1, 2021

NRHA: Dr. Michael Isaac

PMH: Dr. Amy Frykoda

Dr. Mahmoud Khodaveisi

IERHA: Dr. Tim Hilderman

Dr. Karen Robinson

SHSS: Dr. Davinder Singh

WRHA: Dr. Pierre Plourde

Dr. Marcia Anderson

Dr. Joss Reimer

Cadham Provincial Laboratory	Manitoba 🗪				
General Requisition					
ONLY ONE SPECIMEN TYPE PER R	EQUISITION				
All areas of the requisition must be co See back for requisition/specimen ins					
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3Y1 E-mail: ca	945-6123   786-4770 dham@gov.mb.ca www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cpl				
RELEVANT CLINICAL INFORMATION		PATIENT INFORMATION			
Outbreak Code:	☐ In-Patient ☐ Out-Patient	PHIN:	MB Health I	Reg.#	
Reason for Test:					
☐ Needlestick ☐ Sexual Assault ☐ I	Other: Pregnant II Immune Status	Alternate ID: RCMP# Other Provinces/Territories Military # Other:			
Relevant History:		Uninsured:   Ch	eque/Money Ord	der end	losed   Payment to follo
□ Autopsy □ Diabetes □ Cancer/Chemotherapy □ Dialysis	☐ Food Borne Illness ☐ Transplant	Date of Birth:	Sex: M F L	JA	Chart/Clinic/Lab#
Signs and Symptons:  Bonchiolits   Fever   Lymphadenopathy  Conjunctivitis   Gastrointestinal   Preumonia    Diarrhea   Influenza-Like Illness   Rash  Encephalis   Jaundice		Patient Legal Last Name		First	Name
		Street or Other (e.g., Genera	I Delivery)		Phone #
☐ Other: Travel/Treatment History:	City/Municipality/First Nation	s Reserve		Postal Code	
		RETURN REPORT TO:			
SPECIMEN INFORMATION		Ordering Practitioner	Last Name		First name Initial(s
Specimen Type:	Specimen Source:	Facility			
Collected at:	Date/Time:	Facility Address			City/Town
COPY REPORT TO:		1 dulity / dulicos			City/ IOIII/
Other Practitioner Last Name	First name	Postal Code	Phone #		Secure Fax #
Facility	Secure Fax #	After Hours Contact # for Critical Results:			
SEROLOGY		PARASITOLOGY			
Serology Test Panels (see #1 over)		Skin Scrapings dentification	☐ Pir	nworm Examination	
	Prenatal HIV OPT OUT (2)	MICROBIOLOGY			
	Syphilis Screen	Bacteriology			
Hepatitis	-21	☐ Culture & Sensitivity (C&S ☐ MRSA Screen			ile Toxin Testing
☐ HAV IgG (Immunity) ☐ HAV IgM (acute HAV infection) ☐	HBcAb (Total) ☐ HBsAg HBsAb (Immunity) ☐ HCV Ab	☐ MRSA Screen ☐ Helicobacter pylori Culture ☐ Other: ☐ Spore/Sterilizer Testing Gonorrhea			
Nucleic Acid (Plasma Only)   □ WNV PCR □ HCV Gen	stuning	☐ Gonorrhea Culture			
☐ HBV PCR/QUANT ☐ HCV PCR	Chlamydia & Gonorrhea Screen (NAAT)  Urine (APTIMA Urine Tube/Yellow)  Urethra (APTIMA Unisex Swab)				
Miscellaneous Serology		☐ Cervix (APTIMA Unisex S	wab)	□ Oth	er:
Measles □ IgM □ IgG Mumps □ IgM □ IgG	Acute         Immune Status         Acute         Immune Status         Referral Isolate:           □ IgM         □ IgG         CMV         □ IgM         □ IgG         □ IgM         □ IgG         □ IgM         □ IgM <td< td=""><td>, .</td><td>3 Subtyping</td></td<>			, .	3 Subtyping
Rubella 🗆 IgM 🗀 IgG Varicella 🗀 IgM 🗀 IgG	HSV ☐ IgM ☐ IgG Parvo B19 ☐ IgM ☐ IgG Toxoplasma ☐ IgM ☐ IgG	VIRUS DETECTION (must s	specify virus re	queste	ed)
□ Lyme Ab □ H. pylori Ab □	WNV □ IgM  Mycoplasma pneumoniae IgM	☐ Viral Detection ☐ PCR/NAAT(specify)			
OTHER TESTS OR REQUESTS	тусорназтна рпешпопнае ідм				
OTHER 12313 OR REQUESTS					

### 4

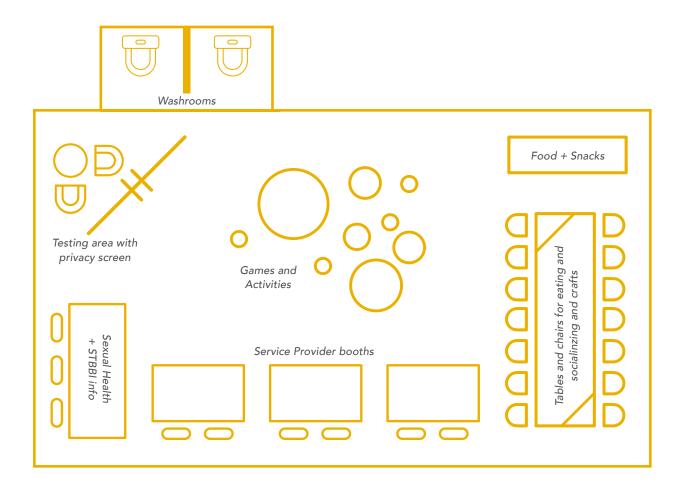
#### THE FORM LOOKS LIKE

The latest CPL forms can be downloaded here: https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cpl/general.html

Your healthcare provider partner who is doing the testing will be responsible for bringing all required forms and paperwork.

# SAMPLE MATERIALS

#### **FLOORPLAN**



# SAMPLE MATERIALS

#### **TESTING EVENT EVALUATION**

Date of	f event:					
		Gender:				
		e ones you agree				
		Comfortable			Well organized	
O I go O I dic	t tested today t tested for the fi In't get tested bu In't need to get t	ut I plan to soon				
Someth	ning you learned	today that you wo	ould share	with a friend		
Someth	ning you enjoyed	l about today				
Comoth	sing you would a	hange about toda	.,			
	iiig you would c	mange about toda	у			
Someth	ning I would like	to learn more abo	ut			
Y / N	I would come to I like the location The time was co	1				
How di	d you hear abou	t this event?				

# QUESTIONS? WE REALLY TO BE A CONTROLLY TO BE A C

Do you need additional support in planning your event? Tell us about your plans and where you're located. We can connect you with one of our partners with community-based testing experience, or connect you to local resources.

Do you have questions or feedback about the toolkit? Did you use this toolkit to plan an event? We'd love to hear from you and incorporate your feedback into the next version of this living document.

https://mhrn.ca/testing-toolkit-contact



THIS IS VERSION 1.0
VISIT HTTPS://MHRN.CA/TESTING-TOOLKIT
TO DOWNLOAD THE LATEST VERSION