



Renfrew County and District Health Unit

"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

Public Health Alert

To: Renfrew County Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, and CHCs

Date: April 5, 2023

From: Dr. Jason Morgenstern, Acting Medical Officer of Health RCDHU

Subject: **New Ontario HIV Testing Guidelines**

Dear Colleagues:

Ontario has released new guidance for HIV testing, developed by the Ontario HIV Treatment Network, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario (PHO), the Ontario College of Family Physicians, and Ontario-based clinicians and testing providers. Please find attached a memorandum from the Ministry of Health (available only in English) and the new *Ontario Guidelines for Providers Offering HIV Testing*. The guidelines can also be accessed at [HIVTestingOntario.ca](https://www.hivtestingontario.ca).

When reviewing the guidelines, please note that the new testing guidelines aim to:

- Recognize advances in HIV testing technologies in Ontario and reduce the window period for definitively diagnosing HIV through laboratory-based diagnostic serology to 6 weeks (from 3 months previously); however, the window period remains 3 months for HIV point-of-care tests and self-tests (p. 10)
- Diagnose people living with HIV as early as possible through a four-pronged approach to HIV testing (p. 4):
 1. Find new/recent infections;
 2. Find chronic infections;
 3. Offer testing to at-risk members of populations with high rates of HIV; and
 4. Identify people in other specific care situations who should be tested for HIV
- Identify people at high risk for acquiring HIV and connect them with prevention services, including post-exposure prophylaxis [PEP] (p. 12) and pre-exposure prophylaxis [PrEP] (see [Canadian Guidelines](#) in the Canadian Medical Association Journal or visit ontarioprep.ca/clinician/ from the Ontario HIV Treatment Network)

An algorithm that summarizes the recommendations is included in the guidelines (p. 6).