

# GetaTest: Rapid HIV Testing in Ottawa and Toronto Pharmacies



## BACKGROUND

- ▶ 14% of Ontarians living with HIV are likely unaware of their status.<sup>1</sup> Innovative testing approaches are necessary in order to increase testing rates to reach undiagnosed HIV-positive Ontarians.
- ▶ To improve access to HIV testing, the OHTN partnered with The Village Pharmacy in Toronto and Shoppers Drug Mart (Gladstone and Bank location) in Ottawa to deliver free, rapid, HIV point-of-care testing in pharmacies through the GetaTest program.
- ▶ GetaTest launched in Toronto in November 2019, and in Ottawa in January 2020

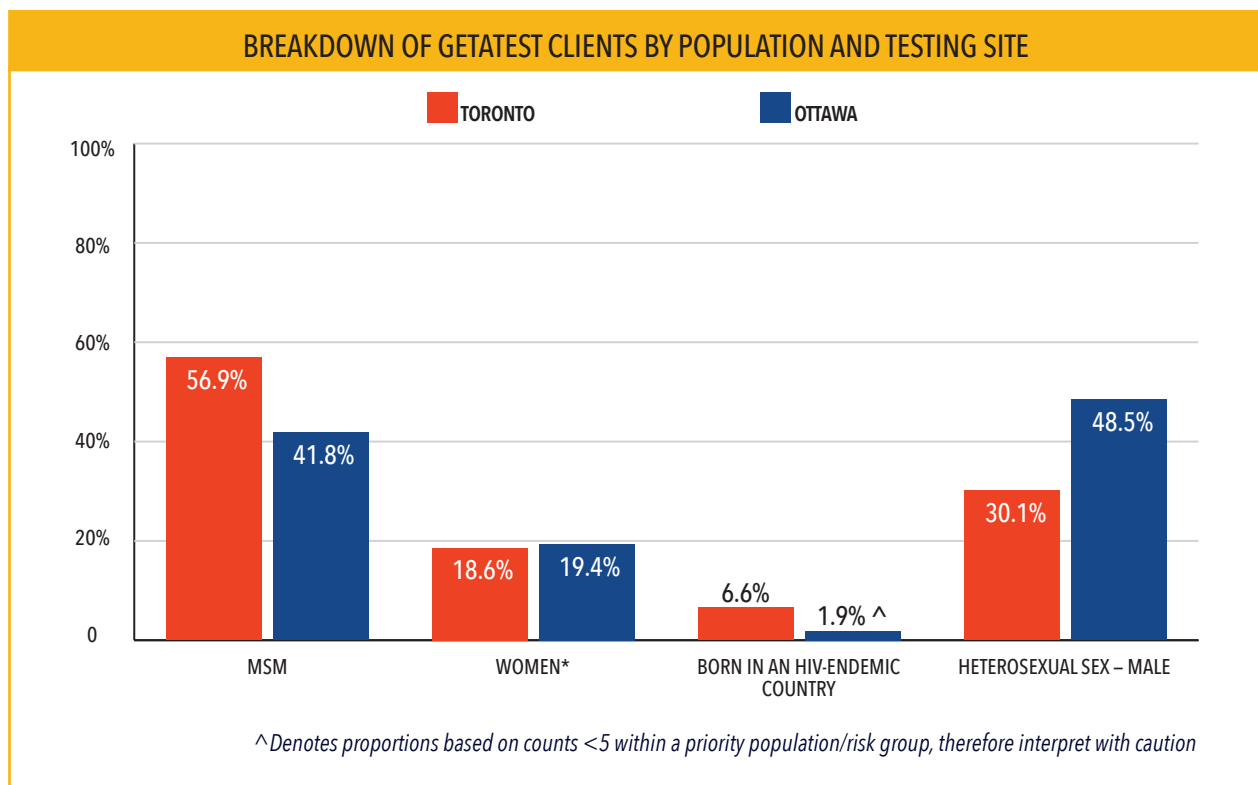
## TESTING



<sup>1</sup> Canadian statistic. Public Health Agency of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/summary-estimates-hiv-incidence-prevalence-canadas-progress-90-90-90.html>

## CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- ▶ The majority of service users identified as white, male, and between the ages of 20-29. Men who have sex with men (MSM) made up the highest percentage of testing recipients across almost all age groups.
- ▶ Both sites were equally effective at reaching women<sup>2</sup>. Notably, there were a high level of testing done by heterosexual men and women.
- ▶ Both Toronto and Ottawa testing sites were effective at reaching women\*. The Toronto site reached a greater percentage of service users who identified as MSM or who were born in an HIV-endemic country<sup>3</sup>, while the Ottawa site reached a higher percentage of heterosexual men.
- ▶ Based on requisition data where sexual orientation and gender were known (n=604), 54.3% (n=328) of clients self-identified as MSM; 18.7% (n=113) identified as women; 10.3% (n=62) identified as Black; 0.17% (n=1) identified as Indigenous; and 0.33% (n=2) identified as a person who uses injection drugs (PWID). These categories are not mutually exclusive.



<sup>2</sup> Women\* includes cisgender and transgender women

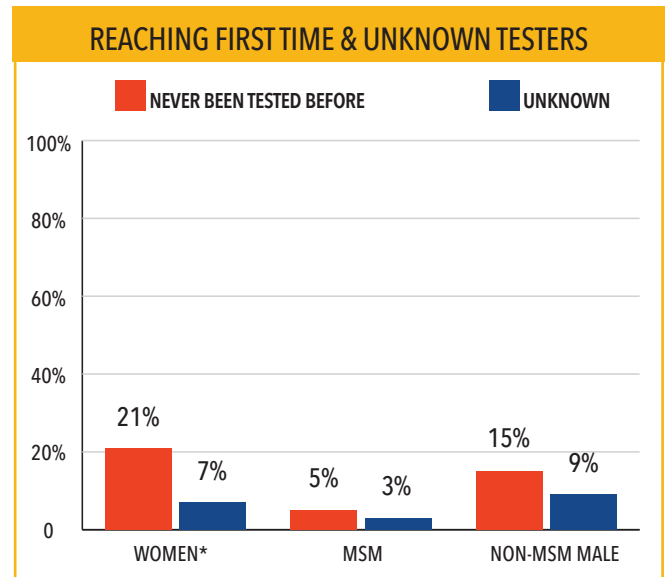
<sup>3</sup> The Public Health Agency of Canada defines countries where HIV is endemic as those countries where the prevalence of HIV among adults (age 15-49 years) is 1.0% or greater and one of the following: 50% or more of HIV cases are attributed to heterosexual transmission; a male to female ratio of 2:1 or less among prevalent infections; or HIV prevalence greater than or equal to 2% among women receiving prenatal care. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/summary-estimates-hiv-incidence-prevalence-canadas-progress-90-90-90.htm>

## TESTING HISTORY

- ▶ This program was fairly effective at reaching first-time testers, with 21.2% of women, 5.2% of MSM, and 15.3% of non-MSM men reporting never having tested for HIV.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF TESTING

- ▶ Service users reported high satisfaction with the experience of pharmacy point-of-care testing.
- ▶ Service users reported very high satisfaction with the time it took to get tested, and the complete testing experience.
- ▶ 100% of the clients perceived HIV testing to be important.



## ENCOURAGING COMMENTS FROM CLIENTS

*“Easily accessible for all. Quick and easy. The pharmacist was very nice and informative. They made me feel comfortable. Not in a scary clinical environment which makes you feel comfortable about going to do it.”*

*“Being available to make it easier for folks to check themselves is the goal. Knowing your status is important and hospitals take longer. This program should be at every pharmacy, clinic and etc.”*

If you found this report interesting, and would like to further explore other Ontario-specific resources across the HIV care continuum, check out the following websites: GetaKit HIV self testing ([www.getakit.ca](http://www.getakit.ca)), The Ontario HIV Epidemiology and Surveillance Initiative ([www.ohesi.ca](http://www.ohesi.ca)), and Ontario PrEP resources ([www.ontarioprep.ca](http://www.ontarioprep.ca))