

Test at Home with OHIV (TAHO) – Internal Procedure

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Background:

At-home HIV testing is becoming widely available to people who may have never received an HIV test due to gaps in accessible care and/or the stigma associated with HIV. Test kits are available commercially, but a cost of \$40 can be prohibitive for some people. In an ideal world, all people would have access to sex-positive, professional healthcare providers in person; but until then the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Ohio HIV Hotline (OHIV) want to assist people who are finding other ways to stay safe and be sure about their HIV status. OHIV staff is also available via phone to provide supplemental counseling to people who are taking this private approach to HIV testing.

Additionally, ODH-funded HIV Counseling, Testing, and Referral (CTR) sites have historically reported difficulties engaging vulnerable communities in Ohio. A significant majority of HIV tests in Ohio CTR sites are given to heterosexual clients who do not inject drugs, while the majority of HIV cases in Ohio are found in men who have sex with men (MSM) and people who inject drugs (PWID). Test at Home with

OHIV (TAHO) is also intended to help reach populations not traditionally encountered by CTR testing programs.

An at-home HIV program (Test at Home with OHIV, also known as TAHO) was introduced as a pilot project in July 2019, spearheaded by OHIV. The program transitioned to a more permanent status in January 2020 and underwent additional changes in April 2020.

Target population:

The Pilot

Marketing was directed towards men who have sex with men (MSM) and Trans and gender non-conforming/non-binary (TGNC/NB) people in Scioto, Hamilton, Summit, and Montgomery County. We chose these specific regions because of the high rates of new HIV infections reported for these areas in the 2017 Ohio HIV Annual Report. Hamilton County specifically had high rates of HIV infection through injection drug use. In order to be eligible, participants must identify as at least one of the following:

- A man who has sex with men (MSM);
- A transgender or gender non-conforming/non-binary individual (TGNC/NB);
- A person who injects drugs (PWID).

Additionally, clients who met the above criteria were excluded if they met one of the following conditions:

- Reported current PrEP use (unless they also reported injection drug use).
- Reported HIV testing within the last 6 months.
- Had attempted to request a TAHO order within the last 6 months.

All participants must have had an Ohio residence and be at least 16 years of age. Test kits were NOT exclusively available to people who lived in our target cities.

Permanent Program

Marketing initiatives were extended to the rest of the state in January of 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed some of this work, understandably.

The current target population for the TAHO program has evolved from the pilot program. In order to be eligible, participants must identify as one or more of the following:

- A man who has sex with men (MSM);
- A transgender or non-binary individual (TGNB);
- A person who injects drugs (PWID);
- A cisgender woman who has been diagnosed with an STI in the last 12 months.

Additionally, clients who meet the above criteria will be excluded if indicate one of the following conditions:

- Have requested a test kit from TAHO in the last 3 months.
- Have tested for HIV in the last 3 months (unless they also indicate injection drug use).

All clients must have a residence in Ohio and indicate themselves to be at least 16 years old.

Marketing Initiatives:

This would be a place to give a summer of past and current marketing initiatives/lessons learned.

Process:

Participants will request a free at-home HIV test kit by filling out our eligibility survey through Survey Monkey, linked from the [OHIV website](#). On this survey, they will answer demographic and HIV risk assessment questions. If approved, they will be redirected to a private confirmation page.

If applications do not meet the eligibility criteria, they will receive a message at the end of the survey explaining that they do not meet our eligibility criteria.

Regardless of eligibility, all applicants will see a survey end page that includes links to an educational YouTube playlist & the [PAPI self-referral form](#).

Steps of Service:

Step 1: Participant clicks survey link

Step 2: Participant answers series of questions:

- Demographic questions:
 - Age, year of birth, Ohio residency, Race, Ethnicity, gender identity, sex assigned at birth
- Risk assessment questions:
 - sexual partners, injection drug use, last HIV test, previous STI's

Step 3a: If participant does NOT meet eligibility criteria, they will see the following message on the final page of the survey.

- *Based on your responses to our questionnaire, we are not able to send you a free HIV test kit at this time. If you think you are at high risk for HIV infection, please call us at 1-800-332-2437 or chat with us at OHIV.org for free or reduced cost HIV testing options near you.*

Step 3b: If participant meets eligibility criteria, they will see the following message:

- *Final step!*
Please fill out this form to receive your free at-home HIV test kit. Your kit will arrive approximately 5 - 10 business days after you submit this form.

You will be redirected to a page with helpful educational material. Please bookmark that page as you will lose access to it when you close your browser.

- Contact info questions:
 - Name, address, email
- Marketing evaluation questions:

- Why do you want an HIV test kit?
- How did you hear about the at-home test service?

Step 4: After completing the contact information on the previous page, eligible participants will see the following message on the final page of the survey:

- *YOUR HIV TEST KIT WILL ARRIVE IN 5 – 10 BUSINESS DAYS*
Nervous about doing your test alone? No worries!
You can schedule a call with one of our friendly, knowledgeable test counselors to talk to you while you perform your test.
Call us at 1-800-332-2437 to let us know if you are interested in this one-on-one support.
After you take your test make sure to reply to our follow up survey! It will come to your email about 2 weeks after you order your test.

Step 5: At the end of the survey, all applicants (regardless of eligibility) will be redirected to a private OHIV page immediately after submitting the survey:

- **Want more info about sexual health and at-home HIV testing?** Click the link below to watch some helpful clips:
 - <https://goo.gl/3MUAZU>
- **Interested in PrEP?** The Ohio Department of Health offers financial assistance and access to experienced health navigators for people who qualify. Find out if you are eligible by visiting this link:
 - <http://bit.ly/ODHPrEP>

Step 6: Hotline staff will download data from survey monkey daily and mail out orders twice per week (Mondays and Thursdays) through UPS. All participants should receive their test kits within 10 business days of ordering. Each package will contain the following:

- Oraquick at-home HIV test kit
- Resource sticker that includes the Oraquick customer care line and local resources for HIV care, PrEP, STI testing, food, housing, mental health, and LGBTQ issues
- Wrapper for kit which will include helpful tips for taking an Oraquick test at home, information about U=U, information about PrEP, Oraquick customer care line, and contact information for the OHIV hotline.
- Double-sided insert including OHIV as a resource and Harm Reduction Ohio's list of syringe access programs

Step 7: Two weeks after placing their order, participants will receive a follow up email from Survey Monkey asking them to fill out the post survey. The email message participants will receive is below:

- *Thank you for using OHIV's at-home HIV testing program! After you take your test, please fill out our post survey at the link below. Your responses help us improve our service so we can continue providing Ohioans an easy, private way to know their status!*

- *Nervous about doing your test alone? No worries! You can schedule a call with one of our friendly, knowledgeable test counselors to talk to you while you perform your test. Reply to this email and let us know if you are interested in this one-on-one support.*

If you have any questions, you can contact us Monday – Friday; 9am – 5pm through any of the platforms below:

Email: Ohiohotline@equitashealth.com

Chat: Ohiv.org

Phone: 1-800-332-2437

Text: 614-859-6448

Facebook: OHIV Hotline

IG: @ohivhotline

Best Wishes,

OHIV

Step 8: If a participant identifies that they tested positive on the home test kit via the post survey, they will see a question that asks if they have already seen a doctor for a confirmatory test. There, we encourage participants to reach out to us over the phone for linkage to care if they desire assistance with finding a doctor, case manager, or other support service.

Assistance for Nervous Participants:

OHIV will offer assistance to anyone who qualifies for the at-home HIV test and is nervous about taking this test alone. We mention this service in our confirmation email, our follow up email, and on our test kit wrapper.

Participants can call the Hotline number to request a 30-minute appointment with a test counselor within the next 5 business days. Currently there is only one test counselor on staff at the Hotline who would be able to provide this service. During the pilot phase of this project, we will track the percentage of participants who elect to receive this service. From this data, we will examine the utility of providing ODH HIV Counseling, Testing, and Referral (CTR) test counselor training to interested hotline operators (interns) and all full and part-time Hotline staff.

The purpose of this service is to provide professional support to people who are not confident about their ability to successfully administer the test and/or people who are nervous about potentially receiving a positive test result. The test counselor provides support by explaining how to administer the test, answering questions about HIV risk while the test is developing, interpreting the HIV test result, and providing referrals and support after test result is determined.

In the future, we would like to include a video chat component to this part of the at-home testing project. This would allow participants to see the test counselor while receiving instruction about test administration and result interpretation.

Step 1: If a participant elects to talk to an HIV test counselor, the Hotline operator speaking with the participant will explain the process and collect the following information on a form that can be found on the agency internal X drive. The file should be saved as, “first initial last name 2 digit birth month underscore 4 digit birth year”. *Ex: Manderson11_1994.* See data collection form below:

HIV Home Test Kit: Test Counselor Appointment Form

If a participant of the HIV home test kit pilot calls and would like to schedule a time to talk to a test counselor complete this form and email it to Mykah and Devin. Make sure you read to the information back to the caller letter by letter (i.e. "A as in apple, E as in elephant") to make sure we have the correct information.

Date:
Your name:
Participant's name:
Participant's pronouns:
Participant's date of birth:
Participant's email address:
Participant's mailing address:
Participant's phone number:
Preferred method of appointment confirmation (text message or email):

What are 3 30 minute blocks within the next 5 days (Monday-Thursday 9-5) when the participant would be available to accept a call from the test counselor and take their at home HIV test.

	DATE	TIME
1		
2		
3		

Make sure you read the name, email, phone number back to the caller letter by letter to ensure we have the correct information ☺

Step 2: When the form is complete, the Hotline operator will save the file in a folder on the internal X drive and attach that file to an email sent directly to the HIV test counselor (current program coordinator).

- X:\Prevention\Columbus\Statewide Initiatives\At-Home testing pilot files\Appointments

Step 3: The HIV test counselor will then select the time that works best for their schedule based on the times the participant reported to have available. The test counselor will send a confirmation to the participant via email (from ohiohotline@equitashealth.com) or text message (from the Hotline's Google voice number). The confirmation will say:

- *Thank you for contacting OHIV to schedule time to talk with an experienced HIV test counselor. Your appointment time is (ex: Thursday, March 28th 1:30pm – 2:00pm). As a reminder, do not eat, drink, or use tobacco or dental products 30 minutes before you take this test. If you would like to cancel this appointment, please reply "cancel" to this email/text. If you would like to change the time of your appointment, please contact a Hotline operator at 1-800-332-2437.*

Step 4: The test counselor will call the participant at the time of the appointment and follow the steps below:

1. Collect the name and date of birth of participant before identifying self as an HIV test counselor
2. Introduce oneself (name, pronouns, why they are calling)
3. Make sure participant is ready to perform test (has not eaten, drank, or used tobacco or dental products)
4. Read Ohio informed consent form to participant to get verbal consent to continue
5. Begin test administration
6. Do risk reduction while result is developing
7. Interpret result
 - a. If result is negative, summarize risk reduction, answer any questions, and make referrals as necessary.
 - b. If test is positive, ask permission to connect participant with EIS staff for linkage to care.
 - c. If test is invalid, explain the need to retest (either through ordering a kit through OHIV or another provider).
8. Remind participant to do post survey (if negative or appropriate with a positive or invalid result).

Preparing Order data for shipping:

All test kit order data will be downloaded every Tuesday from Survey Monkey. A Hotline operator will download, print, and package the orders from the previous Tuesday to the day before the download date. UPS pickups should be scheduled at least 48 hours prior to desired pickup. Orders will be mailed out every Tuesday using UPS Mail Innovations. Participants should receive their test kit within 10 days of ordering.

De-duplication:

Participants can only order a test kit once every 3 months. We will only send out one test kit per residence *ex: one per house number, apartment number, or dorm room number*. A master list will be maintained on the internal X drive. This list will include the date of order, name, and address for each order we process. Before printing labels, all orders will be cross-referenced with the master list. Starting January 1st 2020, the master list will be checked monthly for addresses that need to be archived. For example, any orders placed in February 2020, will need to be moved to the Archive sheet in the Master List in May 2020. This will ensure the participant is eligible for another at-home HIV test kit.

When request information is copied into the master list, the address cell will automatically be highlighted in red if it is already present in the sheet. Hotline Staff will also custom sort the Excel database by street address and check for duplicates that are not automatically highlighted. Hotline staff should record all duplicates in the duplicate tab, ensure the label for that order will not be printed, and send an email to the applicant. Applicants who request more than one test kit in a 6-month period for a single address will receive the following message:

- *Thank you for your interest in OHIV's at-Home Testing Project. Unfortunately, there was an error processing your shipment. Your order is undeliverable for one of the following reasons:*

- *A test kit has already been sent to this address within the last 6 months*
- *Street does not exist*
- *No such person at delivered address*
- *Address number is incorrect*
- *Vacant*
- *Pertinent address information (apt, lot, house number) missing*
- *Postage for forwarding not included*

If you believe you are receiving this message in error, please contact us at the platforms below. We are available Monday – Friday; 9am – 5pm.

Email: Ohiohotline@equitashealth.com

Chat: Ohiv.org

Phone: 1-800-332-2437

Text: 614-859-6448

Facebook: OHIV Hotline

IG: @ohivhotline

*Best Wishes,
The Ohio HIV/STI Hotline*

Sending post survey

Post surveys will be sent to participants every Friday. Hotline staff will collect email addresses from the Master list and send them to JasminBradley@equitashealth.com. Jasmin will update the Master List to show that a post survey has been sent to those individuals.

Survey Monkey will automatically send a reminder email to participants who have not completed the survey within 7 days.

Returns:

If a test kit is returned to us, a hotline staff member will look up the email associated with the address on the package in the master list. This return will be documented in the return tab of the spreadsheet. We will then send the following email to the email used to place the request:

- *Thank you for your interest in OHIV’s at-Home Testing Project. Unfortunately, there was an error processing your shipment. Your order is undeliverable for one of the following reasons:*
 - *A test kit has already been sent to this address within the last 6 months*
 - *Street does not exist*
 - *No such person at delivered address*
 - *Address number is incorrect*
 - *Vacant*
 - *Pertinent address information (apt, lot, house number) missing*
 - *Postage for forwarding not included*

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Best Wishes,
 The OHIV Hotline

Ohio Department of Health Procedures

Data Sharing Schedule

Please see the data sharing flow chart to see more details. The TAHO OHIV team will send monthly data reports to the ODH TAHO team through encrypted email. Quarterly reports will be shared with the ODH M&E team through SFTP.

1. Monthly reports are due on the 15th of the following month. For example, a January monthly report will be expected by February 15th.
2. Quarterly reports are due on the 15th of the following month.

Date	Materials Due	
<i>February 15th</i>	January Monthly Report	
<i>March 15th</i>	February Monthly Report	
<i>April 15th</i>	March Monthly Report	<i>Quarter 1 Data</i>
<i>May 15th</i>	April Monthly Report	
<i>June 15th</i>	May Monthly Report	
<i>July 15th</i>	June Monthly Report	<i>Quarter 2 Data</i>
<i>August 15th</i>	July Monthly Report	
<i>September 15th</i>	August Monthly Report	
<i>October 15th</i>	September Monthly Report	<i>Quarter 3 Data</i>
<i>November 15th</i>	October Monthly Report	
<i>December 15th</i>	November Monthly Report	
<i>January 15th</i>	December Monthly Report	<i>Quarter 4 Data</i>

OHIV/TAHO Coordinator Activities

One ODH staff person at the coordinator level will be tasked with serving as the point person between ODH managers [HIV, STI, & Viral Hepatitis Interventions and Treatment Section Manager (Laurie Rickert as of July 2020) and HIV Prevention Manager (Vacant as of July 2020)] and the TAHO/OHIV team.

Some of their regular activities include:

- Reading monthly TAHO reports and sending feedback to the OHIV team when necessary.
- Saving monthly TAHO and quarterly M&E reports to the shared drive.

- Reading quarterly evaluation reports from the ODH M&E team and sending them to the OHIV team.
- Coordinating regular ODH meetings with the Linkage to Care Coordinator, M&E Team, and any other colleagues directly involved with TAHO. These mainly serve to look over monthly and quarterly reports, discuss any concerns or innovative quality improvement ideas, and synthesize feedback and questions for the OHIV team.
- Periodically (about every six months), checking in with the OHIV/TAHO coordinator to make sure that inventory of test kits is sufficient.
- Responding to inquiries from internal ODH personnel and external parties about TAHO. This could include requests for TAHO information from other states, requests for data from ODH management, or requests for program materials from national organizations like NAACHO or NCSD.
- Coordinating communication between the M&E and OHIV TAHO teams and keeping records of program evaluation decisions.
- Keeping records of program decisions on the shared drive.

The TAHO coordinator should feel free to engage team members in continuous quality improvement.

[Disease Intervention Specialists \(DIS\) During the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020](#)

The HIV Prevention Manager, STI/VH Prevention & DIS manager, and OHIV created a specific link for the use of DIS during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are able to order an at-home HIV test for named partners of people living with HIV (PLWHIV) whom they encounter during their investigations. As of July 2020, there have been no requests through this link.

[Monitoring & Evaluation Activities](#)

[Potential Future Changes and Activities](#)

1. Additional Languages
 - a. Spanish
 - b. What else?
2. Focus Groups for MSM of color
 - a. How to better advertise