

October 2007

## Update on Florida's Rapid HIV Testing Program

In July 2003, the first rapid HIV testing program was implemented in the Duval County jail. The rapid HIV test is a screening test that produces very quick results, usually in 20-40 minutes, depending on the type of testing device used. It can be performed using whole blood through finger stick or venipuncture or with an oral specimen. It is extremely accurate and non-reactive (negative) results are final. Reactive results must be confirmed by a standard HIV test, which can be done using blood or OraSure.

**Figure 1. Number of Rapid HIV Tests and Positivity Rates, Florida 2003-2006**

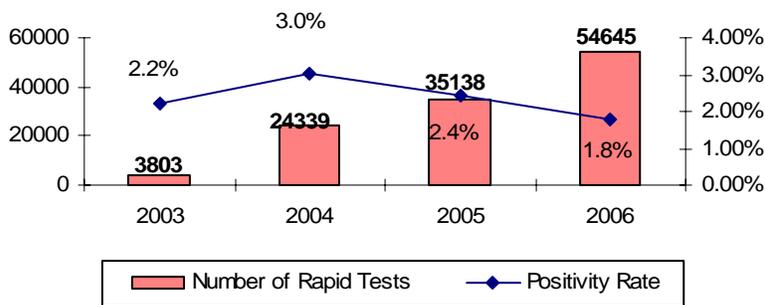


Figure 2 shows the number tested and positivity rate by race/ethnicity and gender for rapid tests conducted between 2003 and 2006. Black men were tested in the largest numbers and had the highest positivity rate (2.8%), followed by black women (2.5%) and white men (2.0%). Heterosexuals accounted for 55% of rapid tests in 2006 and had a positivity rate of 0.9%, while MSM, with a positivity rate of 4.1%, made up 19% of rapid tests (data not shown).

The accessibility and acceptance of HIV testing has changed considerably since the beginning of the epidemic. In the early years, a high proportion of publicly funded HIV testing occurred in the health department. Over time, HIV testing became a routine procedure in more and more situations outside of the health department. Almost 15,000 rapid tests have been conducted in CHD STD clinics, where the positivity rate was 4.8% (Table 1). Approximately 30% of rapid tests were conducted in jails and close to 40% were done in CBO's; the positivity rate was 1.8% in both settings.

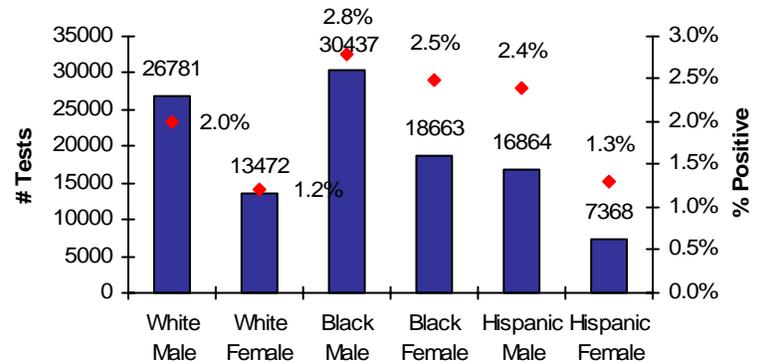
**Table 1. HIV Seropositivity Rates using Rapid Testing for Select Testing Site Types, Florida 2003 - 2006**

Site Type	# Tests	# Positives	Positivity Rate
STD	14,774	710	4.8%
Other CHD	13,891	266	1.9%
Jail	34,551	623	1.8%
CBO	46,084	843	1.8%
Other Community	8,622	131	1.5%

valuable in jails, where inmates are often released and lost to follow-up before traditional test results are available. Rapid testing is an important part of ongoing efforts to increase access and availability of HIV testing and counseling services among high-risk populations, and will continue to increase the proportion of HIV-infected persons in Florida who know their status.

Figure 1 shows that in 2006, 54,645 tests were recorded using rapid testing, up from 3,803 in 2003 when the program started. The statewide positivity rate using rapid testing increased to 3.0% in 2004 then decreased to 1.8% in 2006. Between 2003 and 2006, a total of 117,923 rapid tests were performed. Non-Hispanic blacks accounted for 42% of that total (49,211), non-Hispanic whites recorded 40,334 or 34.2%, and Hispanics 24,403 or 20.7%. Males accounted for a higher proportion than females (64.7% vs. 34.5%) (data not shown).

**Figure 2. HIV Rapid Tests by Race and Gender, Florida, 2003 - 2006**



Growing evidence from the field suggests that the availability of rapid testing has increased test acceptance in a variety of outreach settings, including housing projects, homeless shelters, rural communities, jails and high-risk youth programs. In 2006, rapid testing accounted for 18% of all HIV tests conducted at registered HIV counseling and testing sites. Rapid testing has been extremely