

African American Testing Initiative Finds Over 3,000 New HIV Infections in Florida

An estimated 135,000 HIV-infected individuals live in Florida and 20% are unaware of their infection. On September 30, 2007, Florida began a three-year African American Testing Initiative (AATI) funded by the CDC. The goal of this initiative was to increase awareness of HIV-infection status among disproportionately affected persons, primarily blacks, through the expansion of HIV testing in healthcare settings along with limited expansion in non-clinical settings.

AATI testing was conducted in 11 Florida counties with the greatest burden of HIV among blacks: Alachua, Broward, Collier, Duval, Hillsborough, Manatee, Miami-Dade, Orange, Palm Beach, Pinellas, and St. Lucie. The majority of tests conducted under AATI were in clinical settings, with only 21% (70,864) conducted in community-based organizations (CBOs), as shown in Figure 1. However as Figure 2 shows, CBOs accounted for 31% (1,529) of positives. While the CBOs had the largest proportion of HIV-positive tests, it is noteworthy that emergency departments, which represented only 7% (24,366) of all tests, accounted for 11% (544) of all positives.

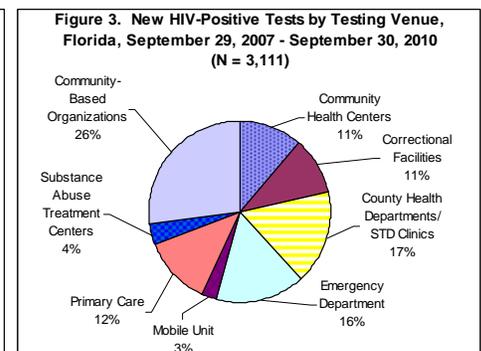
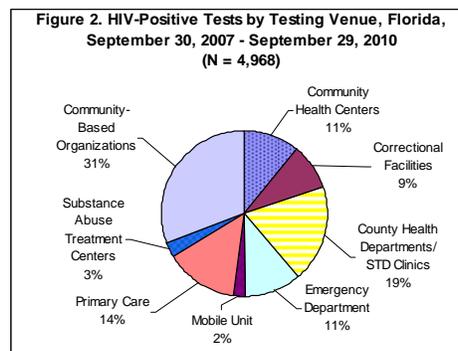
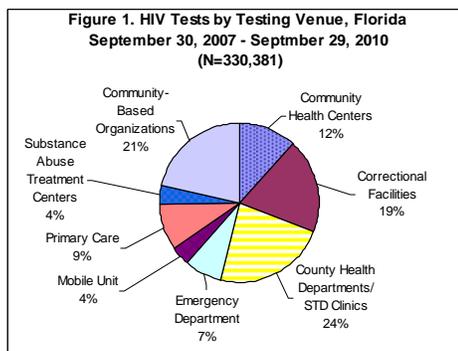
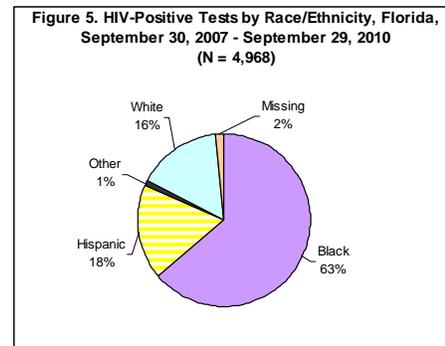
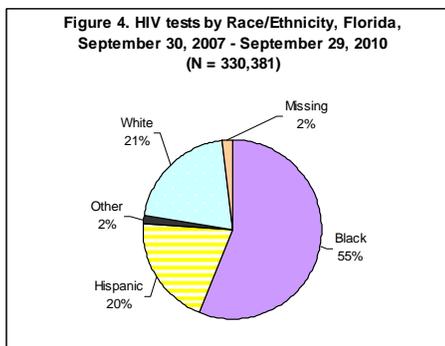


Figure 3 shows the distribution of new positives (the client self-reported either never testing before or that their previous test was not positive) by testing venue. This distribution supports the expansion of HIV testing in healthcare settings. Both primary care clinics and emergency departments found a higher proportion of new positives than their proportion of overall tests (12% and 16% vs. 9% and 7%, respectively). Overall, AATI had a positivity rate of 1.5% and a rate of 0.9% for self-disclosed new positives. Emergency departments had a much higher positivity rate of 2.2% for all positives and 2.0% for new positives. Primary care clinics had the highest overall positivity rate at 2.3% and a rate of 1.2% for new positives (data not shown).



While AATI aimed to increase testing among blacks, anyone who wanted to be tested at an AATI-funded site was offered HIV counseling and testing regardless of race/ethnicity. In the 12 months prior to the implementation of AATI, sites funded under that project tested 55,073 blacks. During the last year of AATI (September 30, 2009 – September 29, 2010), 74,121 blacks were tested at those same sites, which is an increase of 34.6% (data not shown). As shown in Figure 4, blacks had the largest proportion of tests (55% or 185,550) during the three-year period and were disproportionately represented among all positives with 63% (3,176), as illustrated in Figure 5. Overall, AATI has been extremely successful in Florida, with over 330,000 tests and over 3,000 new infections identified.