

# Online Outreach to At-Risk Populations in Pennsylvania

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RAY YEO

HIV PREVENTION AND CARE PROJECT

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

## HIV Prevention and Care Project

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The HIV Prevention and Care Project provides technical assistance, information, and resources to aid the Pennsylvania Department of Health in fighting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections in the commonwealth.

- [www.HIVPreventionAndCareProject.com](http://www.HIVPreventionAndCareProject.com) – Online general resource for HIV/STI testing, prevention, and care information for anyone who resides in PA
- [www.StopHIV.com](http://www.StopHIV.com) – Serves as a portal for PA Dept. of Health, stakeholders, and the state's Community Planning Group (CPG) in the fight against HIV by providing training resources, research information, and organizational materials

## Four basic elements involved in online outreach...

1. **Internet Resources** – Websites/Facebook pages: m4mHealthySex.org and Need2Know.com
2. **Online Sexual Health Education** – Provide HIV and STI testing resources, HIV care, PrEP referrals, and general sexual health information via internet-based venues
3. **Health Alerts** – Short informative bulletins regarding sexual health utilizing HPCP websites and Facebook pages and email list service
4. **HIV Self-Test Kit Program** – Providing free HIV test kits through the mail to anyone who resides in PA

## Internet Resources



[www.m4mHealthySex.org](http://www.m4mHealthySex.org) – Information includes HIV/STI prevention and testing info, PrEP locator, general health listings, posts related to sexual health

- Created in 2012 (as a beta project for the Pitt Men’s Study)
- Updated to WordPress in 2014 with 2,500 visitors
- More than 28,000 visitors in 2022

## Internet Resources



[www.Need2KnowBlog.com](http://www.Need2KnowBlog.com) – Information includes HIV/STI prevention and testing info, PrEP locator, general health listings, posts related to sexual health

- Created in 2021 as a “sister site” to m4m, 1,300 visitors
- 2,600 visitors in 2022
- More than 4,000 visitors so far in 2023

# Internet Resources



## LGBTQ Pittsburgh

6.6K likes • 7.1K followers

Message

Liked

Search

[www.facebook.com/lgbtqPittsburgh](https://www.facebook.com/lgbtqPittsburgh) - Public service page providing news and information to the LGBTQ+ community in southwestern PA

- Started as a website created for the Pitt Men's Study
- 7,000 followers
- 50,500 interactions with HIV/STI, sexual health information in 2022

# Online Sexual Health Educators

**Outreach to MSM in chat venues like *Grindr*, *Adam4Adam*, *Scruff*, and *Jack'd***

- 2015 – 560 individuals contacts were made
- 2016 – Contacts increased to 762
- 2017 – Contacts reached a peak of 1,224
- 2018 – Contacts declined to 865 (loss of Craigslist)
- 2019 – Contacts dropped again to 695
- 2020 – 333 contacts (Grindr, Scruff bans)
- 2021 – 290 contacts
- 2022 – Contacts decline to 210

**Online Outreach began shifting resources to advertising and expanding the reach of “Health Alerts” in 2020.**



# Health Alerts

**Health Alerts are short public health announcements (generally pertaining to HIV/STIs and sexual health) posted on HPCP websites, Facebook pages, Instagram accounts, and advertised on Grindr, with links to more detailed information.**

- Why National Asian & Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day still matters in 2023
- Black gay men and trans women are well protected by injectable PrEP
- Research shows HIV still a prime concern for gay and bi men
- Doctors haven't seen so many cases of this STI in 72 Years
- PA Dept of Health: What you need to know about monkeypox
- Highest rates of syphilis in 30 years says PA Health Department
- Don't get scammed while cruising on the apps



## Health Alerts' Reach

- 2017 – 9 alerts were received by an estimated 20,000 recipients
- 2018 – 12 alerts were received by an estimated 38,000 recipients
- 2019 – 2020 – Resources and funding for one-on-one outreach in chat rooms shifted to Health Alert, resulting in 60 ad campaigns. In the two-year period, there were 1,900,000 impressions and over 36,000 interactions (clicks, likes, shares, and comments)
- 2021 – 214 individual ad campaigns, resulting in 705,780 impressions and 25,000 individual engagements (clicks, likes, shares, and comments)
- 2022 – 200 individual ad campaigns, 3,688,458 impressions and 61,000 interactions

Health Alerts have a “built in” audience of 10,000 followers on Facebook and Instagram, with an addition 1,000 individuals who opted to receive “additional HIV/STI information” through the HST program.



[getmyHIVtest.com](http://getmyHIVtest.com)

Check your HIV status in the privacy of your home

The **getmyHIVtest.com** program was created by  
the **Pennsylvania Expanded HIV Testing Initiative (PEHTI)**  
at Penn State University  
and  
the **HIV Prevention and Care Project (HPCP)**  
at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health



**PEHTI** aims to increase HIV screening among populations disproportionately affected by HIV.

- Increase the availability and accessibility of STI testing
- Offers technical support, testing kits, and HIV testing expertise

**HPCP** provides technical assistance, information, and resources to aid the Pennsylvania Department of Health in fighting HIV.

- Online Outreach Program focusing on at-risk populations
- *Health Alerts* messaging to more than 60,000 recipients in the commonwealth



People who reside in Pennsylvania  
**Get a FREE HIV Test Kit**  
Check your HIV status  
in the privacy of your home




[getmyHIVtest.com](https://getmyHIVtest.com)

EN ESPAÑOL

HOME

The ***getmyHIVtest.com*** program was created by the Pennsylvania Expanded HIV Testing Initiative at Penn State University and the HIV Prevention and Care Project (HPCP) at the University of Pittsburgh, with support from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Our goal is to ensure testing is available for anyone who wants to be tested.

The best way to test for HIV is at a clinic or doctor's office. To find testing near you, go to the CDC's HIV and STI testing locator at <https://gettested.cdc.gov/>. If you don't have medical insurance, most clinics provide testing at little or no cost.



OraQuick<sup>®</sup> is the first FDA-approved in-home test for HIV. It's an oral swab test that doesn't require blood, and it's based on the same HIV test that healthcare professionals have used since 2004. OraQuick<sup>®</sup> also provides expert advice on how to take the test and can help with finding resources if the test is positive. To find out more, **watch their online video** or call their 24/7 support line at 1-866-436-6527.


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## What you should know before you order a test kit

It can take a while for the immune system to produce enough antibodies for the test to detect. While most people (97%) will develop detectable antibodies in the first 3 months after the initial infection, some will not. Therefore, a negative result does not mean that you are definitely not infected with HIV, particularly when exposure may have been within the previous three months. If you think you may have been exposed recently, you may want to get a second test after a 3-month period to verify your negative result.



If you think you've been recently exposed to HIV (in the last 2 days), consider taking **PEP** (post-exposure prophylaxis). PEP is an antiretroviral medication you can take after being exposed to HIV to prevent becoming infected. You can get PEP from your doctor, from local health clinics, and even from any hospital emergency room. Also, for those who are HIV negative, but are at an ongoing risk of HIV, PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis) is a medication that significantly reduces the risk of HIV infection. To find out more about PrEP and to locate local providers, go to the HPCP's **[PrEP information page](#)**.



To obtain the self-testing kit, fill out the information below and then click on the submit button. It's that simple. If you have questions about ordering, send an email to [info@getmyHIVtest.com](mailto:info@getmyHIVtest.com). We will send you an email approximately two weeks after receiving the kit, to request feedback about the [getmyHIVtest.com](https://www.getmyHIVtest.com) program.

**\*\*Note that if you live in Philadelphia County, you should order a test kit from Philly's Keep on Testing Program.\*\***

Name \*

First

Last

Street Address \*

City or Municipality (Philadelphia residents should order from the Keep on Testing Program--see link above) \*

State (must reside in the state of Pennsylvania)

Zip Code \*

Email \*



The following questions help us improve the HIV self-test kit program, to ensure that we are getting kits into the hands of the people who need them the most.

**Please identify your race/ethnicity \***

- Black Non-Hispanic
- White Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Native American/Alaskan Native
- More than one race or ethnicity

**Have you ever been tested for HIV? \***

- Yes
- No
- not sure

**If you've taken an HIV test, how long ago was it? \***

- I have never taken an HIV test
- Between 1 and 6 months ago
- More than 6 months ago
- Not sure

**Would you like more information (via email) about preventing HIV and other STIs?**

- Yes
- No

**Would you like us to include free condoms with your test kit?**

- Yes
- No

**Submit**

**2020** – Planning, marketing design, beta testing

**2021** – Website [www.getmyHIVtest.com](http://www.getmyHIVtest.com) goes live mid-January

- 48k visitors to the website
- 1,083 orders placed
- 968 kits shipped
- 106 Philadelphia County residents referred to *phillykeeponloving.com*

**2022** – 40% increase in orders

- 31k visitors
- 1,732 orders placed
- 1,654 kits shipped
- 68 referred to *phillykeeponloving.com*

**2023** – January to June

- 11k visitors
- 576 orders placed
- 545 kits shipped
- 11 referred to *phillykeeponloving.com*



**Get tested in private, at home**

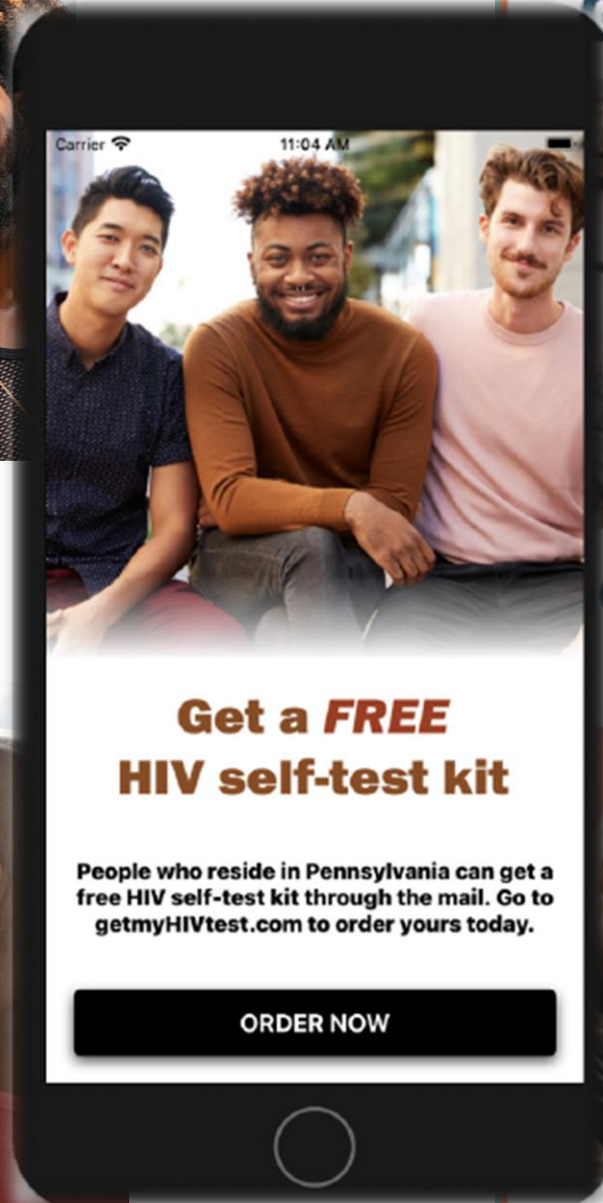
**[www.getmyHIVtest.com](http://www.getmyHIVtest.com)**



**Today is National Black  
HIV/AIDS Awareness Day**

**Get a Free  
HIV self-test kit  
at**

**[www.getmyHIVtest.com](http://www.getmyHIVtest.com)**

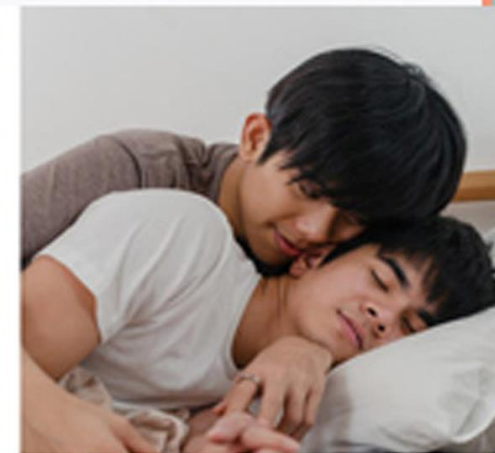


**Get a *FREE*  
HIV self-test kit**

People who reside in Pennsylvania can get a free HIV self-test kit through the mail. Go to [getmyHIVtest.com](http://getmyHIVtest.com) to order yours today.

**ORDER NOW**

**People who reside in Pennsylvania  
Get a *FREE* HIV test kit**



**Get tested in the privacy  
of your own home**



**[www.getmyHIVtest.com](http://www.getmyHIVtest.com)**



**People who reside in  
Pennsylvania**

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**Check your HIV status  
in the privacy of  
your own home**



National  
**HIV TESTING** Day  
JUNE 27

FEBRUARY 7



**NATIONAL  
BLACK  
HIV/AIDS  
AWARENESS DAY**



Ending  
the  
HIV  
Epidemic



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[www.getmyHIVtest.com](http://www.getmyHIVtest.com)



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**2021** – Questions regarding race/ethnicity added in May:

Race

- 48% - White
- 31% - African American/Black
- 18% - Other/Prefer not to answer
- 2.5% - Asian/Pacific Islander
- 0.5% - Native American/Alaskan

Ethnicity

- 60% - Not Hispanic/Latinx
- 27% - Other/Prefer not to answer
- 13% - Hispanic/Latinx

**2022** – Questions regarding race/ethnicity updated:

- 46.60% - white
- 27.45% - African American/Black
- 13.24% - Hispanic/Latinx
- 9.35% - more than one race
- 3.20% - Asian/Pacific Islander
- 0.16% - Native American/Alaskan

**2023** – January to June:

- 50.8% – White
- 22.6% – African American/Black
- 11.9% – More than one race
- 9.5% – Hispanic/Latinx
- 4.7% – Asian/Pacific Islander
- 0.5% – Native American/Alaskan

## 2021 - Previous testing:

- 45% - Not tested in the last 6 months
- 32% - Never tested
- 12% - Not sure/No answer
- 11% - Tested between 1 and 6 months

## 2022 – Previous testing:

- 44% - Not tested in the last 6 months
- 24% - Never tested
- 18% - Tested between 3 and 6 months
- 14% - Not sure

80% requested condoms with their kit

30% requested more HIV/STI information



All orders are followed up with a link to an **online questionnaire** sent to given email address.

- Age
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Identify as transgender
- Sex assigned at birth
- Risk factors
- PrEP usage
- Program feedback

Average response rate 11.3%

55.4% - Male (90% identified as gay/bi)

39.2% - Female (26% Black/59% white)

03.6% - Nonbinary/genderqueer/3<sup>rd</sup> gender

01.6% - Prefer not to answer

“Was better for reaching homeless people and easy to use no stigma.”

“Great program, especially for someone like me who lives in a rural setting and doesn't have easy access to an in-person option.”

“Really like the option of home testing, particularly during COVID. Also addresses and issue of stigma for those concerned with in person screening.”

“Thank you. I have told others about this program. The cost is right \$0, mailed **discretely**, timely and easy to follow. I am unsure about the accuracy of the oral swab vs finger prick.”

“PSU grad. Currently working temp jobs and needed to find a way to make sure I’m safe and others are safe at a reasonable cost.”

“I think you've done a great job at allowing people to easily check their status. I literally can't think of anything to improve the already SEAMLESS process you've made!”

“There's too much to read. Can you shorten the amount of what people have to read in order to do the test?”

“As someone who has done thousands of these tests on program participants, I thought the home testing kit packaging and instructions were actually overly complicated and daunting...”

“Add more condom.”

“You should specify that it’s [getmyHIVtest.com] associated through PA DOH in your website because your website seems too good to be true (and thus looks fake/spam/scam).”

**Questions?**

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