

For immediate release: Tuesday September 20, 2022

Contact: Brian Katzowitz, [bkatzow@emory.edu](mailto:bkatzow@emory.edu)

**Emory receives CDC award to deliver 1 million rapid HIV self-tests across the country**

*The largest HIV self-testing program in U.S. history will bolster prevention efforts*

An Emory University-led collaborative project has been awarded \$8.3 million for the first of a five-year CDC award to implement Together TakeMeHome (TTMH), a national HIV self-testing program designed to increase awareness and diagnoses of HIV infections in the U.S.

HIV testing is a proven strategy for HIV prevention and a key first step in the continuum of care, yet still, too many people are unaware of their HIV status. TTMH addresses common barriers to testing, such as stigma, privacy concerns, cost, and lack of access to HIV clinics by offering free HIV self-tests through mail delivery.

“Testing is a critical entry point for HIV prevention and treatment services, especially for people most affected by HIV,” says Dr. Travis Sanchez, professor at Emory University’s Rollins School of Public Health and executive director for the program. “Together TakeMeHome leverages proven HIV prevention strategies by allowing people to get tests delivered directly to their doorsteps and gives people who otherwise might not have tested an opportunity to know their status.”

By early 2023, TTMH will begin distributing a free HIV self-test to people who enroll through its website. Orders will be processed through Amazon and mailed in discreet packages to all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Emory University will evaluate the program by assessing who used the tests, how many new diagnoses were made, and how many began HIV treatment or pre-exposure prophylaxis. The program will be monitored and evaluated with data from multiple sources, including order information, web traffic/referral tracking, surveys and qualitative interviews.

Some populations are disproportionately affected by HIV and less likely to have access to key prevention services. TTMH will work closely with the *Let’s Stop HIV Together* campaign to market the tests to communities disproportionately affected by HIV, including cisgender gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, and Black or African American cisgender women. CDC’s Let’s Stop HIV Together (Together) [campaign](#) is the national campaign of the [Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. \(EHE\)](#) initiative and the [National HIV/AIDS Strategy](#). Together is an evidence-based campaign created in English and Spanish. It aims to empower communities, partners, and health care providers to reduce HIV stigma and promote HIV testing, prevention and treatment.

“HIV self-testing is a key innovation that supports the national goal to diagnose all people with HIV as early as possible,” said Robyn Neblett Fanfair, MD, MPH, and Acting Director of CDC’s Division of HIV Prevention. “Evidence demonstrates high demand for HIV-self tests—

particularly among people who have never previously tested for HIV and populations that are not equitably reached by HIV testing, effective treatment and prevention tools.”

Following a successful [pilot program](#) in 2020-2021, this will be the largest nationwide mailed HIV self-testing program to date. [Multiple studies](#) have demonstrated the value of self-testing for increasing the frequency of HIV testing, identifying new diagnoses, and reaching people who reported that they have never previously tested for HIV. Scaling up TTMH to one million tests can have a resounding impact on HIV prevention efforts in the U.S., but its success will rely heavily on collaborative efforts.

Several organizations will play crucial roles in the successful implementation of the program. [Building Healthy Online Communities](#), which created the program, will lead outreach and engagement with participants. [Signal Group](#) will manage the technical aspects of TTMH, including the website and back-end development. [NASTAD](#) will lead public health and community engagement activities. As the sole manufacturer of FDA-approved HIV self-tests, [OraSure Technologies](#) will be responsible for the production and logistics of the HIV self-test kits, and CDC's *Let's Stop HIV Together* campaign team will lead the marketing activities.

TTMH will be supported by CDC under award number 1NU62PS924790. The total amount of the award over 5 years is up to \$41.5 million.

#