

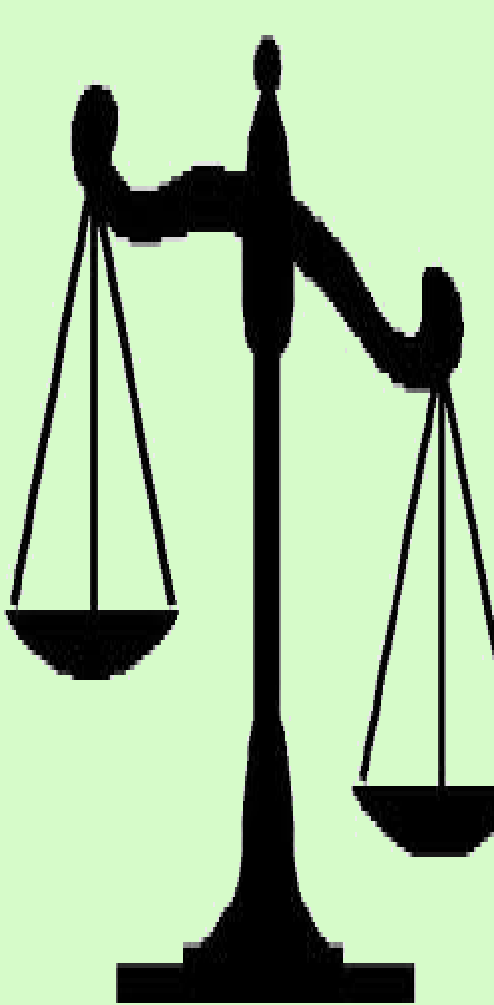
What Is Project IMPACT?

Project IMPACT is a pilot HIV and HCV screening program at the New Orleans Municipal Court that just entered its third year of operation. The intervention has worked to provide HIV and Hepatitis C screening and counseling to individuals called to appear at the Municipal Court on their scheduled court appearances, as well as individuals in Traffic Court, and several inmates when allowed access to them.

In order to integrate health screenings into daily court sessions, the Project IMPACT team has collaborated with court staff in the different courtrooms to allow recruiters to ask all individuals coming into court if they would like an HIV test while they are waiting for their cases to be heard before the judge.

In addition to the courthouse, we also offer free HIV & HCV testing at the New Orleans Syringe Access Program once a week during their hours of operation.

Why a Courthouse?



“Louisiana is the world’s prison capital. The state imprisons more of its people, per head, than any of its U.S. counterparts. First among Americans means first in the world. Louisiana’s incarceration rate is nearly five times Iran’s, 13 times China’s and 20 times Germany’s.”

— reporter Cindy Chang, May 13, 2012 in The Times-Picayune

Roughly 30,000 people shuffle through the Orleans Parish Municipal Court over the course of a year. A significant portion of those coming through the court are also members of high risk populations, such as those who use injection drugs, commercial sex workers, and individuals who are homeless.

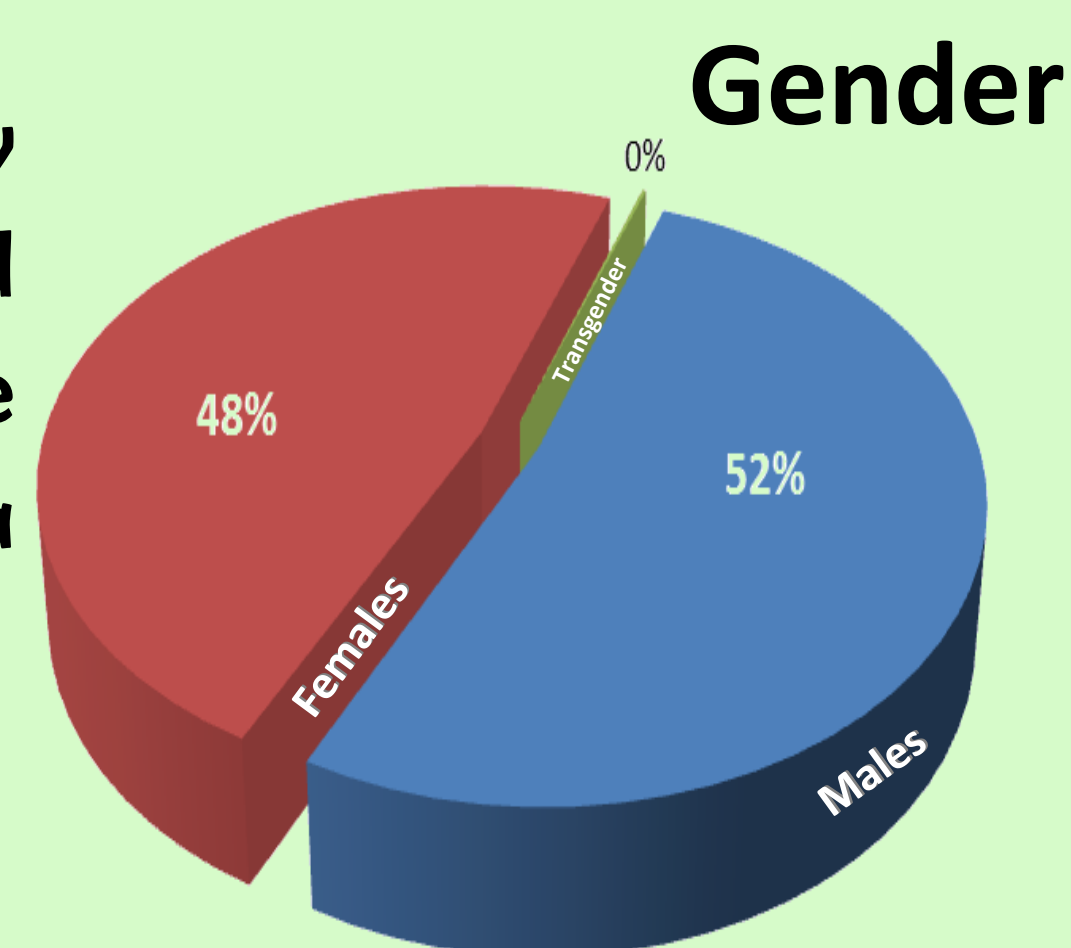
Project IMPACT uses the court system to reach a portion of the population that may not otherwise have access to or knowledge about HIV and HCV testing, prevention education, and linkage-to-care.

Furthermore, we do this with the aid and support of the Orleans Parish Municipal Court administration allowing us to operate within the courtrooms and providing us with testing and office space, the Office of Public Health’s HIV/STD program provides our HIV test kits, the Orleans Parish Sheriff’s Office allows us access to inmates when they can and provides security to the court, the Office of Public Defenders and the Parole and Probations Office often refer clients, and without the cooperation of the court clerks and judges the program would collapse.

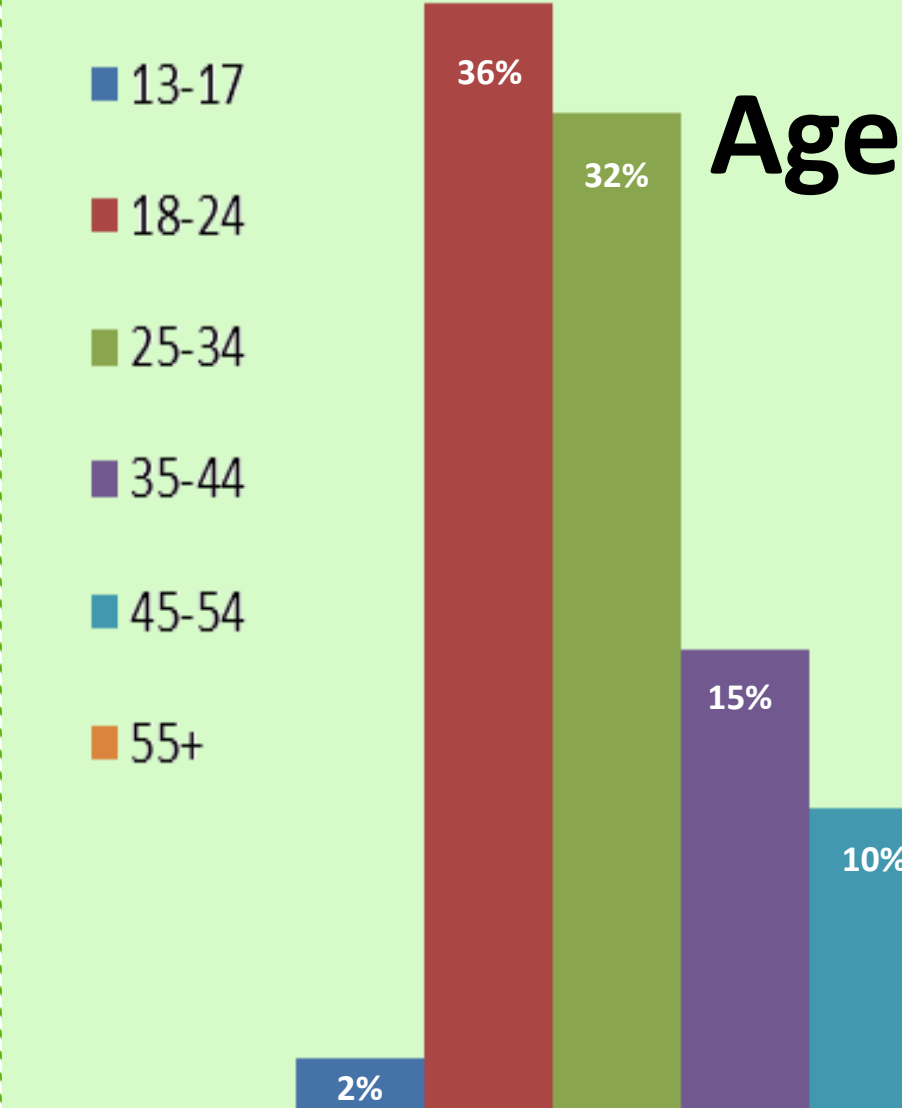


Who Is Getting Tested?

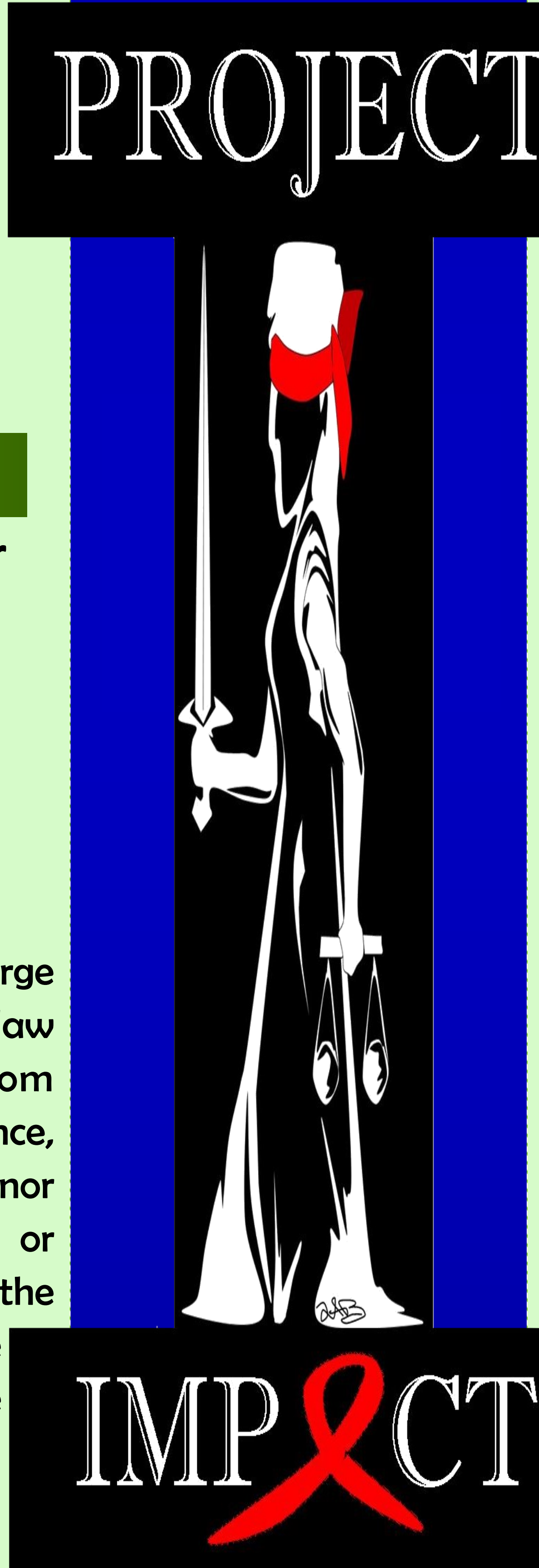
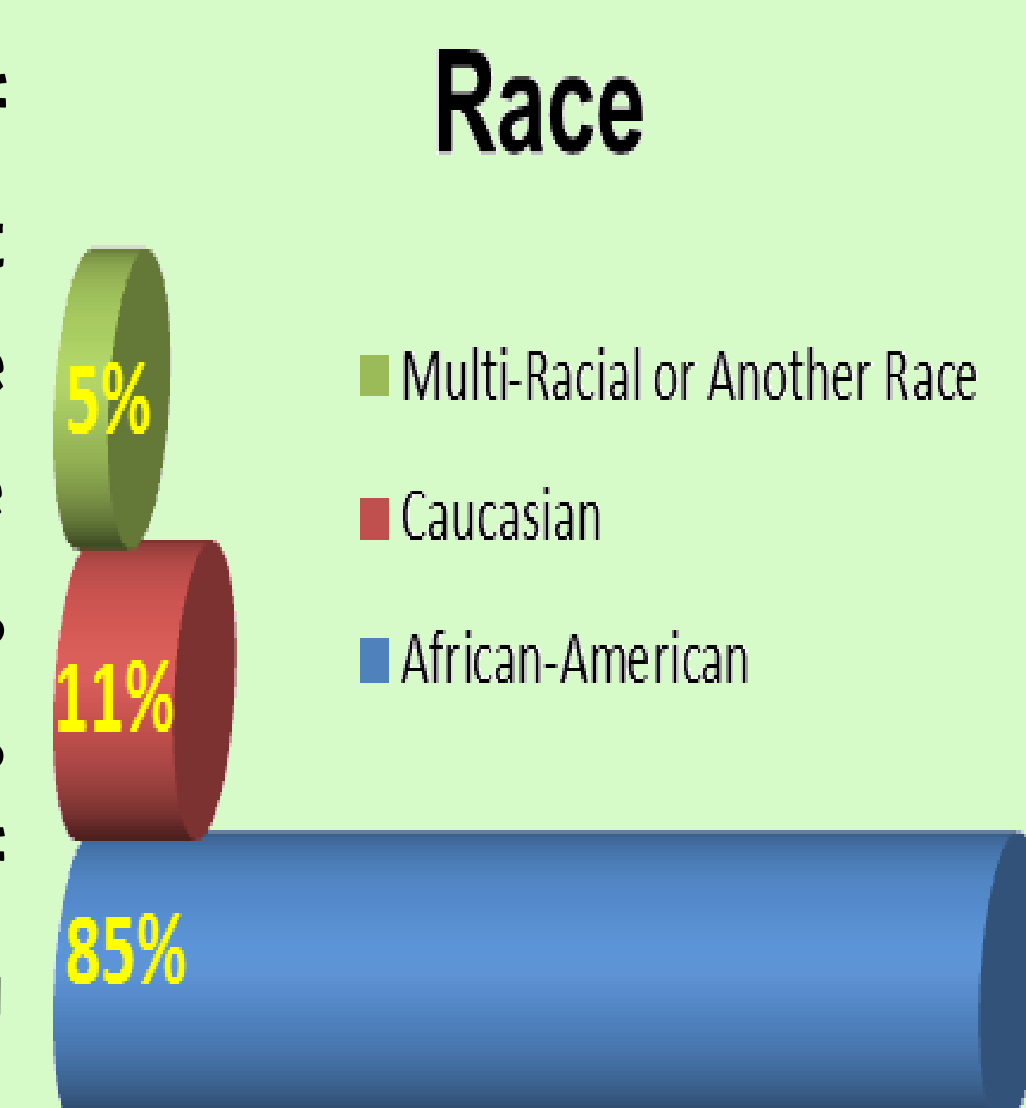
Though the overwhelmingly majority of those incarcerated are male, the number of those passing through the court on a given day is fairly evenly split.



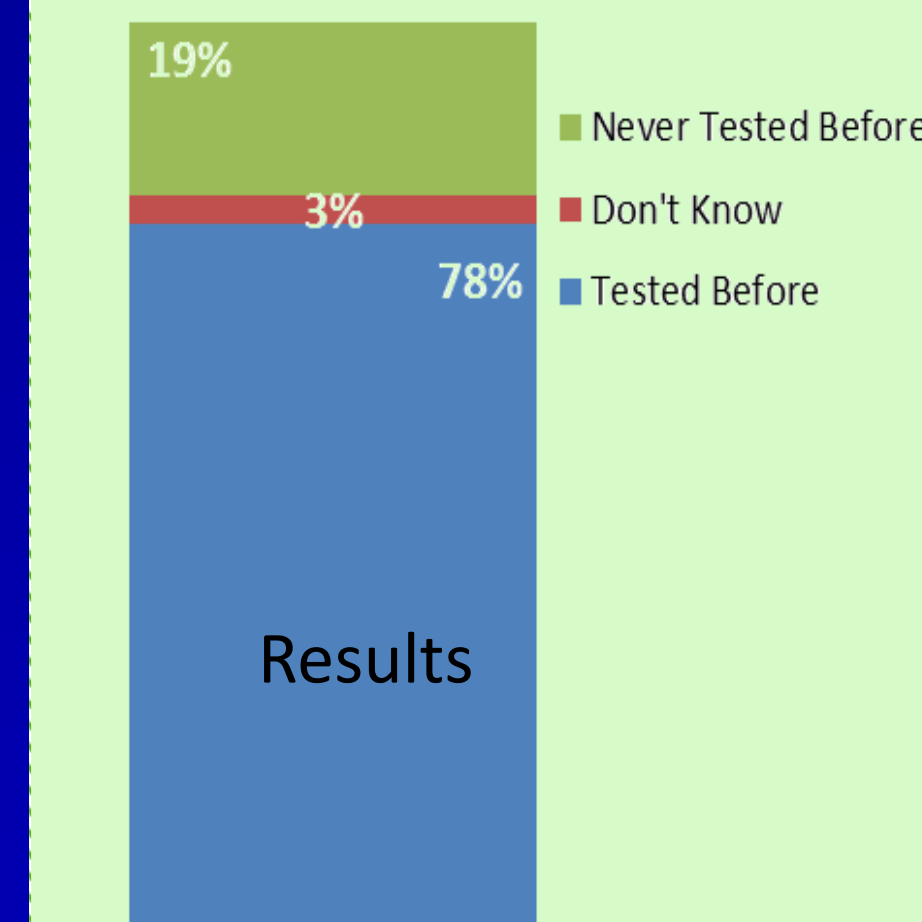
Municipal Court handles a large number of city and state law violations: everything from truancy to domestic violence, underage drinking or minor drug offenses to solicitation or public disturbances. While the range of charges differ, the majority of those facing those charges skews young.



There have been a number of studies and statistics that attest to the fact that there are a disproportionate number of African-Americans arrested in Orleans Parish. As such, the percentage of African-Americans passing through the courthouse is equally disproportionate.

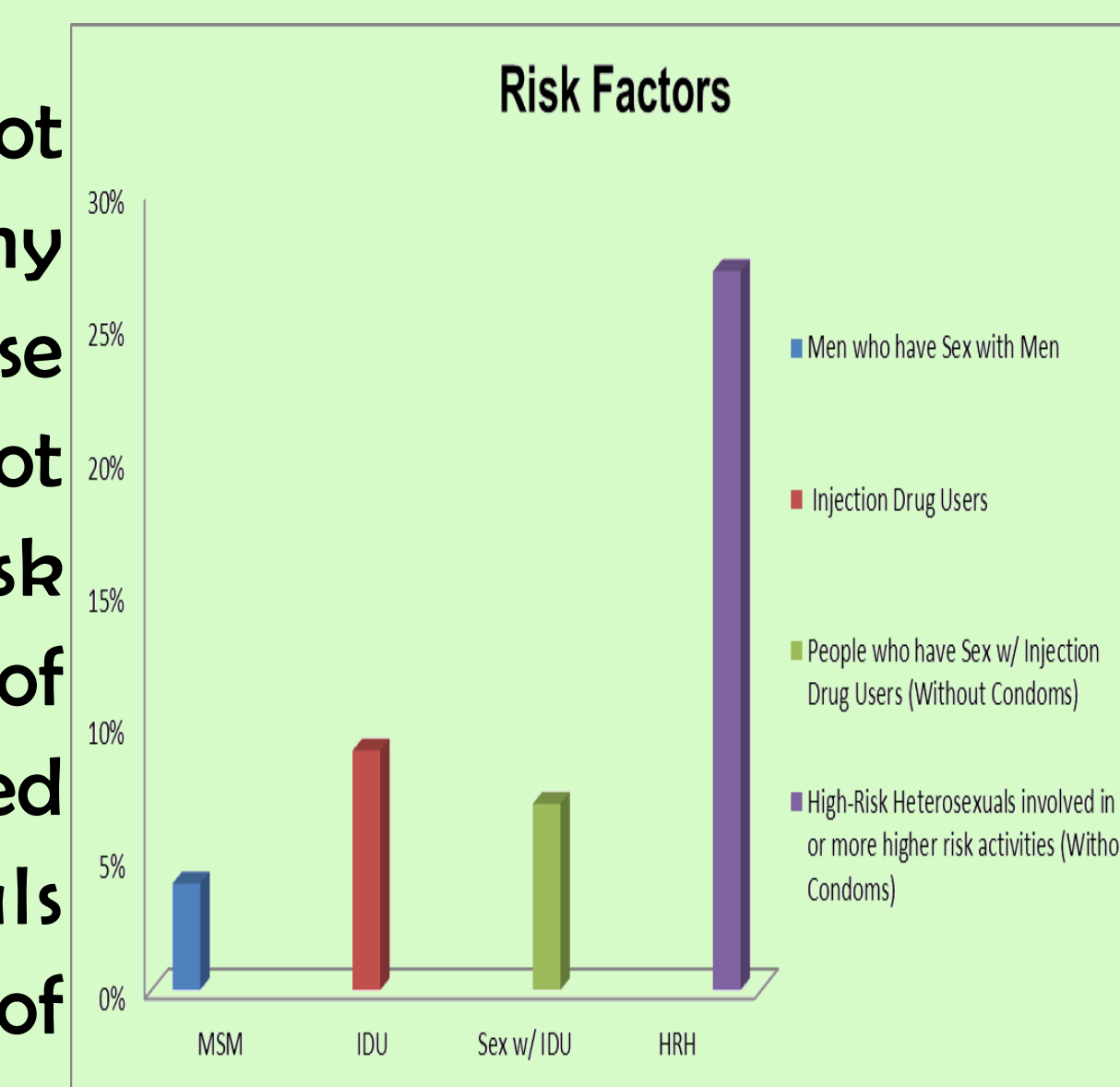


Testing History



While most people have had at least one HIV test before, roughly 20% who test with us have never taken an HIV test before. Additionally, many of those who have had a test before hadn’t been tested in over a year. Of those testing positive, 13% reported they had never been tested before.

HIV testing recruitment is not targeted towards any specific group. Most of those accepting testing are not part of a higher-risk population, though, 22% of those testing are considered higher-risk heterosexuals based on the risk assessment of their self-described behaviors.



What Are the Results?

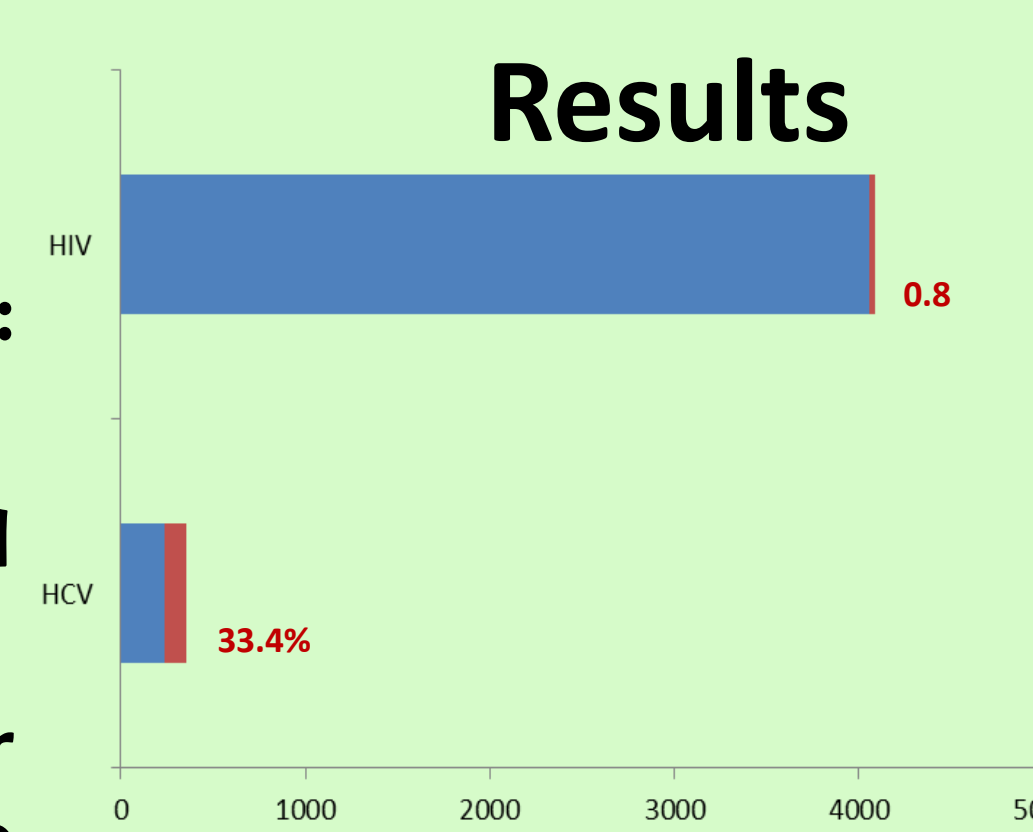
In just a little over 2 years of testing, Project IMPACT has tested a total of 4086 people for HIV and 356 people for HCV. Unlike our HIV screenings, HCV screenings are targeted. We only offer HCV tests to those who may be at higher risk. While there are a number of risk criteria that may prompt us to offer someone an HCV test in addition to their HIV test, the two most prominent risk groups are those in the “baby boomer” age cohort and/or injection drug users.

HCV Breakdown

Total HCV+ Identified: 118

Total Tested for HCV: 351

Of the individuals tested for Hepatitis C, 1 in 3 are positive for HCV antibodies.



HIV Breakdown

New HIV+ Identified in 2013: 6

New HIV+ Identified in 2014: 11

New HIV+ Identified so far in 2015: 7

HIV+ Identified in 2013 who had fallen out of care: 1

HIV+ Identified in 2014 who had fallen out of care: 1

HIV+ Identified so far in 2015 who had fallen out of care: 1

Total Tested for HIV in 2013: 1240

Total Tested for HIV in 2014: 1846

Total Tested for HIV in 2015 so far: 1030

Total Tested for HIV since the program began: 4116

Of the 4116 individuals who tested for HIV, 24 new positives were identified, and 3 self-identified positives who were out of care requested help in being re-linked to treatment. Of those testing HIV+, 83% were African-American, 33% were female, 30% were under 25, and 67% were heterosexual.

Where Is Project IMPACT Going?

When Project IMPACT began, we offered testing to only one of the Municipal Court’s courtrooms, and our testing space was a shared office we could only use in the afternoons.

We now have a testing space dedicated to our program and have expanded the testing hours to both mornings and afternoons. We can actively recruit people from all of the Municipal Court divisions, and can offer testing to individuals who are in the building for Traffic Court once they have completed their business there.

We will begin a partnership with the Tulane University School of Medicine’s Drop-In Center for Homeless Youth to offer free, rapid HCV testing to their clients later this summer. Additionally, we will begin offering free, rapid syphilis testing along with HIV & HCV at all of our locations in the fall of 2015.

Conclusions

Our testing program continues to achieve the success it does because of the strong support it receives from our courthouse and syringe access partners. Buy-in from those partners is just as important as buy-in from the community in general. Project IMPACT won the support of our partners through respect for their staff and workflow, a lengthy process of educational and training sessions with key staff, building our own program’s operational flow to work within theirs, and an occasional lunch or two.

New Orleans still has one of the highest rates of HIV and AIDS in the country, and is only beginning to discover the extent of our HCV epidemic. So long as there remains a need, both the medical and prevention community should invest in providing both HIV and HCV screenings in non-clinical settings, in order to reach those who are disenfranchised, and unwilling or unable to receive these services in more traditional settings.