

# **HIV RAPID TESTING IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT CULTURAL FIT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

## **Authors**

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## **Objectives**

- Reach out to every patient who enters the Emergency Department, Monday-Friday, 1 PM – 9 PM (busiest hours).
- Encourage every Emergency Department patient to accept HIV rapid testing.
- Ensure that every HIV-positive patient is linked to care.
- Follow-up carefully with every newly- diagnosed patient to ensure she or he enters in care.

## **Methods**

- Engage PATH's Advisory Board (patients and community members), PATH staff and Emergency Department (E.D.) staff in planning the initiative. Especially engage agencies serving Latino and Caribbean people.
- Build close referral linkages between E.D. and PATH.
- Integrate HIV rapid testing seamlessly into the E.D. patient flow.
- Implement outreach to every E.D. patient, hiring a bilingual (English-Spanish) HIV Counselor.

## **Results**

In calendar year 2007, the Brooklyn Hospital E.D. Rapid Testing Initiative:

- Provided HIV education and testing information to 1,496 patients.
- Provided HIV testing to 1,153 patients (77% of those reached).
- Identified 24 newly-diagnosed HIV-positive patients and engaged them in HIV primary care.

## **Conclusions**

- HIV rapid testing in the Emergency Department setting is highly effective.
- Culturally appropriate staffing (multilingual, multi cultural) can result in a high level of patient acceptance.
- Engaging patients, community members and staff in planning helps to ensure the project's success.
- Careful integration of HIV testing into the E.D. work flow will encourage staff to use the service and encourage patients to accept it.