

SOP FOR DISTRIBUTION MODELS IN LESOTHO

BACKGROUND

Accessible and acceptable access to HIV testing services is the first critical step of the HIV treatment cascade. Globally, testing remains the biggest challenge to meeting the 90-90 - 90 targets. To reach those people living with HIV who do not yet know their status, who are clinically well and have high CD4 cell counts, innovative approaches to HIV testing services are needed. Using the principles of differentiated service delivery (adapting services according to the elements and building blocks); testing services may be adapted to target both high-risk populations and those that are currently hard to reach. HIVST is an innovation which is intended to enhance the achievement of the Ministry's goals on HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Clients will be offered HIV Self-Testing with an option to opt for provider HIV testing or even opt out. It is a screening test; as a result, all positive tests must be confirmed using the national algorithm for HIV testing.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) PURPOSE

The purpose of this SOP is to standardise the processes and procedures at Newstart sites and outreaches to incorporate and integrate high- quality HIV self-testing services to clients accessing health services at different institutions nationwide. This SOP will be used in conjunction with The National HIV Testing Services Policy & Guidelines, Ministry of Health Lesotho (November 2017).

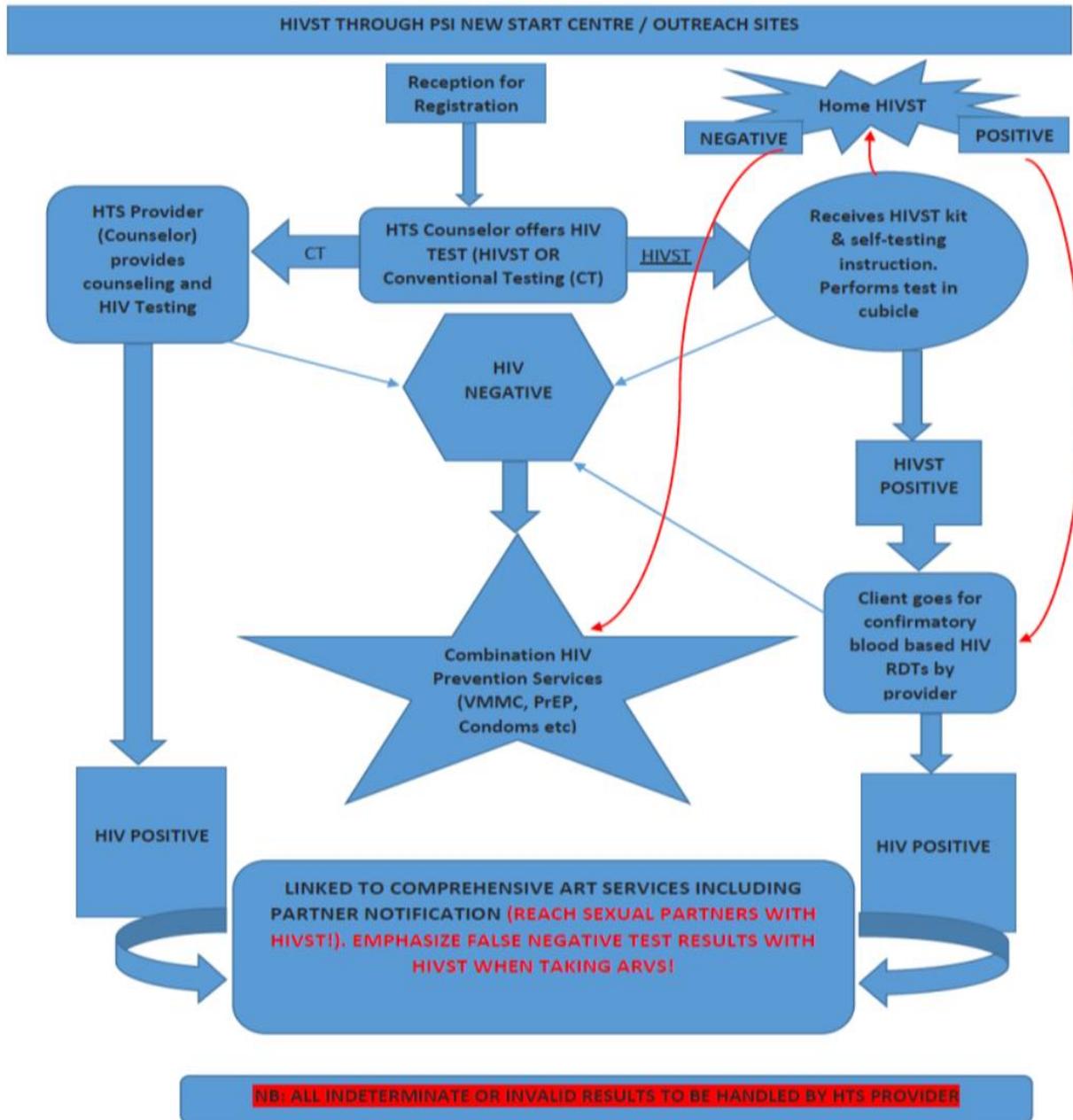
RESPONSIBILITIES

- PSI is responsible for the implementation and rollout of the program in all Newstart and implementation of the SOP

1. Integrated HIVST at New Start sites

Figure 1: Client Flow at the New Start Centers and Outreaches.

A client who comes to the New Start Centers or accesses HTS services at the New Start outreaches will follow below client flow:



The clients will be offered option to self-test or to receive provider delivered HIV Testing (PDHTS) at the seven New Start Centers. The HTS provider collects client data based on the HIVST register (see attached copy of HIVST register)

Clients who opt for self- testing will have the choice of testing on site or taking the kit away for testing at their convenience. Clients will be encouraged to test at site where possible to maximize review of test result with health care provider.

Clients who choose to self-test on-site will be given a self-test package and access to room where they can self-test in private. The self-test package will consist of the kit and testing instructions in English and Sesotho. Clients are encouraged to discuss the result with an HTS provider after self – testing within testing site. If the result is positive, the client is offered confirmatory HIV Testing by the provider. If confirmatory results are positive, then client is referred for on-going HIV care & treatment at the community initiation housed in New Start site. All confirmed clients living with HIV will be offered HIV self-test kit for secondary distribution to their sexual partner(s) or home visit for index HIV testing.

If HIV self-test is negative, the client is counseled on HIV prevention and offered preventive methods including VMMC for males, PrEP if eligible according to guidelines and consistent & correct condom use. The client with a negative HIV status will also be counseled on need for subsequent repeat testing according to risk profile outlined in the national guidelines.

Clients choosing to self-test off site

Clients choosing to test off-site will be given the self-test package and will be shown the instruction video and written step by step guide on how to perform an HIV self-test. All clients who opt for out of New Start HIV self-testing will be provided with counseling on the importance of linking to a health facility after taking the test. Clients who test positive out of New Start will be encouraged to link to health care facilities of their choice, for confirmatory provider delivered HIV testing and possible enrolment into on-going care. Clients who test negative by self-test out of New are encouraged to present at health facilities for HIV prevention services as applicable.

Clients who opt to test out of the site will be offered telephonic follow-up by the HTS provider to find out the outcome of the test. At the time of collecting the self-test kit, participants will be asked to think about the date and time they are likely to self-test. Once they decided on date they want to test, they will be provided with a client held appointment card that serves as a reminder to the client. An appointment date for the facility visit after the test will also be entered on the card.

Clients will be encouraged to return used kits when they follow at the facility for services outlined above. The returned are only used to assess use of distributed kits. Clients who self-test out of facilities will be followed with a phone call randomly (systematic random sampling, taking every third client served) to check use of the test and linkage to appropriate services. Calls to clients

who opt to test at home will be made within a month of collecting the kit. This telephonic follow-up will be implemented for the first six months of implementation and then reviewed. Clients will also be asked to report if they visited a health facility after taking an HIV self-test for services outlined above.

2. Targeted HTS outreach services integrated within New Start outreach

Clients who test at the New Start mobile outreaches will follow the client flow indicated above (Figure: 1). The clients will be offered option to self-test or to receive provider delivered HIV Testing (PDHTS) at the mobile outreach. The HTS provider collects client data based on the HIVST register (see attached copy of HIVST register). Clients who opt for self-testing will have the choice of testing on site or taking the kit away for testing at their convenience. Clients will be encouraged to test at mobile outreach where possible to maximize review of test result with HTS provider.

Clients who choose to self-test on-site will be given a self-test package and access to testing tent where they can self-test in private. The self-test package will consist of the kit and testing instructions in English and Sesotho.

If the result is positive, the client is offered confirmatory HIV Testing by the HTS provider at the site. If confirmatory results are positive, then client will be initiated at the collaborative community ART initiation with EGPAF. For HIV positive clients who may not be willing to initiate at the community ART initiation, then they will be referred to the preferred nearby health facility. All confirmed clients living with HIV will be offered HIV self-test kit for secondary distribution to their sexual partner(s) or home visit for index HIV testing.

If HIV self-test is negative, the client is counseled on HIV prevention and offered preventive methods including VMMC for males, PrEP if eligible according to guidelines and consistent & correct condom use. The client with a negative HIV status will also be counseled on need for subsequent repeat testing according to risk profile outlined in the national guidelines. Clients who will opt to do self-test off site will also follow similar processes for clients who test off site at New Start.

3. DETAILED PROCEDURES

Oral Fluid Tests: *there is no need to prick but to simply swab gums*



HIVST is the strategy that is implemented to compliment other health strategies in the fight against HIV. It should be noted that HIVST kits should be distributed to **clients who are not likely to test with conventional testing.**

Efficient and effective Use of HIVST

