

Considerations for Hosting a School-Located Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Testing Event

Providing students with a school-located STI testing event is SMART!

Here's why:

Studies show that adolescents and young adults account for nearly half of all newly diagnosed STIs – in a typical year, that's almost 10 million!¹ Despite recommendations² that sexually active youth be tested for STIs annually, a recent [study](#) found that **only 1 in 5 young people reported being tested in the past year.**

Many students rely on schools and school-based health centers (SBHCs) for preventive and acute health care.

Access to a trusted source for testing and trusted health care professionals can make all the difference in a student's decision to get tested.

Reaching more students, effectively and efficiently, is possible when screening events are school-wide. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies provision of periodic STI screening events or mobile clinics as an important way that schools can increase youth access to sexual health services.

It's **T**ime to normalize STI screening and increase screening acceptability among young people! Screening events can remove stigma and prevent students from feeling singled out.



¹ The CDC estimates that there are nearly 20 million new STIs each year

² Review a summary of CDC STI testing recommendations [here](#)

Is your local education agency (LEA) thinking about hosting a pop-up STI testing event? Here are some key considerations to help you get started.

Assess legal, liability, and policy-related issues

- Learn about your state's relevant laws, regulations, and requirements and assess how that may facilitate or restrict hosting an STI testing event at your school
- Review [Parental consent laws regarding access to STI services](#)
- Consider student privacy and confidentiality



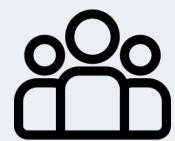
Identify funding and resource sources

- Look at both direct funding and in-kind supports



Identify and engage partners and champions

- Obtain buy-in from school leadership (eg, Superintendent, School Board, Principal(s))
- Consider other partners and champions, including:
 - ⇒ School nurse
 - ⇒ Local and state health department
 - ⇒ Community partners (eg, teen clinics, community health care clinics, FQHCs)
 - ⇒ SBHCs
 - ⇒ School staff
 - ⇒ Health care providers and health systems
 - ⇒ Pharmacies



Plan for implementation and logistical needs



- Identify a liaison or primary contact within the school who will address questions and concerns from internal and external partners
- Establish a date and operating hours (eg, before/during/after school; weekend)
- Identify staffing needs
 - ⇒ Identify test providers and other staff needed to implement your clinic
 - ⇒ Define roles and responsibilities for all involved
 - ⇒ Identify training needs; conduct training
- Determine facility space needs
 - ⇒ Depending on where the event will be held, consider whether resources to improve student privacy and access may be needed (eg, privacy tents, separators, curtains, portable bathrooms)
- Determine testing supply and resource needs (needs will depend on type of testing offered)
- Develop a process/flow chart for the screening event and screening-related activities (eg, specimen collection/storage/transfer)
- Ensure follow-up of results and patient notification if tests are sent out to a lab
- Plan for treatment and follow-up care and education/anticipatory guidance for students with and without a positive test
- Identify any special insurance requirements

Develop an outreach and communication plan



- Consider how you will engage school leadership and school staff
- Consider how you will engage parents and guardians
- Consider how you will engage the community
 - ⇒ Seek support from trusted messengers and influencers
- Determine how your school will engage students and promote the testing event
 - ⇒ Consider how you will clearly communicate confidentiality and minority consent laws to youth and parents
 - ⇒ Seek support from a diverse group of trusted messengers and influencers representing all sectors of the student population (including but not limited to peer educators, Genders and Sexualities Alliance members)
- Ensure that you incorporate culturally-appropriate messaging to meet the needs of your students and community
 - ⇒ Consider literacy level of all event materials and educational resources
 - ⇒ Consider language/translation needs
- Determine what communication channels you will utilize (eg, social media, flyers, etc)
- Plan for health information exchange
 - ⇒ Determine how test results will be communicated
 - ◆ Maintain privacy and confidentiality
 - ⇒ Determine if test results will be shared with the student's primary care provider

Make it (even more) impactful!



- Consider combining your testing event with another school activity or event (vaccination clinic, sports physicals, Homecoming, prom, Valentine's Day, School-Based Health Care Awareness Month)
- Offer participation incentives if resources permit (eg, snacks, raffles, drawings, movie passes, gift cards, condoms/dental dams, "swag bags" with personal care items)
- Leverage lessons learned from similar activities
 - ⇒ If applicable, identify lessons learned from previous LEA/school hosted pop-up vaccine clinics or related events, and consider what lessons from those activities are relevant to planning and implementing a school-located STI testing clinic
- Celebrate successes and evaluate strengths and improvement opportunities
 - ⇒ Thank participants and volunteers
 - ⇒ Report to stakeholders on key metrics (eg, number of students served, increase in testing rates)
 - ⇒ Collect feedback (by confidential survey or even anecdotally) from students about their experience, what they liked, and what could be improved for future STI testing clinics

Resources

Here are a few key resources on adolescent sexual health and sexual health services

- [GYT: Get Yourself Tested for High Schools](#) [CDC]
- [Adolescent Sexual Health](#) webpage [American Academy of Pediatrics]
- [What Works: Sexual Health Services](#) [CDC]

The following resources focus on planning and implementing a school-located *vaccine* event but include many considerations and recommendations relevant to developing and hosting an STI testing event

- [Considerations for Planning School-Located Vaccination \(SLV\) Clinics](#) [CDC]
- [Hosting Vaccination Clinics: Best Practices for School Districts and Early Care and Education \(ECE\) Programs](#) [CDC]
- [School-Located Vaccination School Nurse Planning Checklist](#) [Association of Immunization Managers]
- [Advancing Health Center & School Partnerships to improve COVID-19 Vaccination Administration for Children and Adolescents](#) [School-based Health Alliance; National Association of Community Health Centers]

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