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AMSTERDAM
FAST-TRACK CITIES 2023

Our Healthbox / Notre Boîtesanté

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reachnexus



September 25-27, 2023 | RAI Amsterdam Convention Center

Abstract ID: 1153

Our Healthbox: Implementation and Evaluation of Interactive Dispensing System for Low-Barrier Access to HIV Self-Testing and Harm Reduction Supplies for Marginalized People in Canada.

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The problem in Canada

- Alarming increase in cases of infections like Syphilis, Hep C and HIV
- 6,500+ people are living with HIV and who are undiagnosed and not in care
- 20 die daily from opioid toxicity
- **Stigma** attached to substance use and HIV continues to hinder care delivery including access to harm reduction supplies
- Access to mobile devices, internet and technology is not universal
- Many affected are vulnerable, marginalized and have complex healthcare and social needs

Everyone should have equitable access to the healthcare they need

***BUT** we know that this is not the case*

M


1st HIV Self-Test Approved – Now what ? ... ACCESS

November
2020

Canada approves first HIV self-test as it moves to increase access to screening

ADINA BRISGE
THE CANADIAN PRESS
PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 3, 2020
FOR SUBSCRIBERS

This article was published more than 1 year ago. Some information may no longer be current.



Dr. Sean Rourke of the Centre for Urban Health Solutions at St. Michael's Hospital was the principal investigator of a clinical trial that helped clear the way for approval of a one-minute HIV blood test.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

June
2021

Ending HIV in Canada Together: We're Ready!

Home / News / Ending HIV in Canada Together: We're Ready!

May 30, 2021

Join Unity Health Toronto's MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions, REACH Nexus and special guests to learn about how the I'm Ready research program plans to end HIV in Canada with access to HIV self-testing and connections to care.

Featuring Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, MAP Scientist Dr. Sean B. Rourke and Indigenous and community leaders from across Canada.

When: Wednesday, June 2nd, 1 to 1:45 PM EST.
This is a virtual event. [Register: reeachnexus.ca/imready](#)

The I'm Ready research program launch celebration, featuring Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Theresa Tam.

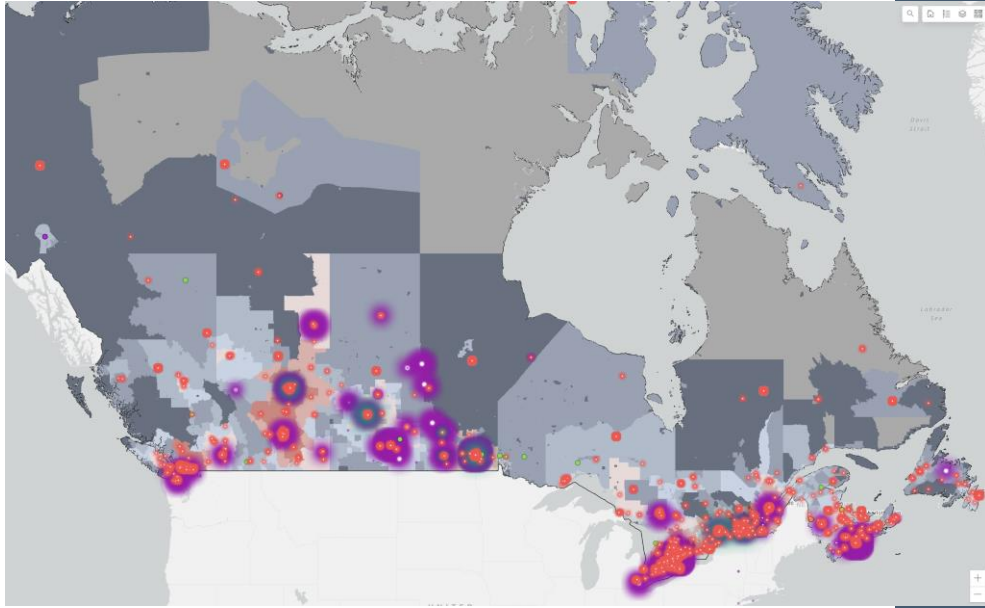
I'm Ready

Know your status. Connect to care. Together, let's end HIV in Canada.

Learn about the I'm Ready research program

I'm Ready. I'm ready to lay my fear to rest. I'm ready to defy stigma. I'm ready to seek advice. I'm ready to know my status. I'm ready to love and be loved.

I'm Ready to Know offers low-barrier options to HIV self-testing and connections to care.



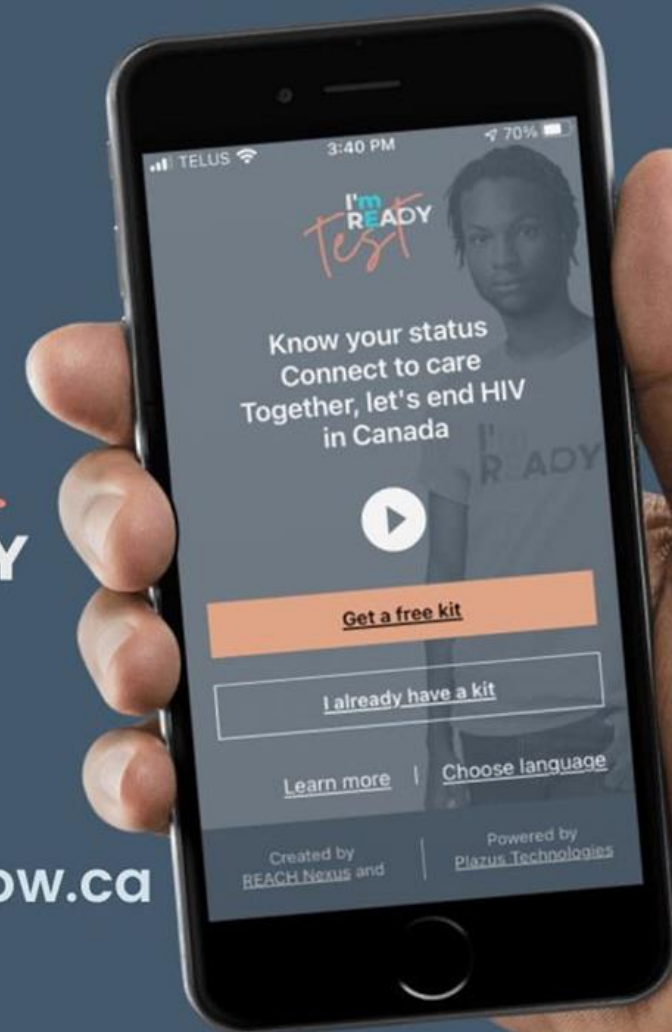
Know your status

I'm Ready

www.readytoknow.ca

I'm
READY
Test

readytoknow.ca



MY
HEALTH, IN
MY HANDS.



I Am

www.i-am.health

I AM

I AM...
PUTTING
MY HEALTH
IN MY
HANDS.

Jordy D. Ironstar
(He/They)

Community Readiness
Coordinator;
Two-Spirit Nakoda Oyate from Cega
K'inna (Carry the Kettle First Nation)

Our latest solution



Helpful. Accessible. Without judgement

A 'smart', interactive dispensing machine with the goal to:

- provide *low barrier-access* to self-testing kits for HIV and COVID-19, plus essential harm reduction and sexual health supplies *for free*.
- provide health *resources*, and a *support* services directory for people to find the healthcare they need – in their community.

We Built Our Healthbox

Our Healthbox (Notre Boîtesanté) program is centered around a network of 'smart', interactive dispensing machines, hosted by community-based organizations, that provide low-barrier, anonymous access to things people need for their health.

They provide testing, harm reduction supplies - complete with community engagement tools and healthcare resources, an integrated inventory management system and “real-time” data collection software system that facilitates program planning and evaluation.

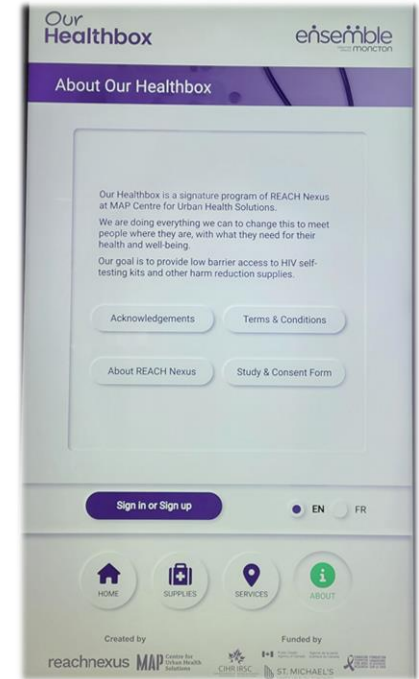
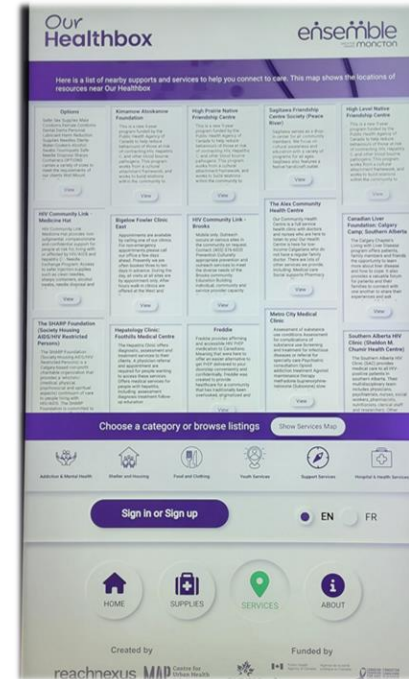
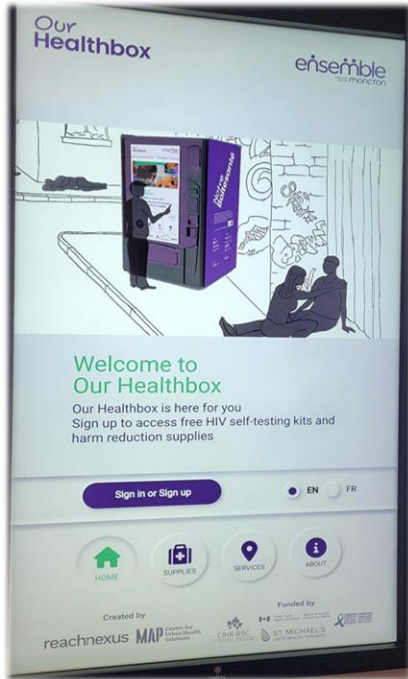
The Our Healthbox experience



1. Persons join the program by self-referring at their local Healthbox machine. Participants are:
 - Living in Canada
 - At least 16 years of age (18 years in Quebec)
 - Read and understand English or French
2. Participants use the interface to consent to the program, create a simple and unique login, and complete a one-time demographic survey. Information collected is anonymous. The data informs program funding, evaluation and ultimately, improve how we connect individuals to the care they need.
3. Participants can dispense free products, access education materials and healthcare services directories to connect to care. Short, post-access and follow-up surveys are also completed. For return visits, participants login to dispense products.

Note: Naloxone kits can be accessed without consenting for emergency use.

Our Healthbox interactive interface



The home page provides community announcements. Participant sign-up/sign-in to access the supplies they need. The health services directory (list/map), resources such as product information, tips, videos (such as naloxone and HIV self-test kits use) and program information pages do not require sign-in.

Items accessible from Our Healthbox

Self-Tests

- HIV self-test kits
- COVID-19 Rapid Antigen tests

Sexual Health and Wellness:

- Tampons and pads
- Condoms and lube
- Alcohol wipes
- Hand sanitizers and masks
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Seasonal essentials (socks, hat, mittens)
- Snacks and food kits
- Medicine bundles

Harm Reduction Supplies:

- Naloxone kits
- New needles and syringes
- Straight stems and bubble pipes
- Vitamin C and cookers
- Sharps disposal containers



Our Healthbox

Our Healthbox is designed as an implementation science research program to:

1. *understand* who we are reaching, how they use the machine for their health needs (all anonymously) and its impact on the community
2. *learn* if it improves health and wellness, reduces stigma, improves access to HIV testing and harm reduction supplies and connections to care

We value what we measure

Methods

Design: Implementation research

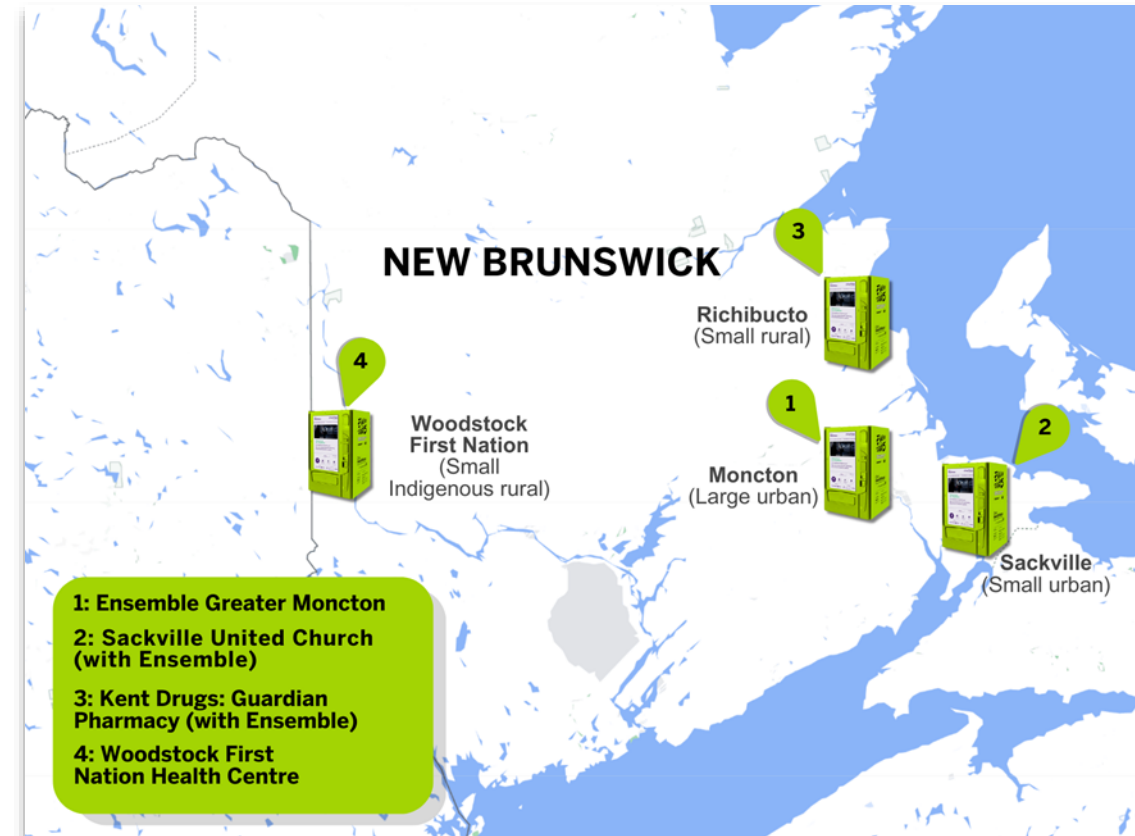
Evaluation: Guided by RE-AIM framework

Data:

- Surveys: anonymous, optional at sign-up, dispensing, return use (1 week) and follow-up (1, 3, 6 months)
- Machine dispensing data
- Host organization interviews

Period: Jan 23 - Aug 27, 2023 (7 months)

View: First 1,000 participants (4 Healthboxes)



Our Healthbox launched in January 2023 in four New Brunswick (Canada) communities. Richibucto site operates 9am-6pm while all other machines are available 24/7.

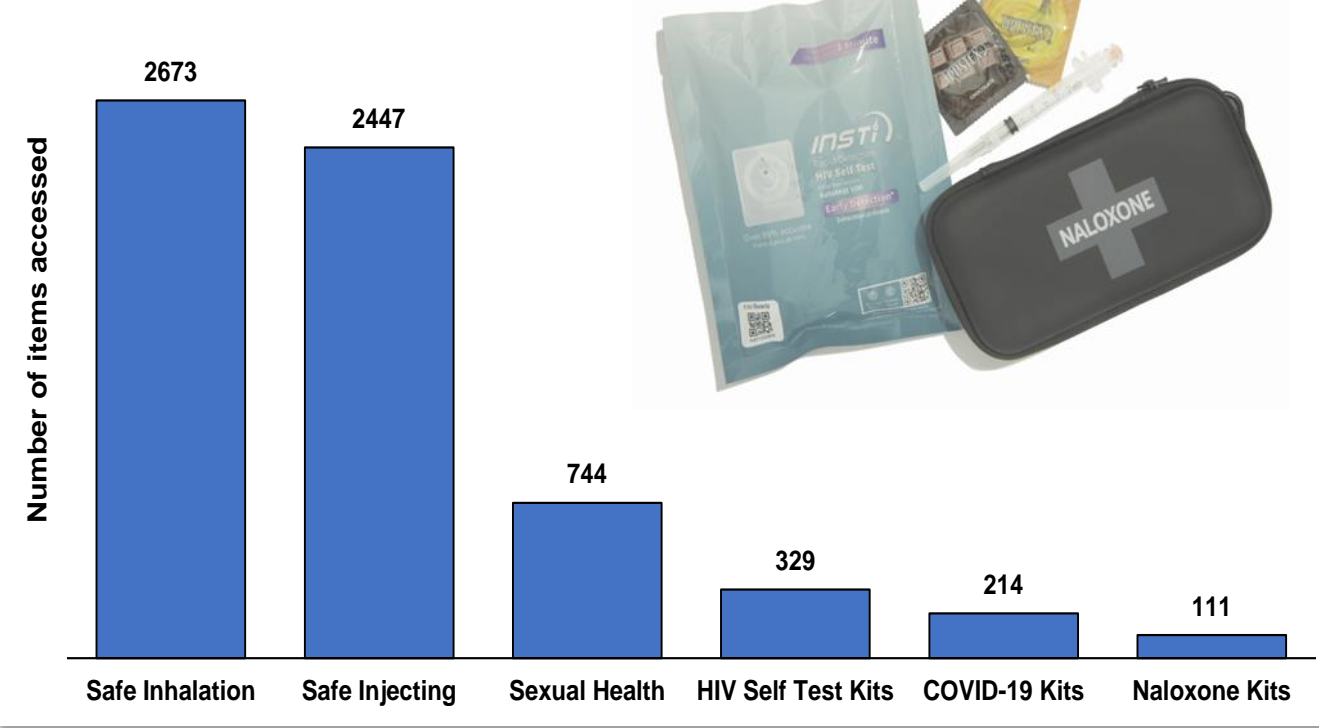


EVEN THE ODDS Our Healthbox
BETTER ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE AND MEDICINE



Our Healthbox - First 1,000 participants

19,000+ visits/encounters*
11,000+ viewed items
6,500+ items accessed
4,000+ surveys completed



* Persons can view supplies, educational and support services resources without signing in or dispensing an item.

Who we are reaching



Young - Age: 78% (n=778) were <39 years old



Women: 60% (n=432) reported their sex at birth as female



Heterosexual: 46% (n=296) identified as non-LGBTQIA



White: 53% (n=342) self-identified as Caucasian



Educated formally: 63% (n=380) completed at least high school



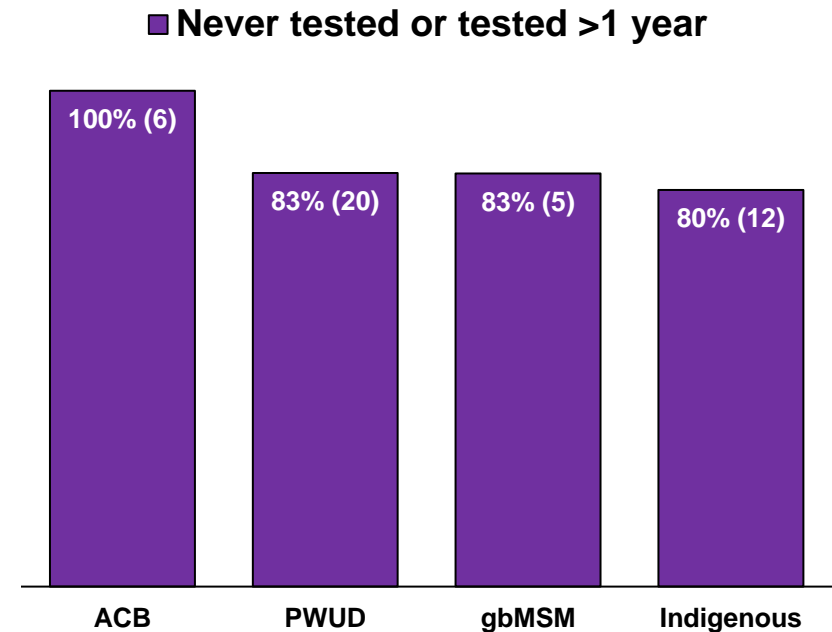
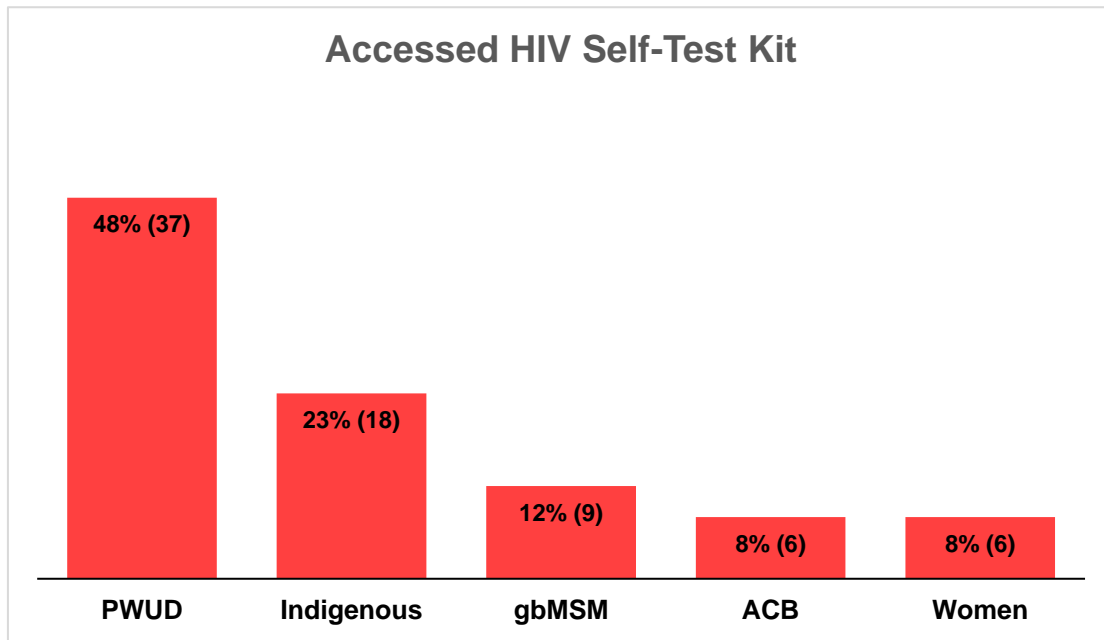
Unemployed: 66% (n=369) were not employed or earning regular income



Urban living: 80% (n=804) lived in a small urban area

HIV Testing

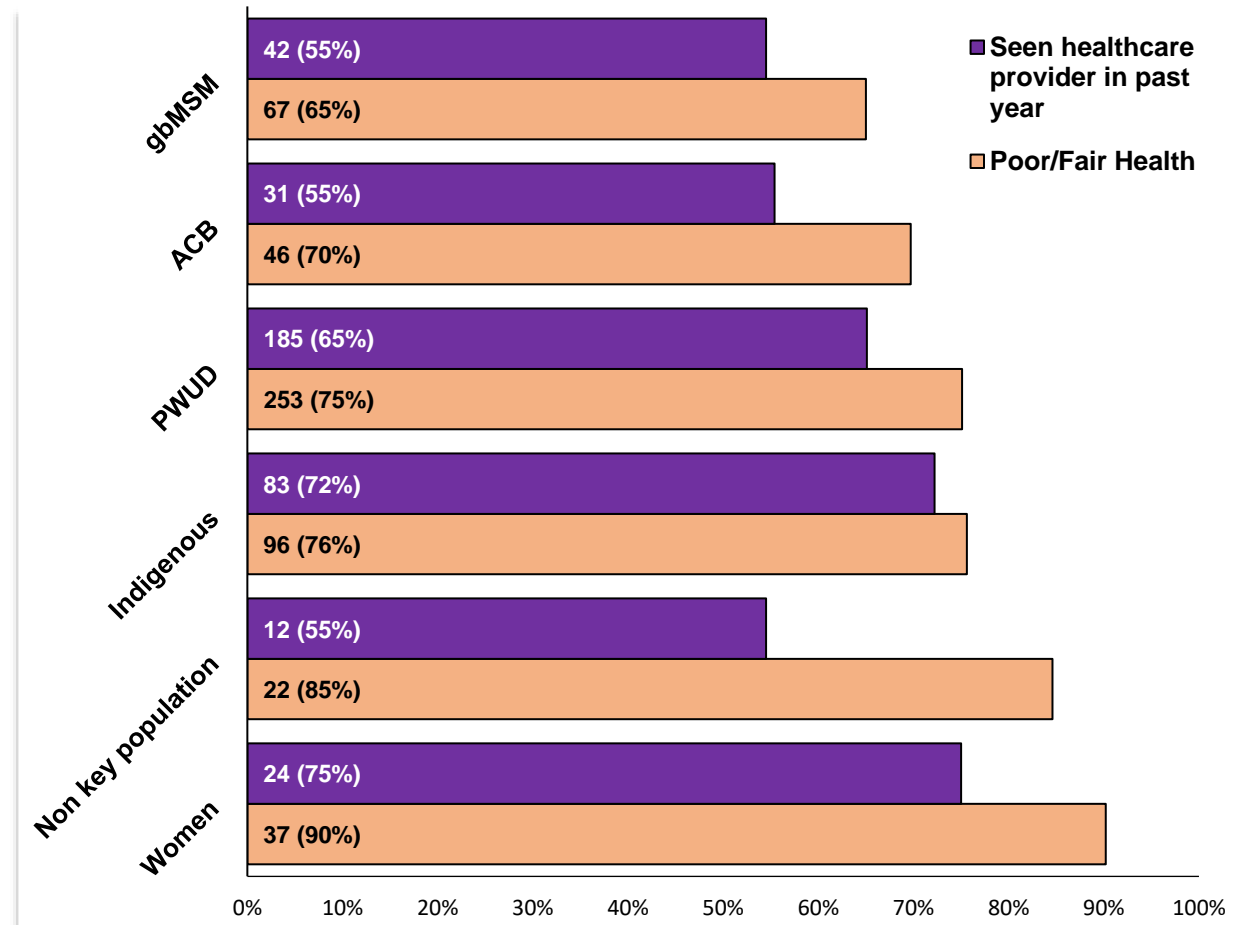
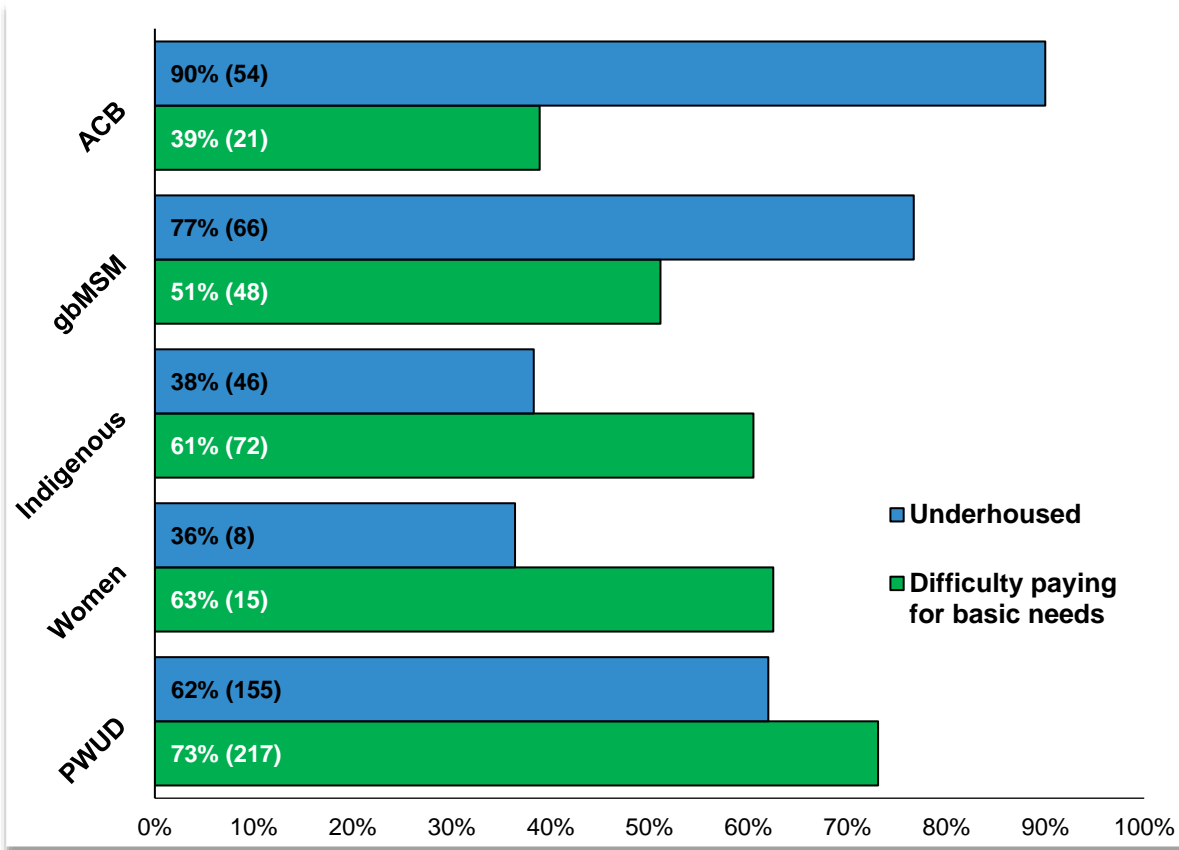
60% were **First-Time testers** for HIV of those who accessed an HIV Self-Test



About **18%** persons gave a kit to a social connection (**secondary distribution**).

* ACB = African, Caribbean and Black People; gbMSM – gay men and men who have sex with men; PWUD: people who use drugs

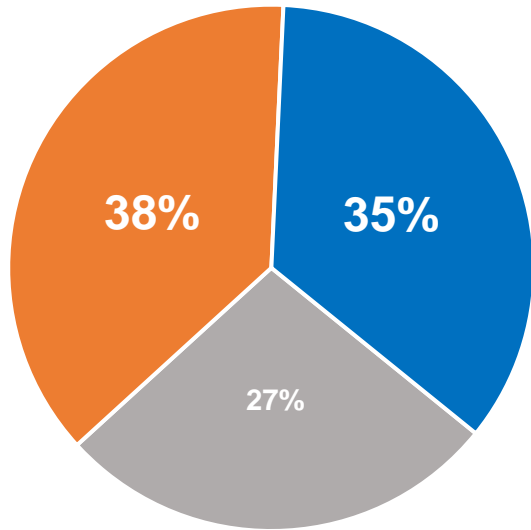
Housing, needs, health and care access



* Sample sizes >5 were suppressed

Acceptability by participants

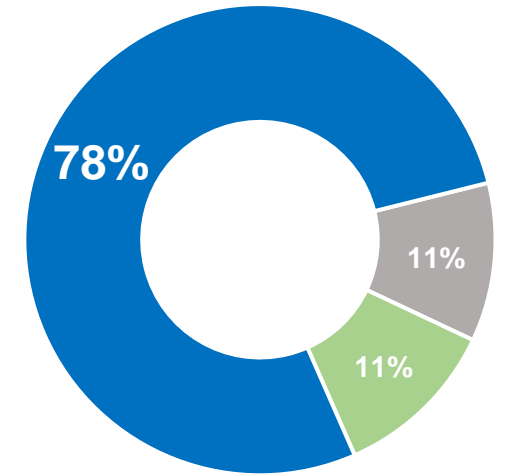
3 out of 4 rated their overall Healthbox experience as **good to excellent**.*



Rate: **Excellent / Very Good (n=90)** | **Good (n=96)** | Fair / Poor (n=70)

Close to 80% would **recommend** Healthbox to others.*

Recommend: **Yes (n=157)** | **Unsure (n=23)** | **No (n=22)**



Healthbox helped to reduced stigma around **access to HIV testing and harm reduction**.*

HIV Testing: **Yes (n=99)** | **Unsure (n=50)** | No (n=13)

Harm reduction: **Yes (n=106)** | **Unsure (n=45)** | No (n=15)

*Over 50% (200+) participants selected "prefer not to answer" for these questions.

Feedback from host partner CBOs

Getting Started

“[The onboarding process] was very well packaged and it hit every single thing.”

“Even though we’ve had some hiccups, we’ve always been well-supported in the process.”

“We’ve made great collabs in the process, which has presented us with other opportunities as well.”

Acceptability

“It is the most anonymous way to get your supplies... [in] a rural community ... so it has been helpful reaching a lot of people we wouldn’t be able to reach just by having the doors open.”

“[Initially there were concerns] about the [survey] questions... But the pushback didn’t last long... It went a lot smoother than I had thought.”

“I think most people are hitting ‘prefer not to answer’... [but] if you didn’t have that option, people wouldn’t use the machine.”

Impact

“We’ve noticed that a lot of the people who use the [Health]box aren’t necessarily clients... It’s people who don’t want to come inside for different reasons, so we are reaching different populations.”

“When we talk about [Our Healthbox], it has helped... because we can introduce [our clients] to other programs just by them asking about the Healthbox.”

Summary

- Our Healthbox is reaching key, vulnerable and marginalized people where they are with what they need - in both urban and rural areas.
- Reaching first-time testers for HIV.
- Participants feel the Healthbox is acceptable.
- Partner agencies feel Healthbox is making an impact.
- Encountered some implementation challenges but moving forward.
- By the end of 2023 we aim to implement 25 machines in communities across Canada and scale-up to 100 communities over the 3-year program.



Scaling up Our Healthbox



We are at various stages of implementation with community-based organizations, public health units and local governments to scale-up across Canada.

More information



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www.OurHealthbox.ca



Helpful. Accessible. Without judgement

Thank you! Merci! Dank je!