

# HIV Self-Testing in BC – New and Innovative Approaches

March 10, 2022

Northern Health Regional Training

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*Strengthening BC's collective action on HIV,  
hepatitis C, and harm reduction.*

# New and Innovative Approaches to HIV Testing in BC

- HIV self-testing – research-based initiatives
  - REACH's I'm Ready
  - CBRC Studies (Martin and his team will speak to this)
- Working towards approval for new HIV self-test – oral fluid test
- Dried-Blood Spot Testing

# PAN's work on STBBI Testing

- Partnership with REACH Nexus
- Supporting community-based testing needs – 2020 BC Testing Needs Assessment
- Working in partnership with other researchers and health partners to move new testing models forward



<https://paninbc.ca/2020/12/02/check-out-the-findings-from-pans-2020-bc-testing-needs-assessment/>

# What did the needs assessment tell us?



**Enthusiasm about new testing technologies**, including HIV self-testing, dried blood spot (DBS) multiplex testing for HIV and STBBIs, and self-testing for hepatitis C.

ASO and CBO stakeholders think that it is important and beneficial to **expand testing opportunities**.



**Pathway for access to HIV confirmatory testing** and linkage to prevention and treatment care, must be in place and clearly presented for those using HIVST, especially in communities with fewer services.

**Legal, surveillance, and public health reporting requirements** concerning positive HIVST results must be clear for CBOs and ASOs.



ASO and CBO stakeholders **call for guidelines and role clarity** of different stakeholders involved, including the anticipated role of peer support workers in HIVST.

**Collaboration** between ASOs/CBOs, healthcare providers, and health authorities is perceived as critical as HIVST is rolled out in the province.

# REACH Nexus supporting innovative testing work in Canada

- REACH Nexus is an ambitious national research group working on how to address HIV, Hepatitis C and other STBBIs in Canada.
- Focused on:
  - Reaching the undiagnosed
  - Implementing and scaling up new testing options,
  - Strengthening connections to care, improving access to options for prevention (PrEP and PEP)
  - Ending HIV stigma.

Part of [MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions](#) at St. Michael's Hospital, Unity Health Toronto, and is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

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# REACH Nexus' research secured the approval for Canada's first HIV self-test

- On November 3, 2020 Health Canada provided approval of the first HIV self-test in Canada
- On June 2, 2021, just after 7 months later, we launched Canada's first major national HIV self-testing distribution program to support all regions and key populations.

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

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

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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

Federal regulators have approved the first HIV self-test in Canada in a long-awaited move that experts say is critical to diagnosing people who don't know they have the virus.

Health Canada granted a medical device licence on Monday to a one-minute, finger-prick blood test manufactured by Richmond, B.C.-based bioLytical Laboratories.

*choice, access, testing, care*

# What is I'm Ready **to Know?**

## Democratizing HIV self-test in Canada

"I'M READY" IS A **NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM** THAT AIMS TO GIVE PEOPLE IN CANADA, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE UNDIAGNOSED AND PART OF KEY POPULATIONS:

- Approximately 50,000 free HIV self-tests;
- choice of delivery (home or other address); and
- connections to care for prevention or treatment through online and mobile options.

**I'M READY IS FOR EVERYONE, NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU LIVE.**

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**MAP**



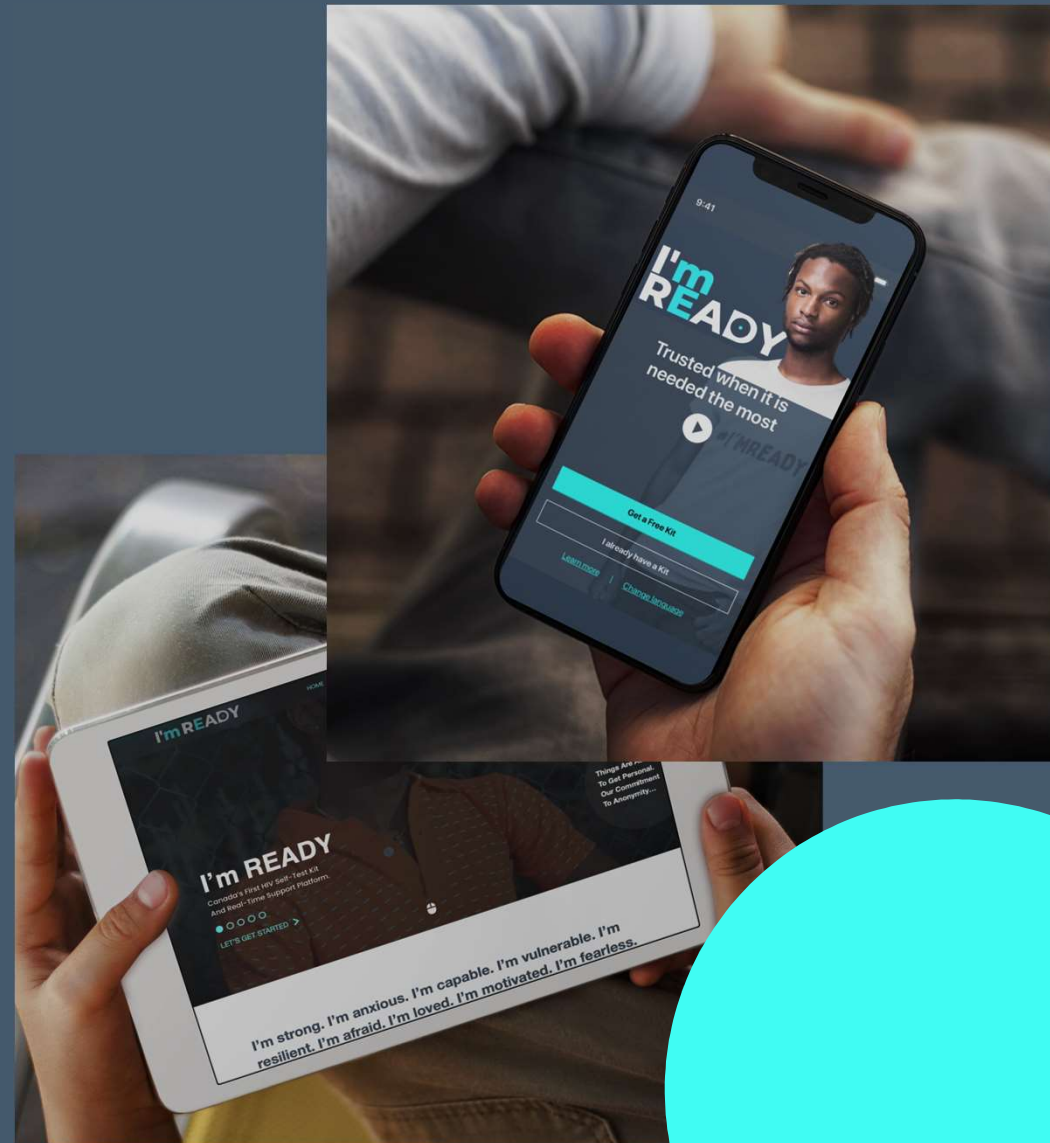
# The technology

## APP: *I'm Ready, Test*

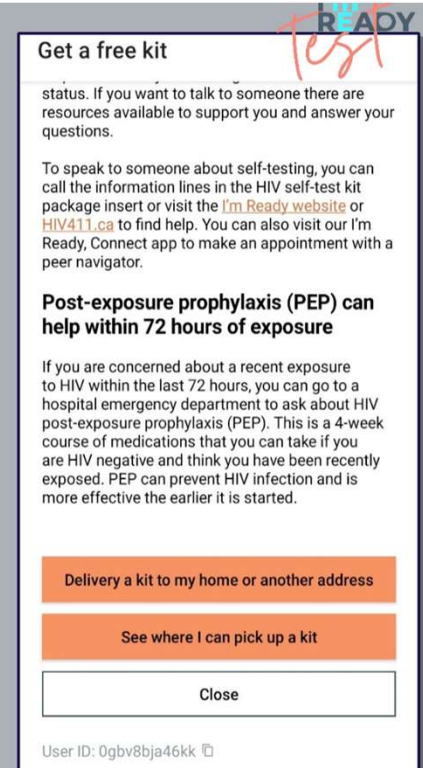
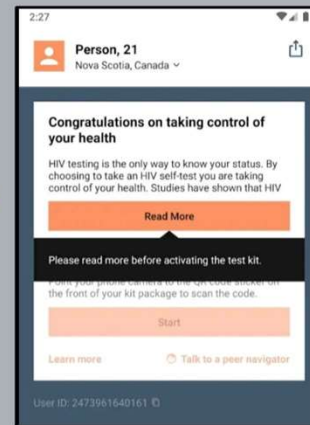
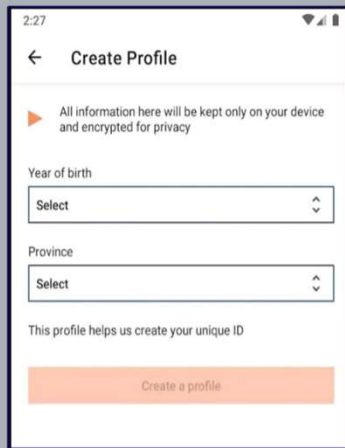
- Download the app on any major app store
- Set up a secure profile with PIN
- Order a test, take the test, share results and answer surveys
- Connect to support anytime before, during or after you take the test

## Website: *I'm Ready to Know*

- Comprehensive program information; pickup locations
- Includes pathways to care by province; knowledge base of FAQs
- Connection point for all services and resources associated with I'm Ready







- **Download** the I'm Ready, Test app
- **Consent** to join the research program
- **Create a profile**
- **Complete survey** (pre-test survey)
- **Access up to 3 free kits: Mail or CBO Pick-up**

# The I'm Ready, Test app



## Accessing HIV self-testing kits

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There are 2 ways to access HIV self-testing kits  
Across Canada:

- 61% were delivered to an address (people ordered 2 kits on average)\*
- 39% have been ordered for pickup at one of our 80 pickup locations

\* end of Q1

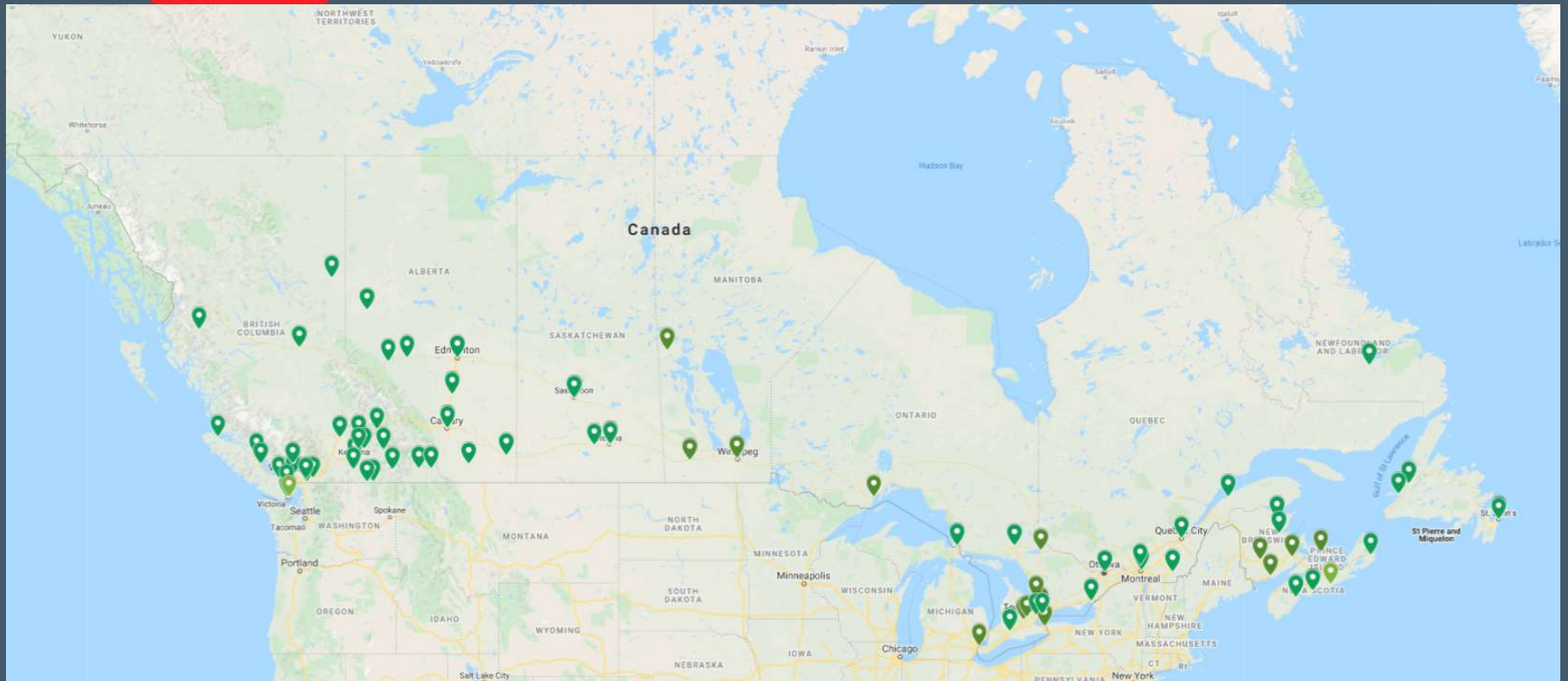
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# Pickup sites across Canada



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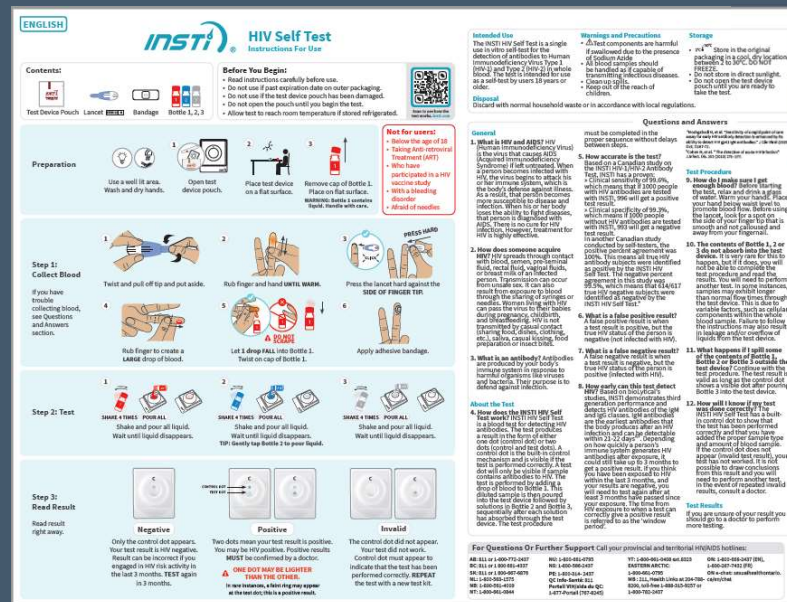


# BC Pickup Locations

- 'Ksan Society, Terrace
- AIDS Vancouver
- ANKORS, Cranbrook
- ANKORS, Nelson
- ASK Wellness
- AVI – Campbell River
- AVI – Nanaimo
- AVI – Victoria
- Central Interior Native Health, Prince George
- Cool Aid Pharmacy, Victoria
- Fort St. John Women's Resource Society
- HIM on Davie
- HIM on the Drive
- Island Health, Mt Waddington Region | Harm Reduction Outreach, Port Hardy
- Living Positive Resource Centre, Kelowna
- Options for Sexual Health (various locations)
- Phoenix Society

# What comes in a kit:

- Test Device Pouch (membrane)
- Lancet
- Bandage
- Bottle 1, 2, 3
- Package insert





A photograph of two men in a collaborative workspace. The man on the left, wearing a red hoodie and glasses, is smiling and looking towards the man on the right. The man on the right, wearing a grey beanie and glasses, is also smiling and looking back. They are standing in front of a wall covered with various papers and sticky notes. A large cyan curved shape is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

# On-Demand Peer Navigators

*I'm Ready, Talk*

**ACCESS THE ONLINE CARE & SUPPORT "TELEHEALTH" SERVICE PLATFORM FROM THE WEBSITE OR APP.**

**PEER NAVIGATORS ARE THERE TO SUPPORT SERVICE USERS BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER THEY TAKE THE TEST.**

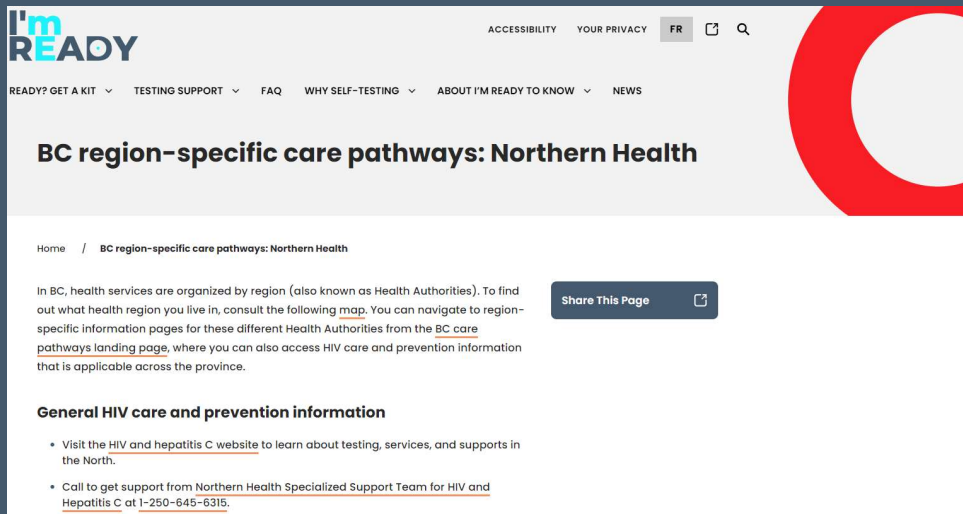
**STAFFED BY INFORMED, TRAINED PEER NAVIGATORS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE.**

**SELF-TESTERS CAN CHOOSE A PEER(S) TO TALK TO ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN COMFORT LEVEL, BASED ON HOW THE PEER NAVIGATORS DESCRIBE THEMSELVES .**

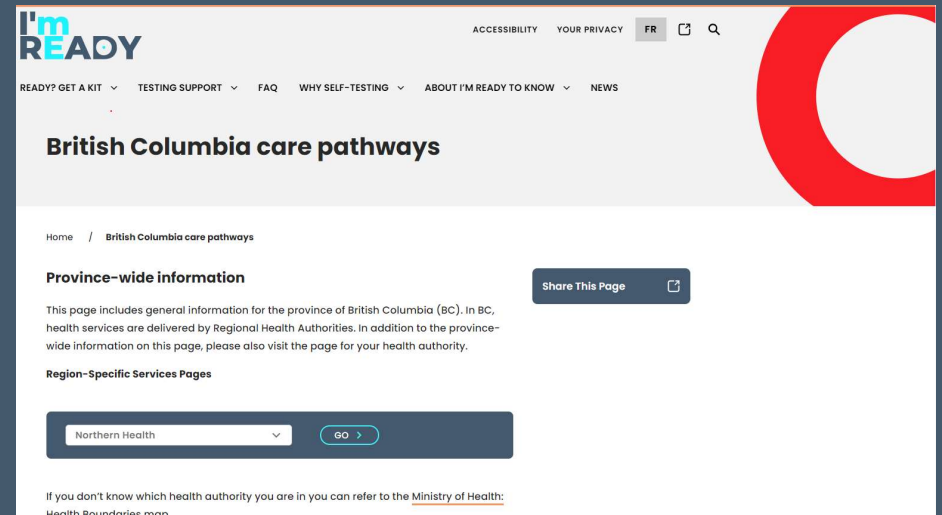
**THIS IS AN OPTIONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL CONNECTION TO ON-DEMAND SUPPORT.**

# Prevention and Care Pathways

- Developed in partnership with each Regional Health Authority
- Updatable – I'm Ready Website
- Used by study participants or I'm Ready Peer Navigators



The screenshot shows the I'm Ready website interface. The header includes the I'm Ready logo, navigation links (READY? GET A KIT, TESTING SUPPORT, FAQ, WHY SELF-TESTING, ABOUT I'M READY TO KNOW, NEWS), and accessibility/privacy links. The main heading is "BC region-specific care pathways: Northern Health". Below this, a breadcrumb trail reads "Home / BC region-specific care pathways: Northern Health". The text explains that health services in BC are organized by region (Health Authorities) and provides a link to a "map" to find the user's region. It also mentions a "BC care pathways landing page" for HIV care and prevention information. A "Share This Page" button is visible. The section "General HIV care and prevention information" lists two bullet points: visiting the HIV and hepatitis C website for testing, services, and supports in the North, and calling for support from the Northern Health Specialized Support Team for HIV and Hepatitis C at 1-250-645-6315.



The screenshot shows the I'm Ready website interface for British Columbia care pathways. The header includes the I'm Ready logo, navigation links (READY? GET A KIT, TESTING SUPPORT, FAQ, WHY SELF-TESTING, ABOUT I'M READY TO KNOW, NEWS), and accessibility/privacy links. The main heading is "British Columbia care pathways". Below this, a breadcrumb trail reads "Home / British Columbia care pathways". The section "Province-wide information" includes a "Share This Page" button and text stating that the page includes general information for the province of British Columbia (BC) and that health services are delivered by Regional Health Authorities. The section "Region-Specific Services Pages" features a dropdown menu with "Northern Health" selected and a "GO" button. At the bottom, a note states that if the user doesn't know which health authority they are in, they can refer to the "Ministry of Health: Health Boundaries map".

## Other HIV Testing Studies – CBRC

- Test@Home Study – part of the Sex Now Study
- Test Now Buddies – virtual support for the Test@Home Study
- Get it Wet Program
- Medicine Bundle Pilot – for Two-Spirit, queer and trans Indigenous people

[https://www.cbrc.net/test\\_now](https://www.cbrc.net/test_now)



## New HIV Self-Test Kit – Oral Fluid

- Research underway to support Health Canada review and approval for oral fluid test:
  - Healthcare point-of-care
  - Self-testing

# Dried-Blood Spot Testing



From: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-dry-blood-spot-testing-1.5024372>

- Currently – healthcare provider led testing
- Accessioned at BCCDC – sent to National Microbiology Lab in Manitoba for processing
- Results come back to ordering provider and reported back to patient

# Dried-Blood Spot Testing – New Approaches

- Heath partners exploring new approaches test new implementation models for DBS
  - Self-collected DBS
  - Peer-based models
  - Outreach models

Thank you!

Question?!?



*Strengthening BC's collective action on HIV,  
hepatitis C, and harm reduction.*