



Express STI Testing: Improving Access to STI Diagnosis and Treatment

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Indian Country ECHO Grand Rounds

IHS STI Testing Strategies



- Test symptomatic patients with an STI Bundle
 - Syphilis
 - HIV
 - Gonorrhea and Chlamydia
- Test at risk persons who have no symptoms
 - Diagnosed with another STI to rule out coinfection
 - Persons with multiple sex partners
 - Persons seen for Alcohol/Opiate/Stimulant use disorder
 - Persons seen for trauma
 - Pregnant women
- **Universal Testing Age 13-64**

IHS STI Testing Strategies

- On Demand Testing
 - Pioneered about a decade ago in Phoenix and Navajo Area
 - Nicknamed the Golden Ticket
 - Patients could get a ticket from their provider, nurse, PHN, or at a community event
 - Patients can also walk in on their own and simply ask for a test



Why do we need this in the IHS?



- Allows for rapid testing on demand and rapid treatment: “Test and Treat”
- No provider or nurse visit required so wait times are shorter
- Avoids stigma and confidentiality problems in a close knit community
- Complements and expands on the other three testing strategies:
 - Symptomatic
 - At risk
 - Universal



Why Now?

Express STI Testing: Rationale

1. Increasing STI rates and congenital syphilis among AI/AN
2. Patient-initiated care (on demand)
3. Reduce demand for clinical provider visit
4. Prioritize provider visits for patients who need STI treatment
5. Reduce wait time for patients (no appointment needed)
6. Streamline process for collection of specimens for rapid turnaround of results and treatment
7. Maximize limited resources
8. COVID-19 demonstrated need for innovative approaches to continue sexual health services



What is Express STI Testing?

What are express services?

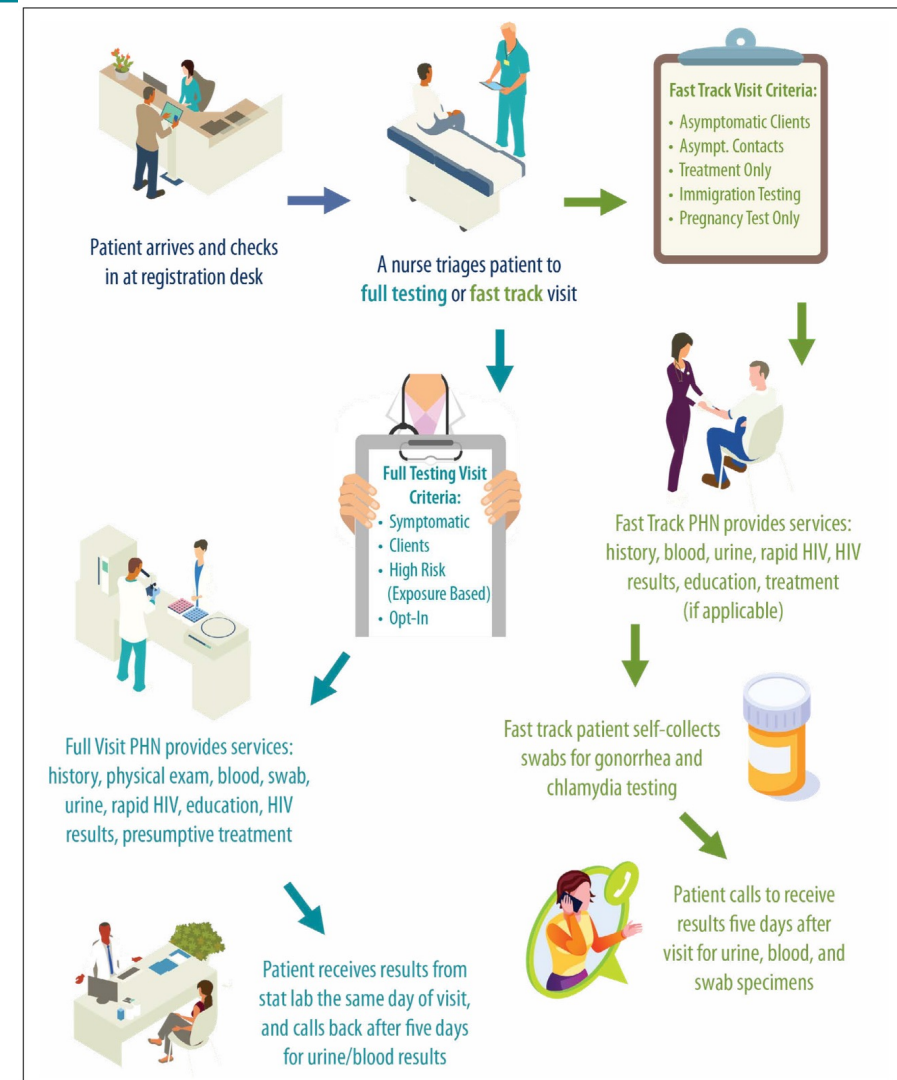
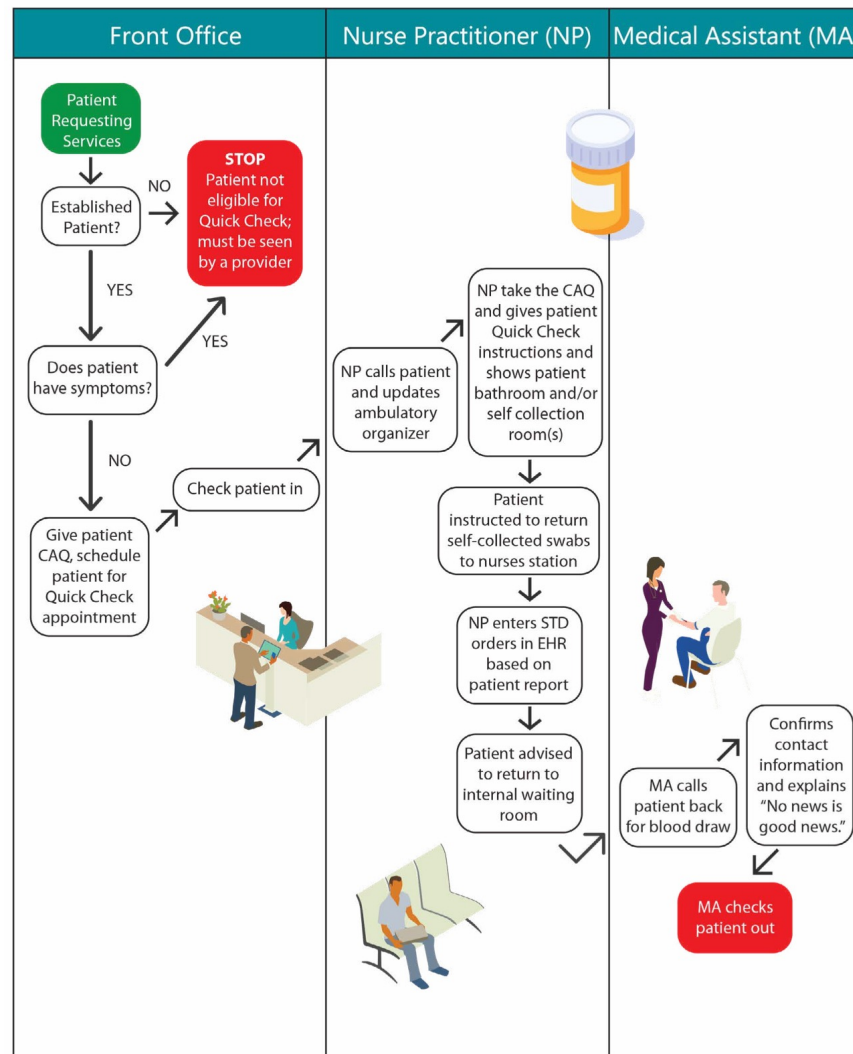
STI express services refer to triage-based STI testing without a full clinical examination. Research shows that STI express services **increase clinic capacity, reduce time to treatment, reduce visit time, and decrease visit cost**. Therefore, express services have the potential to increase access and testing while maximizing available resources.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to express services.

Because express services are driven by limited interactions with clinicians, they are also associated with staffing models that maximize top of license strategies, patient self-collection of swabs, and technology and automation to conserve time and staffing.



Intake and Triage



Key Considerations



Physical space

- patient intake and waiting areas
- location/number of toilets
- patient flow

Staffing

Standardized symptom and risk assessments

Specimen collection and delivery to laboratory

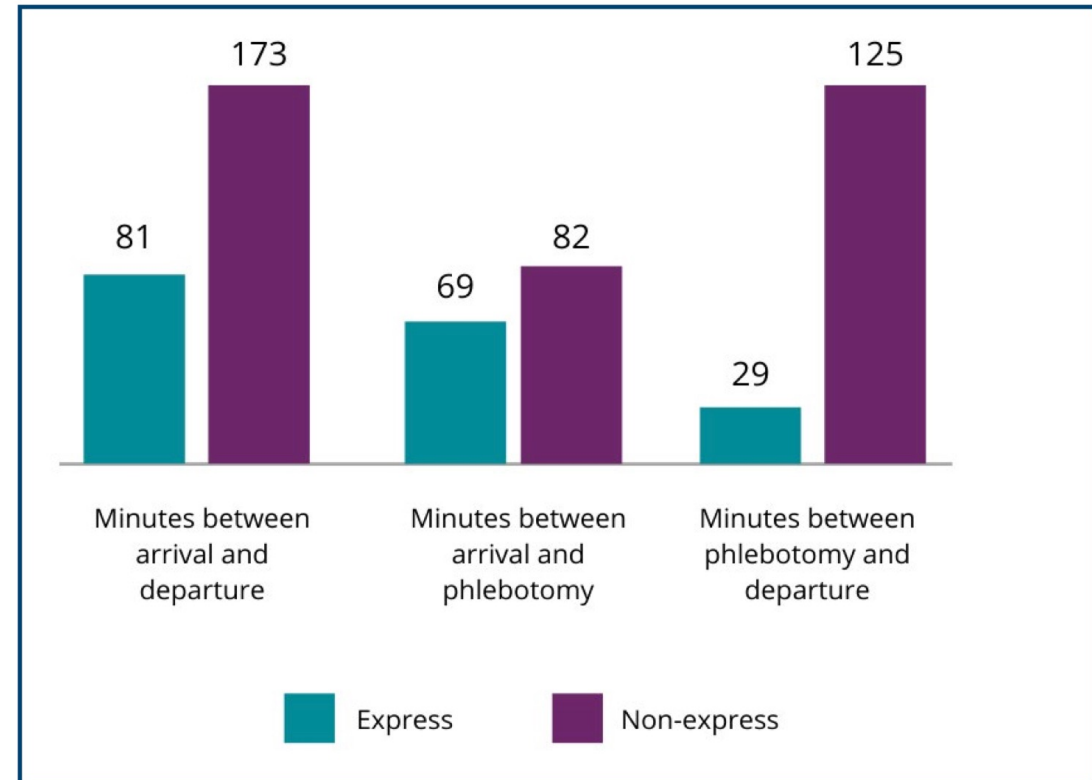
Reporting/routing of test results

Connecting STI case patients to prompt treatment

Patient Flow & Staffing – Key Considerations

- Delegation
- Billing Requirements
- Staff Buy-in
- Volume and Capacity
- Technology

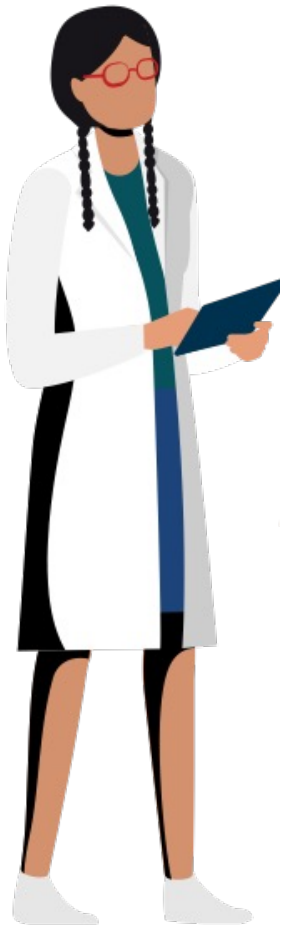
Figure 1: Average appointment time of patients receiving express vs. non-express visits



Statistically significant difference in minutes between express and non-express visits for all time points ($p < .001$)¹⁶

Express STI Testing: Implementation

⇒ **Test-only visit for “asymptomatic” sexually active adolescents and adults without a provider exam or encounter**



Serum

- syphilis
- HIV
- Hepatitis
- (pregnancy)

Urine

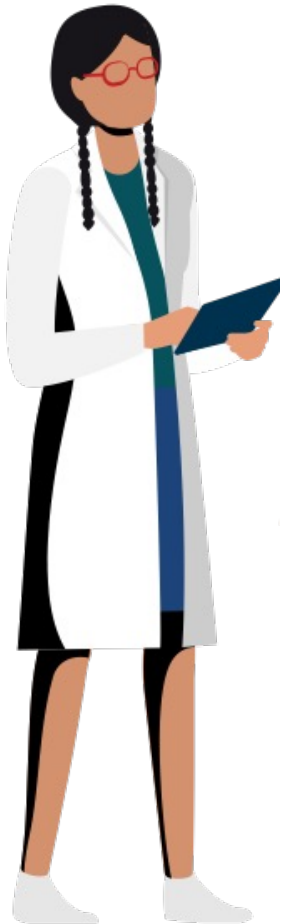
- gonorrhea
- chlamydia
- pregnancy

Self-collected swabs

- vaginal
- rectal
- oropharyngeal

*trichomoniasis testing may be available depending on clinical service unit

Express STI Testing: Patient characteristics*



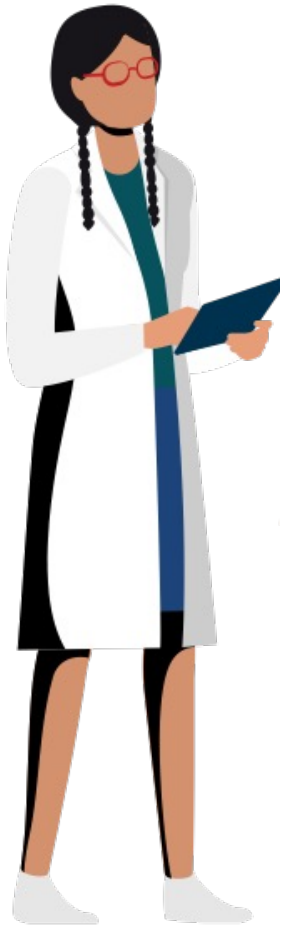
1. New patients
2. Younger patients (adolescents)
3. Male patients
4. Heterosexual patients
5. Minority race/ethnicity
6. Engaging in transactional sex,
7. Using high-risk or injection drugs



* Results compared to non-express visits, 13 clinical sites, National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and Cardea Services, 2021

1. [STI Express Services: Increasing Access and Testign While Maximizing Resources \(naccho.org\)](https://naccho.org/sti-express-services-increasing-access-and-testign-while-maximizing-resources)
2. [sti-express-report.pdf \(naccho.org\)](https://naccho.org/sti-express-report.pdf)

Capacity and Time



1. Express services increased clinic capacity to see patients.
2. Express visits were significantly shorter than non-express visits, further allowing the clinic to see more patients per day.



Cost Benefit

- 36,946 clients seen at Maricopa County Department of Public Health, Phoenix, AZ
- Treatment completion rates were comparable but were higher among patients seen through PVs (99%) as compared with ET (94%).
- A savings of \$2936 per 1000 patients seen was achieved when 20% of clients were routed through ET.
- Clinic turn-aways decreased significantly, from 159 clients during the 2 months before implementation of ET to 6 patients during the last 2 months of evaluation (96% reduction).



HHS Public Access

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Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Diagnosis, Treatment, Personnel Cost Savings, and Service Delivery Improvements After the Implementation of Express Sexually Transmitted Disease Testing in Maricopa County, Arizona

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Abstract

Background: The demand for low-cost sexually transmitted disease (STD) services in Maricopa County (Phoenix area) is high. Improved methods for STD/HIV testing are needed to increase the number of patients receiving testing.

Objectives: The present study sought to evaluate an STD/HIV express testing (ET) option for patients identified as being at lower risk for infection.

Methods: Clients reporting current STD symptoms, contact to an infected partner, or health department referral were identified via questionnaire and routed to a traditional provider visit (PV); those not reporting these situations were routed to ET (laboratory-only). Demographics, treatment completion, and treatment intervals were compared among patients diagnosed as having chlamydia and gonorrhea through ET and PV encounters in September 2008 to July 2011. Personnel costs were compared for each of the 2 visit types. The number of clinic turn-aways for the 2-month time interval before the start of the program was compared with the 2-month interval at the end of the evaluation.

Results: Of the 36,946 clients seen at Maricopa County Department of Public Health, 7466 (20.2%) were patients seen through express visits. Overall chlamydia and gonorrhea positivity was lower among ET patients (527/7466; 7.1%) as compared with those tested through PVs (6323/29,480; 21.4%). Treatment completion rates were comparable but were higher among patients seen through PVs (99%) as compared with ET (94%). A savings of \$2936 per 1000

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Top 5 patient considerations when choosing a clinic to receive testing

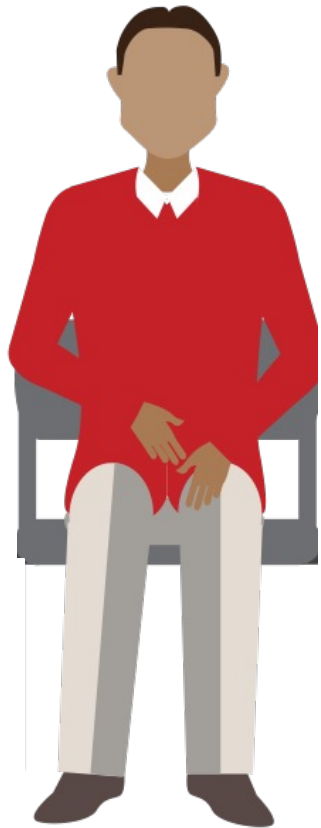


Examples of Case Studies from Indian Country



Northern Navajo Medical Center – Shiprock, NM

Express STI Testing

An advertisement for STI testing. The background is a mix of purple and orange geometric shapes. At the top, a microscope is faintly visible. The main text is in large, bold, white letters with a blue outline. Below the text is a yellow box with a list of bullet points. At the bottom, there is a white box with the hours of operation and a small circular logo in the bottom right corner. The logo features a stylized figure and the text 'HEALTH SERVICES' and '1953'.

**GET TESTED FOR
SEXUALLY
TRANSMITTED
INFECTIONS
TODAY**

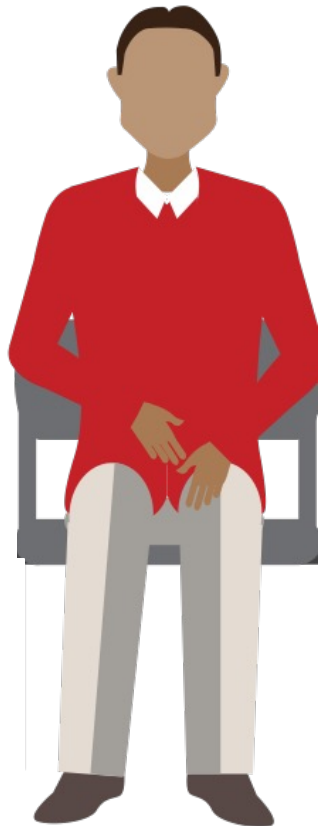
- Know your status
- No questions asked
- Go directly to the Northern Navajo Medical Center Lab during open hours to get tested
- Private, confidential results

**OPEN 8am - 4pm
Monday - Saturday**

Available to all eligible for IHS care.

Northern Navajo Medical Center – Shiprock, NM

Express STI Testing



Date: _____

NNMC STI TESTING TICKET

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

IHS Chart Number: _____

I want to be tested for Sexually Transmitted Infections today (Includes: testing for HIV, Syphilis, Gonorrhea, Chlamydia & Trichomonas)

For those with concerns about a sexually transmitted infection (STI) happening right now as you have symptoms or a recent exposure, it is recommended that you talk with your provider a full evaluation.

I prefer to be contacted with results by:

Phone Number(s): _____

Letter sent to mailing address: _____

I prefer to call in for my results to 505-368-6818

TEAR THIS SECTION OFF AND PLACE IN SECURE BOX IN LAB FOR FOLLOW-UP

LABORATORY SLIP

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

IHS Chart Number: _____

For NNMC Lab Staff:

Lab Order Number: _____
Lab Account # 30979612

Labs:

- HIV- 083935
- Syphilis- 012005
- Urine Gonorrhea/Chlamydia/Trichomonas- 183160

EHR/PPMS Location: HPDP STI Testing Order under Ann Vaughn, MD

TEAR THIS SECTION OFF AND GIVE TO THE FRONT DESK LAB STAFF OR PLACE ON LAB DESK

LEARN MORE ABOUT SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

STIs are preventable. There are steps you can take to keep yourself and your partner(s) healthy:

- ✓ Practice Abstinence
- ✓ Use Condoms
- ✓ Have Fewer Partners
- ✓ Get Vaccinated
- ✓ Talk With Your Partner
- ✓ Get Tested

CDC estimates there are **MILLIONS** of new STD infections in the United States each year.

Anyone who is sexually active can get an STD.

Some groups are more affected by STDs and their outcomes

Adolescents and Young Adults Gay, Bisexual, & other Men who have Sex with Men Pregnant Women and Infants Racial and Ethnic Minorities

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF BY VISITING THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES:

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/STD/
- WER NATIVE: www.wernative.org/my-relationships/sexual-health



Northern Navajo Medical Center – Shiprock, NM

Express STI Testing



HOW TO FIND OUT LAB RESULTS

Get your test results online from LabCorp website

- Set up your own LabCorp account and get your results as soon as they are ready!
- The LabCorp Patient™ Portal allows you to view, download, and print your LabCorp test results as soon as the results are available.

Step 1: Create an account. Enter the link below into your web browser and fill out the registration information.

<https://patient.labcorp.com/account/registration/register>

Step 2: Look up your results by typing in the email address and password you created from the registration.

<https://patient.labcorp.com/landing>

- If you are not able to sign up on LabCorp's website to look at your test results and you have not yet been contacted about test results two weeks after getting tested, please call 505-368-6320 to receive your test results.
- If any tests results are positive or you have questions on these results---Please call NNMC Call Center to be transferred to your clinic to schedule an appointment for an evaluation & treatment
- If any tests return positive, it is VERY important to not have sexual activity with your partner(s) & have you both evaluated & treated by a provider.
- Please contact your sexual partner(s) if you have positive test results to let them know of potential infection & need for testing and treatment if you can do so safely. This will help stop the spread and reinfection of these sexually transmitted infections.

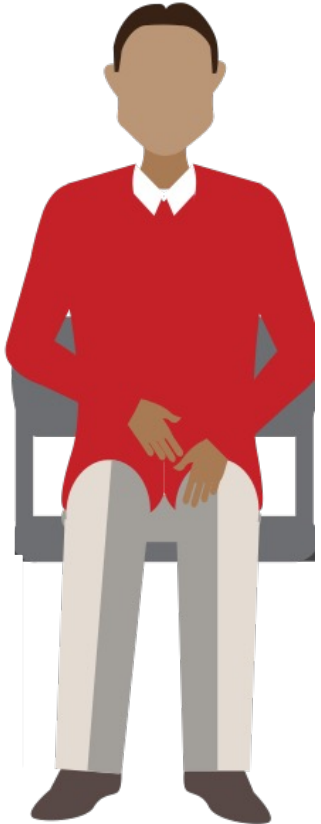
Northern Navajo Medical Center – Shiprock, NM

Express STI Testing



Northern Navajo Medical Center – Shiprock, NM

Express STI Testing



CURRENT ISSUES:

- **Hesitancy regarding self-collected swabs**
 - Increased education necessary for all lab staffing on appropriate handling and instruction
- **Privacy/Confidentiality**
 - Lab with concerns regarding privacy to fill out form especially if questions arise
- **Facilities**
 - Two bathrooms within drawing station at facility

NEXT STEPS:

1. Expand testing to include viral hepatitis and pregnancy as recommended
2. Offer self-collected swabs to ensure offering testing for all relevant sites
3. Create separate express testing ticket for those under 18 yo (to be ordered under LabCorp Confidential Account)



Wind River Family and Community Health Care Open Access STI Testing

**Touch here if
you want STI
Testing**



**Standing order on file with each of our 3 labs. Marketing with fliers,
social media, word of mouth**

Wind River Family and Community Health Care Implemented January 2023

Since implementation:

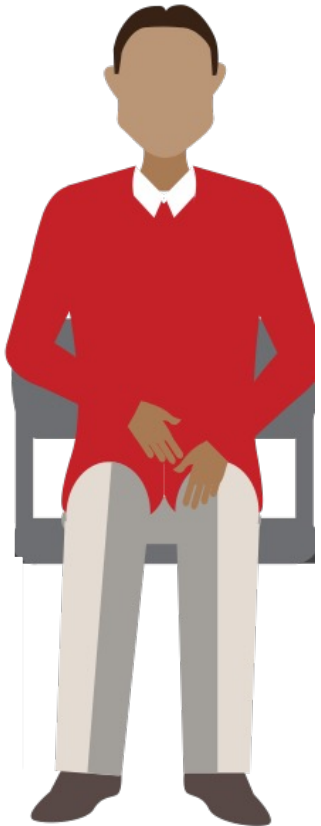
- 19 patients have utilized services
- 6 cases of chlamydia have been detected and treated
- 2 cases of gonorrhea have been detected and treated
- Contact tracing is completed and any partners identified are contacted and treated at that time

Feedback from patients:

- Easy to use
- Confidential
- Timely notification and treatment

Prior to implementation:

- Discussion with all departments that would be impacted
- Heavy marketing and frequent reminders of new policy and change of clinic flow





Primary care clinicians should be at the forefront of STI treatment.

IF THEY ARE NOT, NOBODY WILL BE.

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