# Out for Delivery: HIV Testing in the Privacy of Your Home

A new program aims to deliver 1 million free rapid HIV tests.

November 14, 2022 By Trent Straube

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Testing yourself for HIV—for free and in the privacy of your own home—is about to get a lot easier and more common, thanks to the largest HIV self-testing program in U.S. history. The Together TakeMeHome program aims to deliver 1 million rapid HIV tests across the country starting in early 2023.

The federal government, via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has awarded $8.3 million per year to Together TakeMeHome for its five-year project (for a total of $41.5 million), according to a press release from Emory University, which will oversee the program.

Orders placed on the program's website will be processed by Amazon, which will deliver the tests in discreet packages, according to the press release. OraSure will provide the tests, which will be available in all 50 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico.

Nearly 40% of new HIV cases are transmitted by people unaware of their positive status, according to the CDC, which estimates that about 1.2 million people in the United States are living with HIV, including 158,500 who don't know they have it.

Put another way, about one in eight people with HIV are unaware of their status, according to HIV.gov. "Knowledge of status is the gateway to engaging in prevention or treatment services that enable individuals, regardless of their status, to live a long and healthy life," said Harold J. Phillips, MRP, director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy, on HIV.gov.

In other words, it's important to know whether you have HIV. If you're positive, then you can take medication—daily pills or long-acting injections—that stop disease progression and reduce your viral load. People living with HIV that is undetectable not only live longer and healthier lives, they also do not transmit HIV sexually, a fact referred to as

Undetectable Equals Untransmittable, or U=U.

“HIV self-testing is a key innovation that supports the national goal to diagnose all people with HIV as early as possible,” said Robyn Neblett Fanfair, MD, MPH, acting director of the CDC’s Division of HIV Prevention, in the press release. “Evidence demonstrates high demand for HIV self-tests—particularly among people who have never previously tested for HIV and populations that are not equitably reached by HIV testing, effective treatment and prevention tools.”

As part of the new program, a team at Emory University will monitor how many tests are ordered, how many diagnoses are made and how many people are linked to care or, if negative, enrolled in pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, the pills and long-term injections that prevent people from acquiring HIV.

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