
For Immediate Release | November 1, 2018

On Demand HIV testing now available across the Interior

Getting tested for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) just got easier for residents across the Interior Health (IH) region, now that [On Demand testing](#) is available at all IH laboratories.

As of today, patients can visit any IH lab and get an HIV test without having to first visit their physician or nurse practitioner. Patients can fill out a lab requisition on their own and take it to the lab, ask the lab for the test to be done, or ask to have the test added to existing bloodwork being ordered.

“Today, thanks to early diagnosis and advancements in treatment and care, HIV is a chronic, manageable condition,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “The first step is learning whether you have HIV, and that’s why I applaud Interior Health for making HIV testing more accessible for British Columbians.”

On Demand HIV testing began in Interior Health in 2016 with an innovative partnership with Valley Medical Laboratories in the Okanagan. Based on the success of that program, Interior Health is excited to now be expanding the service across the region.

“Interior Health is committed to providing accessible and patient-centered care for people in ways that respect their dignity and privacy,” said Doug Cochrane, Interior Health Board Chair. “By eliminating barriers to testing, and enabling people to be tested on their own terms, we are making it easier for individuals who test positive for HIV to access the care they need.”

Early diagnosis is vital for treatment of HIV, but one in four people living with HIV don’t know it.

“When people have easy access to HIV testing, they are far more willing to get tested,” said Maja Karlsson, Interior Health Manager of Harm Reduction and Health Outreach. “I encourage everyone to get tested for HIV as part of their health routine.”

Patients who request a test at an IH lab will be provided with information about the test and the follow-up process for both negative and positive results. Results are available two weeks after the test occurs. There is no additional follow up for patients who test negative. Patients who test positive will be contacted by a nurse who will provide support, education, follow-up care, and referral to a physician when needed.

Non-nominal testing for HIV is not done through the On Demand program. If a patient wishes to test without their name, this can be done through a family physician or nurse practitioner.

On Demand HIV testing is a partnership between Interior Health Laboratory Services and the STOP HIV program, which aims to reduce transmission and improve the health outcomes of those living with HIV.

The BC-CfE congratulates Interior Health as they continue to innovate in support of the expansion of HIV testing. “Facilitated access to HIV testing is a key component of the made-in-BC Treatment as Prevention strategy,” said Dr. Julio Montaner, Director of the BC Centre of Excellence in HIV/AIDS.

To find the IH lab nearest you, please visit interiorhealth.ca/findlab

In addition to expanding access to HIV testing, access to HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) are critical to curbing the fight against HIV/AIDS. PrEP and PEP are part of the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS' (BC-CfE) Treatment as Prevention® strategy, which has led to a consistent decline in new HIV cases.

Since B.C. introduced no-cost coverage of PrEP, and expanded access to PEP for those at high risk of HIV infection on Jan. 1, 2018, over 3,000 people provincially have been prescribed the highly effective HIV prevention drug.

For more information:

- Interior Health [On Demand HIV testing](#)
- BC Healthlink File – [HIV and HIV Test](#)
- [My Health is Sexy](#)

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Media, for information:

Media@interiorhealth.ca

1-844-469-7077