

I'm READY

I AM...

National implementation and scale-up of innovative HIV self-testing programs to help reach and support the undiagnosed and key populations in Canada

Rick Galli



reachnexus

MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions

ST. MICHAEL'S UNITY HEALTH TORONTO

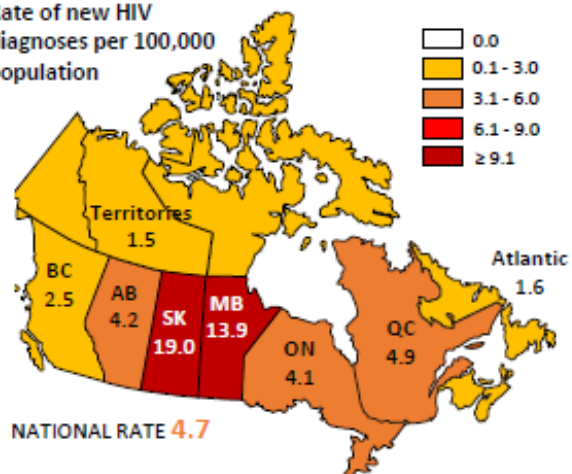


Public Health Agency of Canada

Setting the Context

HIV in Canada: 2022 Surveillance Highlights

Rate of new HIV diagnoses per 100,000 population

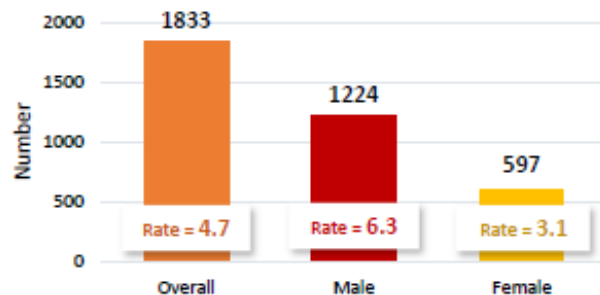


NATIONAL RATE 4.7

1,833 new diagnosed cases of HIV in 2022
(24.9% increase since 2021)

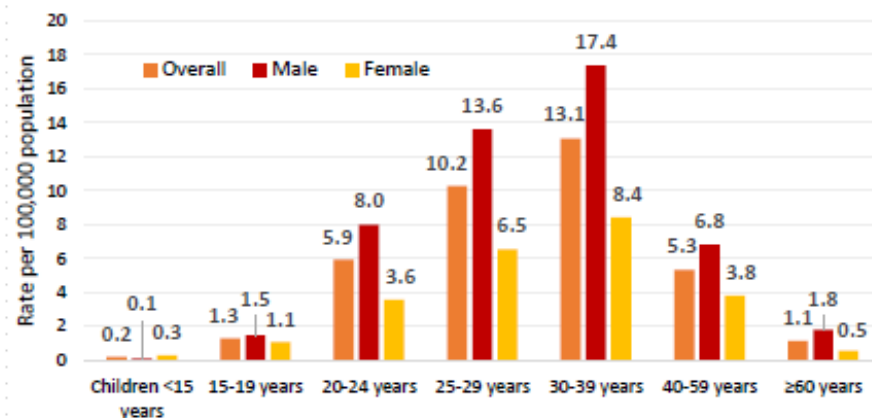
For all jurisdictions, data for 2022 exclude cases that have been previously diagnosed outside of Canada (e.g., prior to immigration) or in another province/territory.

Number and rate (per 100,000 population) of new HIV diagnoses, by sex*

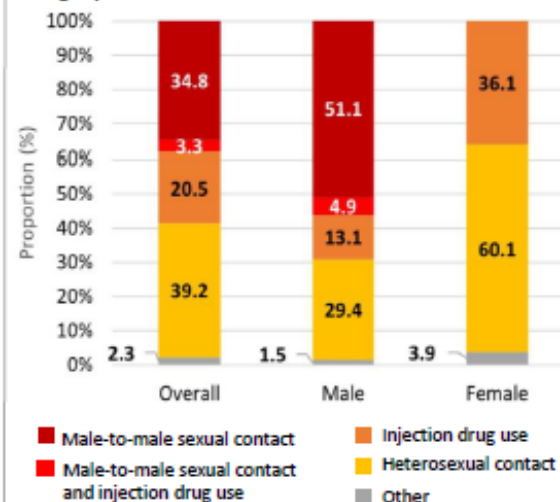


*Cases for whom sex was reported as transgender or for whom sex was not reported are included in the overall category but not male and female categories.

Rates per 100,000 population of new HIV diagnoses, by age group and sex



Distribution of new HIV diagnoses, by exposure category and sex



Perinatal HIV Surveillance in 2022:

- » 239 infants born to people living with HIV
- » 96.2% of pregnant people living with HIV received perinatal antiretroviral therapy (ART)
- » 6 infants were born with perinatal transmission of HIV: 2 were born to pregnant people living with HIV who did not receive any ART, 3 born to people who received some or partial ART, and 1 was born to a person with unknown ART status.

Based on sentinel surveillance representing 95% of infants who were exposed to HIV.

Data Sources - HIV/AIDS Surveillance System (HASS) and Canadian Perinatal HIV Surveillance Program (CPHSP)

Continued Gaps in the Cascade

There were an estimated **62,790 people living with HIV (PLHIV)** in Canada at the end of 2020

Targets for the HIV care continuum

90% PLHIV were diagnosed 

87% of people diagnosed with HIV were on treatment 

95% of people on HIV treatment had a suppressed viral load 

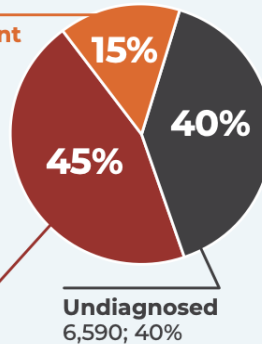
1 in 10 PLHIV didn't know their status



An estimated **16,690 people** were not engaged or represented in the HIV care continuum

On treatment but not suppressed
2,560; 15%

Diagnosed but not on treatment
7,540; 45%



Key populations vary on the HIV care continuum targets²

People who inject drugs (2018-2020)³



African, Caribbean and Black Community in Ontario (2018)⁴



Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men in three urban centres (2017-2019)⁵



People incarcerated in federal correctional facilities (2020)



First Nations communities in Saskatchewan (2020)



1st HIV Self-Test Approved - Then providing low-barrier access to them

November
2020

June
2021

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

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

The screenshot shows the 'I'm READY' website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'READY? GET A KIT', 'TESTING SUPPORT', 'FAQ', 'WHY SELF-TESTING', 'ABOUT I'M READY TO KNOW', and 'NEWS'. The main headline reads 'Ending HIV in Canada Together: We're Ready!'. Below this, there is a sub-header '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.' Two circular portraits of Dr. Theresa Tam and Dr. Sean B. Rourke are featured, with text identifying them as the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada and MAP Scientist, respectively. The event details are listed as 'When: Wednesday, June 2nd, 1 to 1:45 PM EST.' and 'This is a virtual event. Register: reachnexus.ca/imready'. A 'Share This Page' button is visible on the right side. At the bottom, there is a 'Next Article' section with a thumbnail image and the title 'Message from the Minister of Health, Launch of 'I'm READY' Program'.

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

HIV Self-Test Study – August 2019 to March 2020

First-of-its-kind study in Canada to evaluate performance and usability in the hands of intended users. Some highlights:

767 participants enrolled in Winnipeg/Montreal/Toronto:

- 5/5 previously undiagnosed positives detected: Sensitivity = 100%
- 3/617 false positives: Specificity = 99.5%
- >95% found the test easy to use, would use it again, and recommend it to friends/partners.

**Approved by Health Canada in November 2020.

Galli et al. *BMC Public Health* (2021) 21:1421
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11418-z>

BMC Public Health

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Open Access

An observed, prospective field study to evaluate the performance and acceptance of a blood-based HIV self-test in Canada



Richard A. Galli¹, Jason M. Lo Hog Tian^{1,2}, Michelle Sumner-Williams¹, Kristin McBain¹, Emal Stanizai¹, Wangari Tharao³, Muna Aden³, Heather Jamieson⁴, Mark Da Silva⁴, Anne-Fanny Vassal⁵, Lorie Guilbault⁵, Laurie Ireland⁶, Kim Witges⁶, Alexandra King⁷, Kehinde Ametepee⁷, Nathan J. Lachowsky^{8,9}, Nitika Pant Pai¹⁰, Tony Mazzulli¹¹ and Sean B. Rourke^{1,12*}

Abstract

Background: Self testing for HIV is a targeted intervention with the potential to increase the access, uptake and frequency of HIV testing and more effectively reach the undiagnosed, especially in priority populations. The objectives of this study were to (1) evaluate the INSTI HIV self-test performance compared with laboratory reference testing, (2) document if intended users can perform the steps to use the HIV self-test device, and (3) document if intended users can successfully interpret contrived positive, negative, and invalid results. Study was intended to be submitted to Health Canada for review for regulatory approval purposes.

Methods: The study used a cross-sectional design and recruited consenting adults who were representative of intended users of HIV self-testing from four community sites across Ontario, Québec, and Manitoba between August 2019 and March 2020. The results of the observed HIV self-test were compared with results of the Abbott Architect HIV Ag/Ab Combo test. Usability outcomes for critical (e.g., lancing finger, blood droplet into bottle, shaking bottle four times) and noncritical self-test procedure steps were also determined.

Results: Overall, 77% ($n = 522$) of participants were between 18 and 45 years of age, 61% ($n = 410$) were male, 71% ($n = 480$) had some college or more education, and 45% ($n = 307$) were employed; identity for race and ethnicity: Caucasian (44%; $n = 296$), African, Caribbean or Black (17%; $n = 113$), Indigenous [First Nations, Métis or Inuit] (14%; $n = 95$), Asian (16%; $n = 106$), Latin American (7%; $n = 46$). Primary performance analysis on 678 completed HIV self-tests revealed a positive percent agreement of 100% (5/5, 95% CI: 43.6–97.0%) and a negative percent agreement of 99.5% (614/617, 95% CI: 98.6–99.8%) with the comparator method. The overall percent agreement of results interpretation between participant and observer was 93.5% ($n = 633$). For the 708 participants who took part in the usability study, the average success rate for steps determined to be “critical” for successful completion of the test was 92.4%. 97% ($n = 670$) of

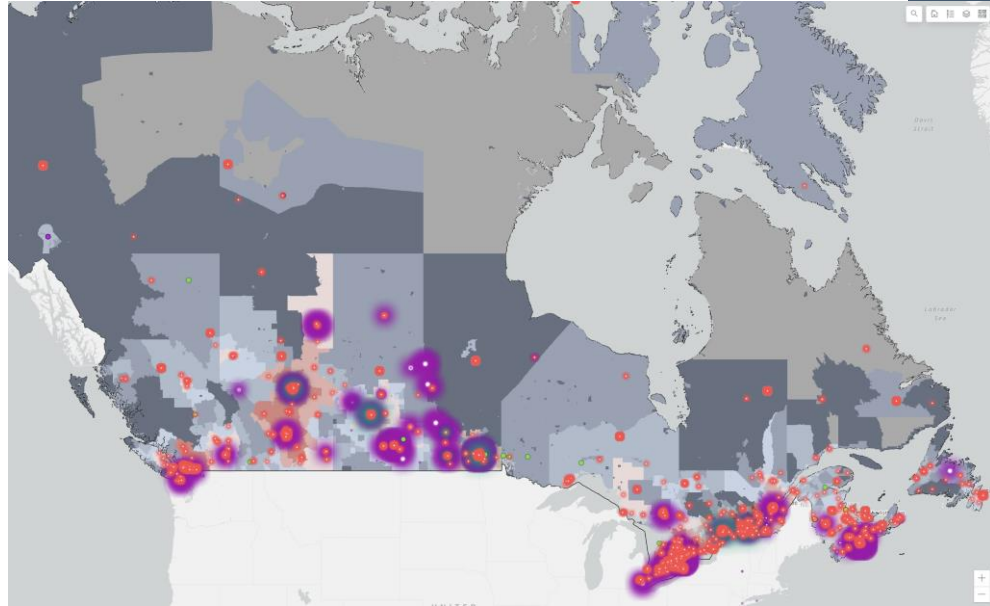
* Correspondence: sean.rourke@utoronto.ca

¹MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions, Unity Health Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

¹²Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Full list of author information is available at the end of the article

Know your status

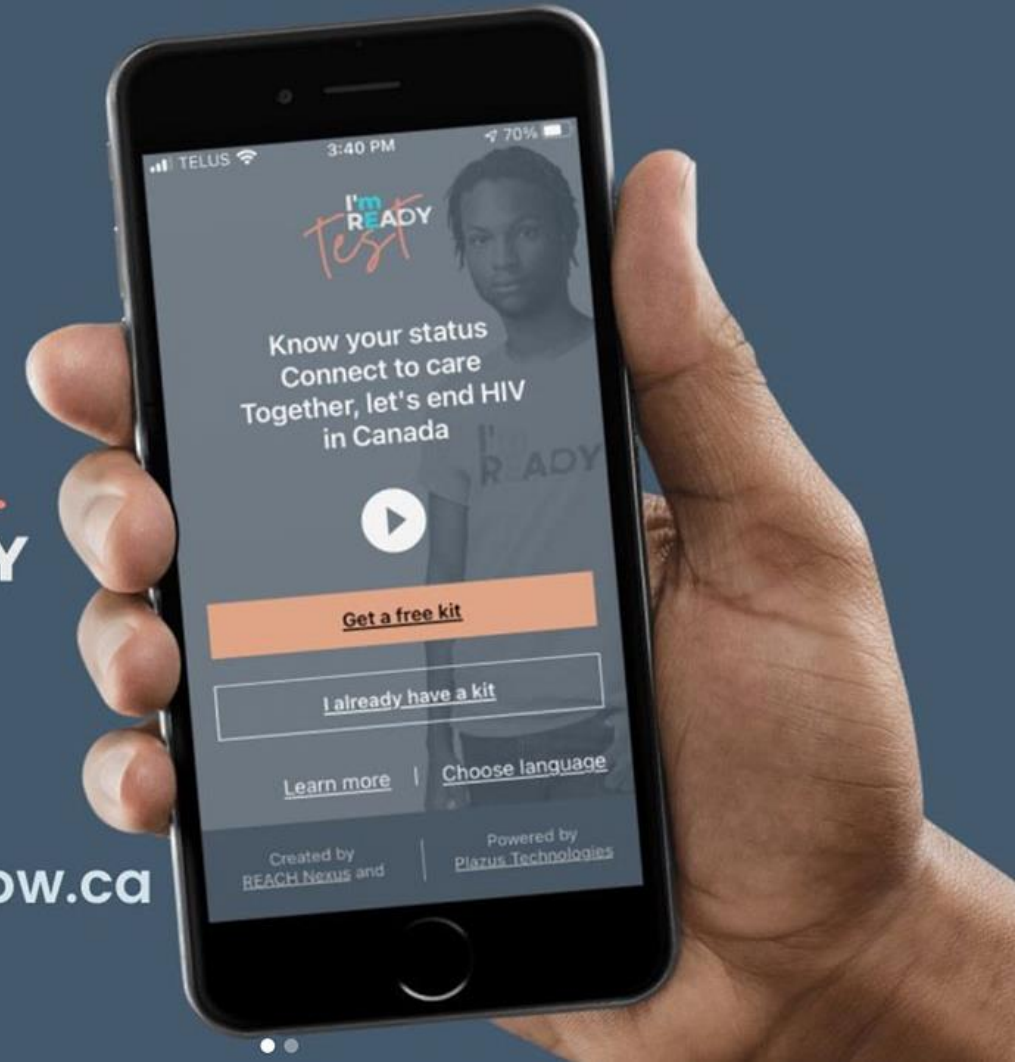


I'M READY

www.readytoknow.ca

I'm
READY
Test

readytoknow.ca

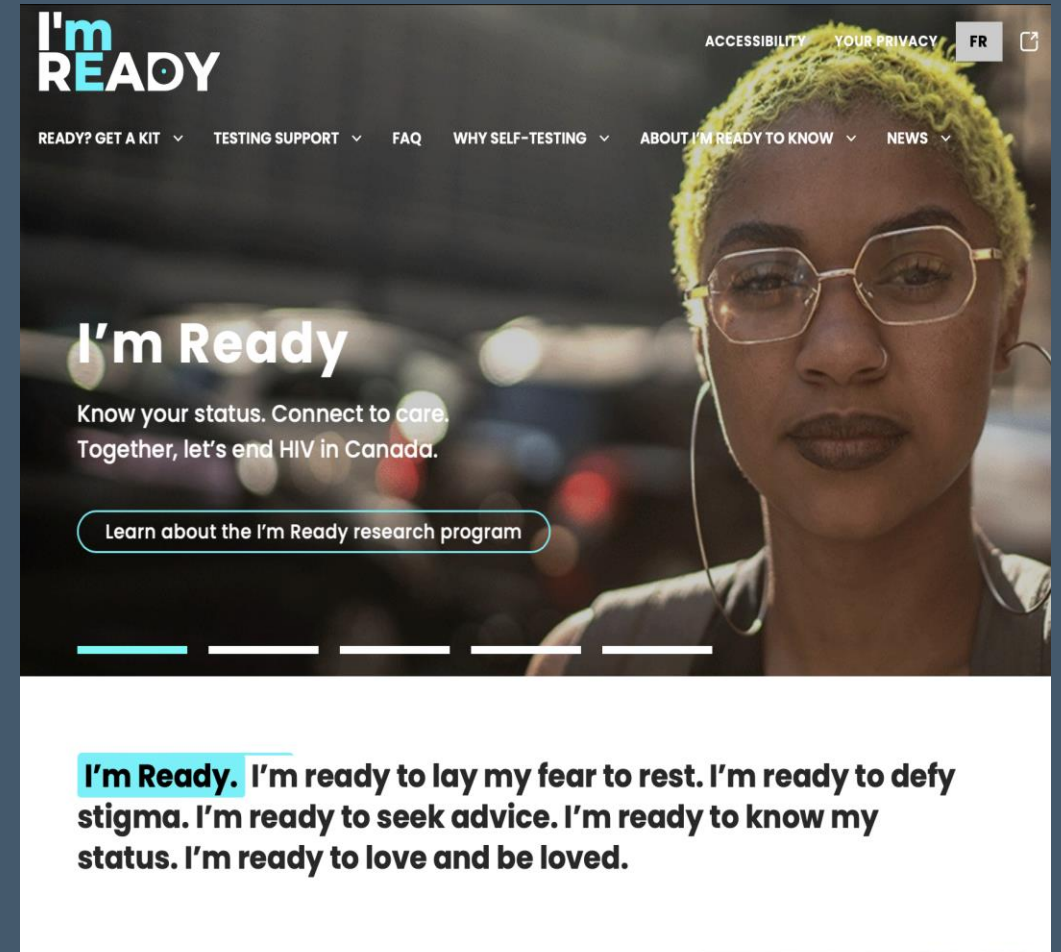


I'm Ready – Democratizing HIV Self-Test in Canada

I'm Ready is a national research program of REACH Nexus that is providing Canadians access to HIV self-testing and support to care, especially those who are undiagnosed and from key populations.

I'm Ready is for EVERYONE, no matter who you are or where you live.

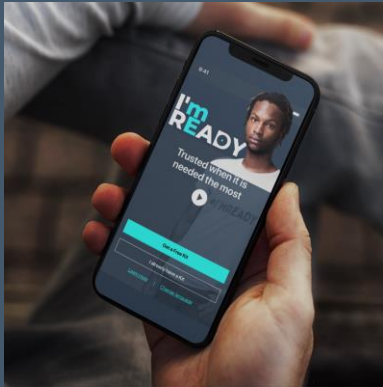
Launched as a research initiative in June 2021, I'm Ready has now transitioned to a public health program in January 2024!



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



The Technology – Mobile and Web-Based



I'm
READY
Test

I'M READY, TEST

- Mobile app: order kits, upload results and answer surveys
- Up to 3 kits: choice of delivery or pick-up



I'm
READY
Talk

I'M READY, TALK

- Integrated telehealth platform with live and virtual support
- Trained peer navigators with lived experiences.



WEBSITE Readytoknow.ca

- Connection point for services and resources
- Pickup locations, pathways to care and HIV information

Developed with Plazus Technologies Inc (GoHealth), Sandbox Software Solutions and ConsumptionCo.

Community Engagement

- Provincial ministries, regional health authorities and various creative services vendors.
- >80 local community-based AIDS service organizations and 9 Universities as pick-up locations across Canada, with more Universities showing interest.
- African, Caribbean and Black Steering Committee of Black-led, Black-focused and Black-serving organizations across Canada



Modes of Distribution



People We Are Reaching – Since June 2021

9,340 participants ordered at least one HIV self-test kit

- 70% were <35 years old
- 68% identified as cis-male
- 78% were from at least one key population
- 75% graduated from high school and above
- 53% employed full-time
- 60% from very large urban areas (population >200k)



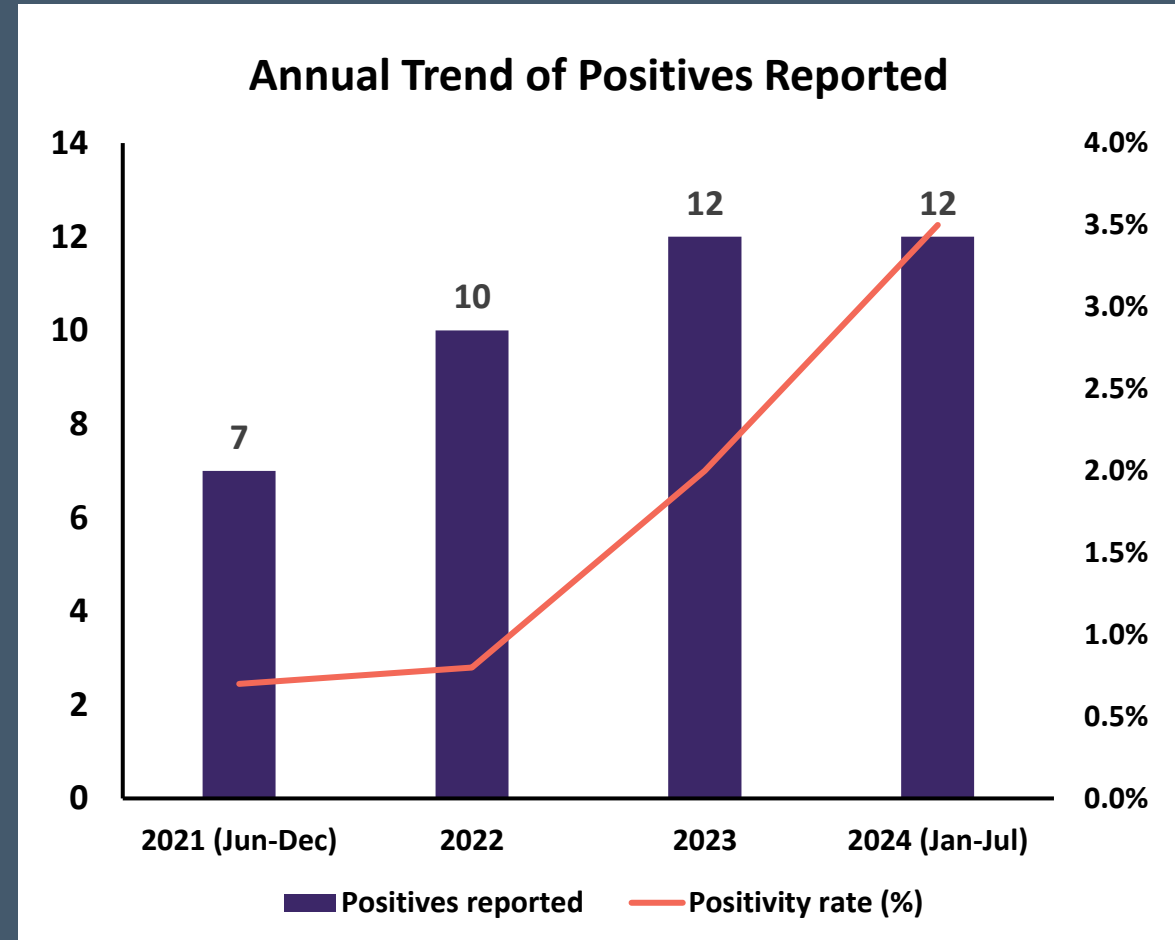
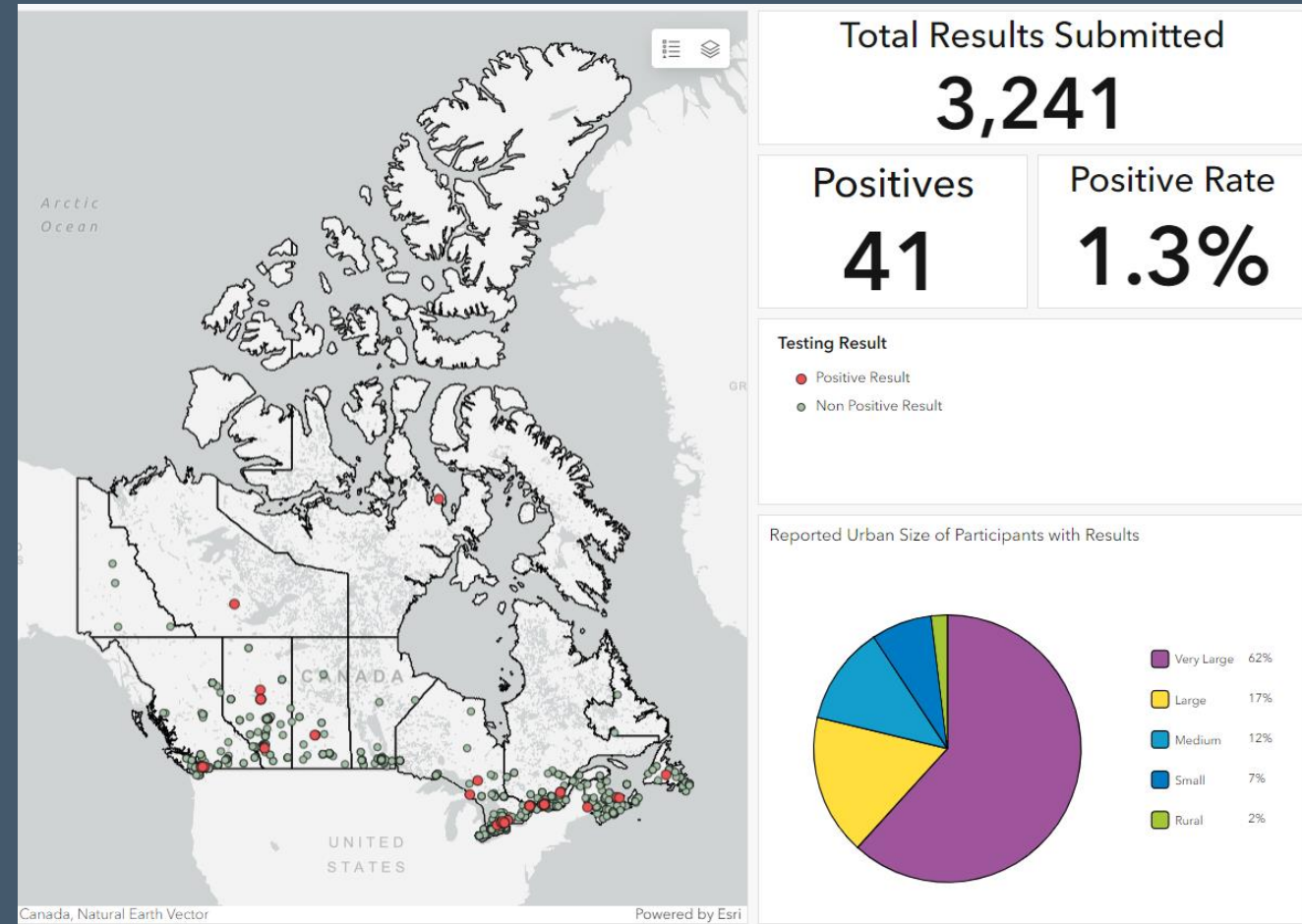
Impact of I'm Ready in Reaching the Undiagnosed

41 previously undiagnosed people living with HIV tested positive:

- 1.3% positive rate (who submitted test results)
- Estimated overall rate = 118 potential positives (if everyone who had kits submitted their results).
- 33% were first-time testers and 31% tested more than 1 year ago.



Understanding more who tested positive



Reaching First-Time Testers

34% (n=2,952) were first-time testers and 33% (n=2,801) had tested >1 year ago



2.8

times more likely to be under 24 years old (n=1,076)



3.2

times more likely to identify as heterosexual, bisexual, or others* (n=1,885)



1.4

times more likely to live in rural areas (n=725)



1.5

times more likely to be identified as women (n=823)



1.8

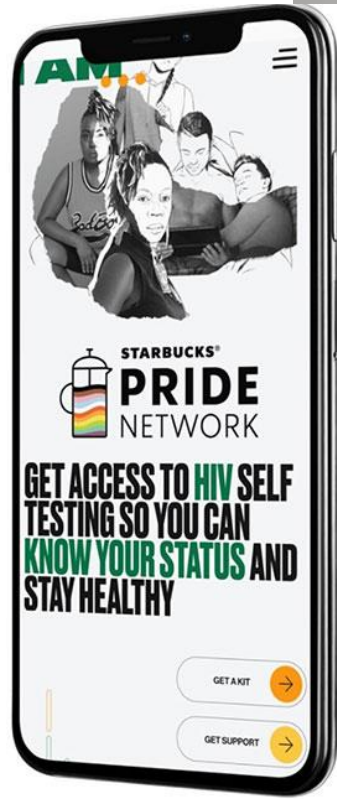
times more likely to have a high school education or less (n=752)



1.8

times more likely to be a student (n=674)

MY
HEALTH, IN
MY HANDS.



PHAC FUNDED NATIONAL HIV SELF-TESTING PROGRAM

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)



I AM...



GET AN HIV SELF-TEST

You can do the self-test when and where it works best for you - at home, in private, or with someone who can offer you support.

Get your self-test kit for delivery.

ORDER A KIT



Or use the search tool below for more options.

Knowing your HIV status puts you in control of your health.

Once you test, you choose the support and care options that are best for you.

www.i-am.health

And remember, you always have access to support before, during and after you test.

GET SUPPORT

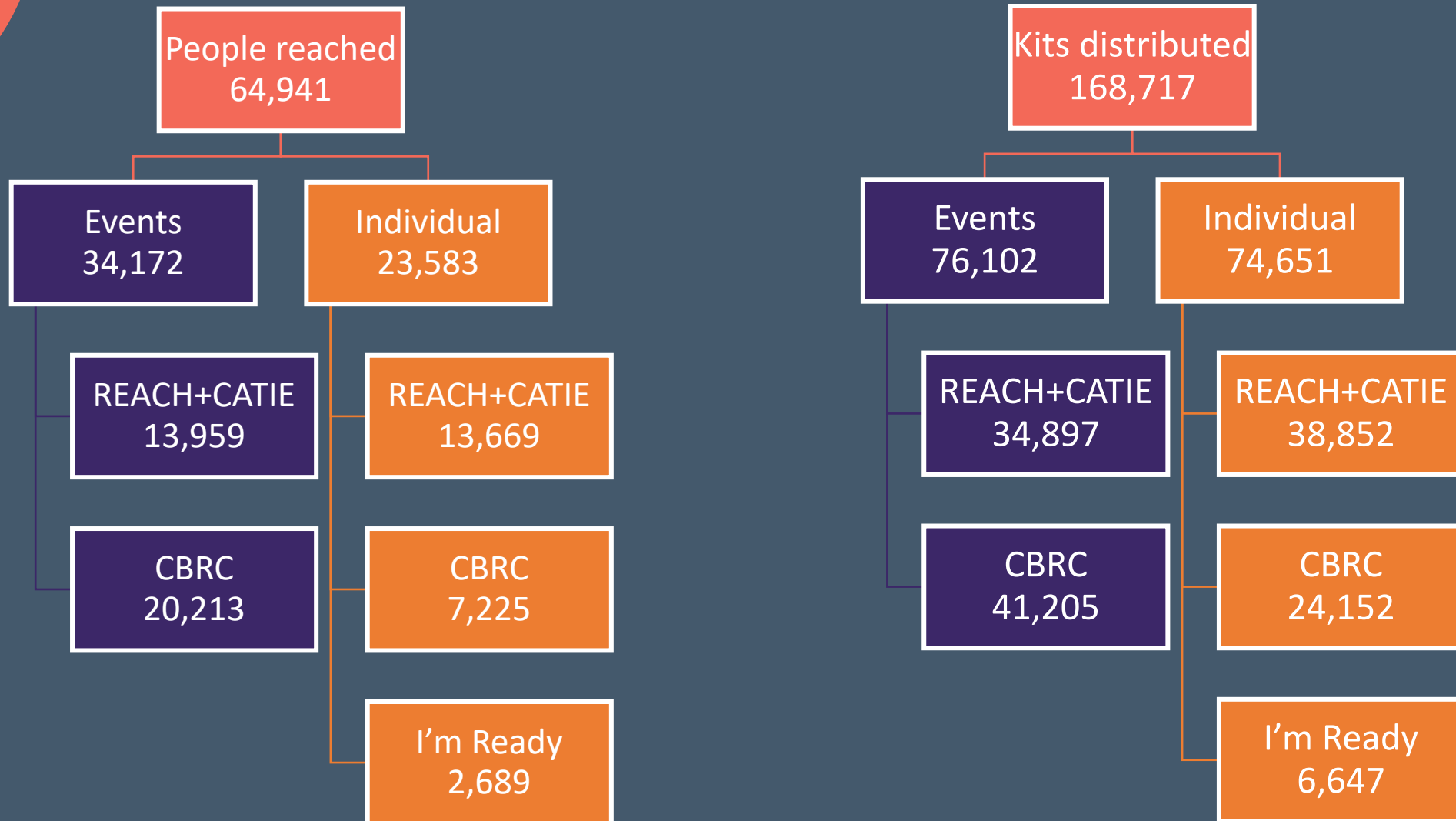


National Community-Based Program

- August 1, 2022: The Public Health Agency of Canada funded an \$8M HIV self-testing program.
- Implemented as a partnership with four national organizations – REACH Nexus (Community Link and I'm Ready), CATIE, CAAN and CBRC (Test@Home, My Test and Test Now).
- Until March 31, 2024: Funding for distribution of 235,310 HIV self-tests to 477 community-based, harm reduction organizations and frontline agencies.
- As of April 1, 2024: 72% of kits distributed to people across Canada.

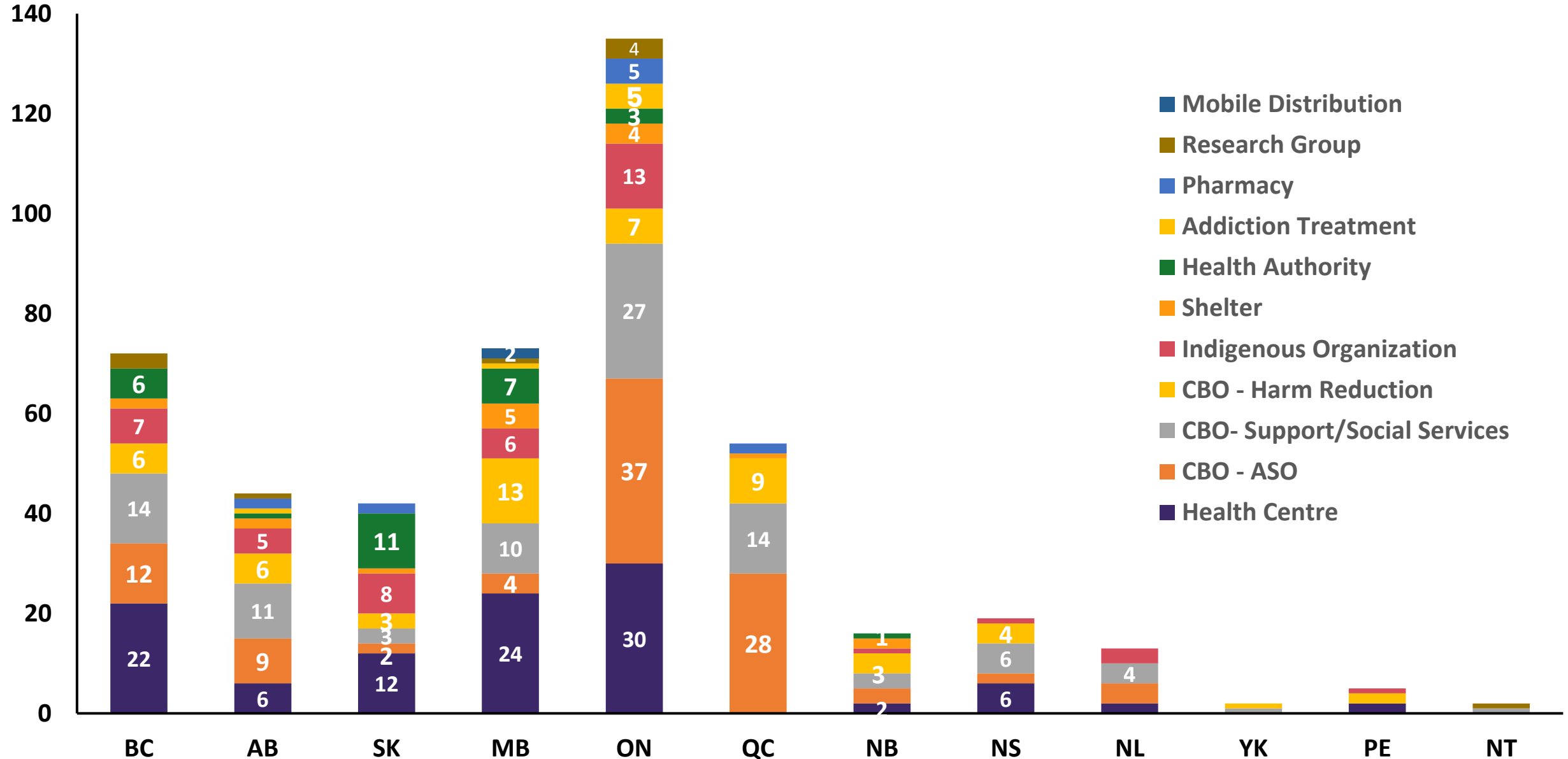


Event and Individual Distribution

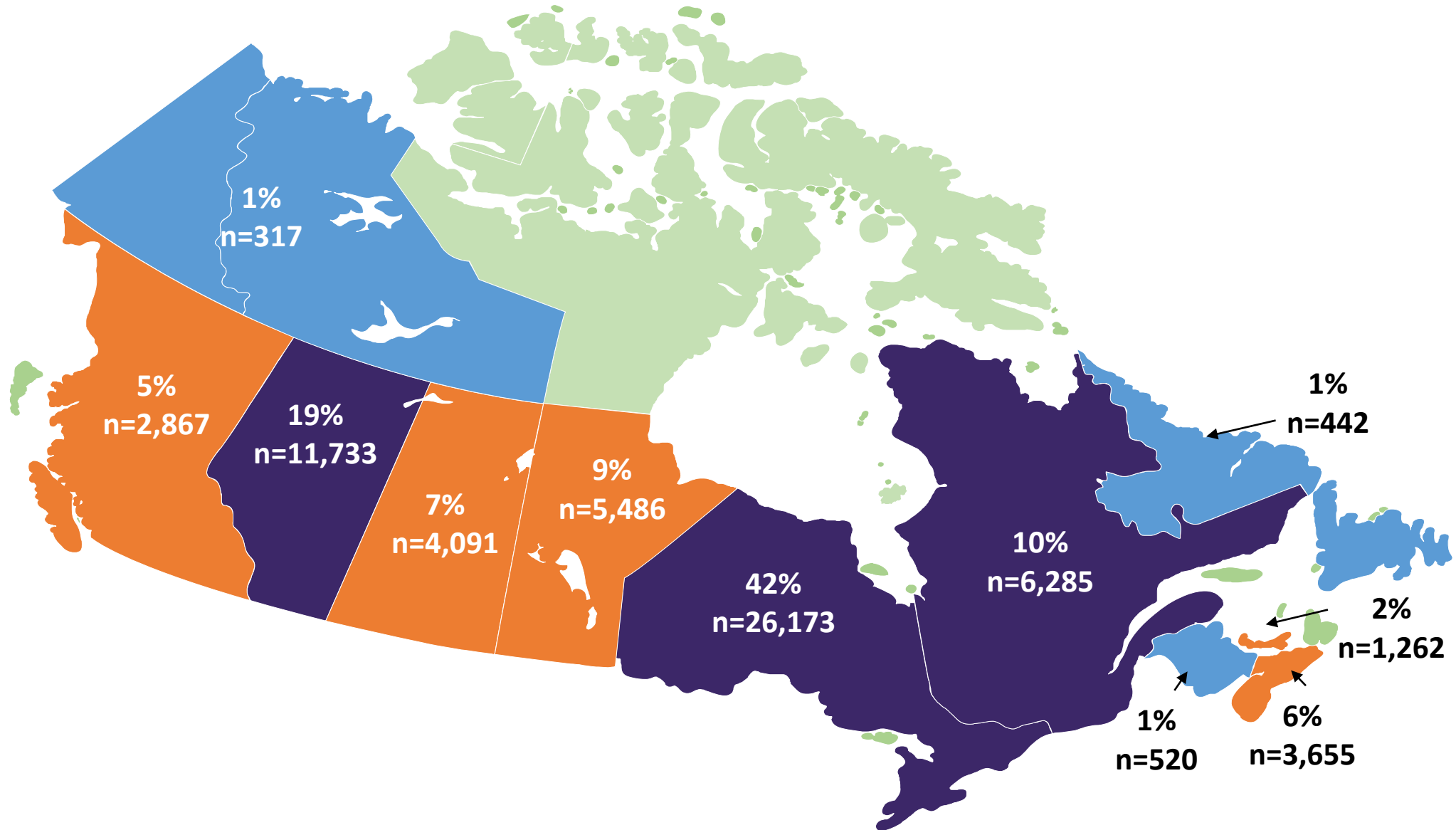


This does not include GetaKit and self-reported distribution from sites.

477 Distributing Sites Involved !

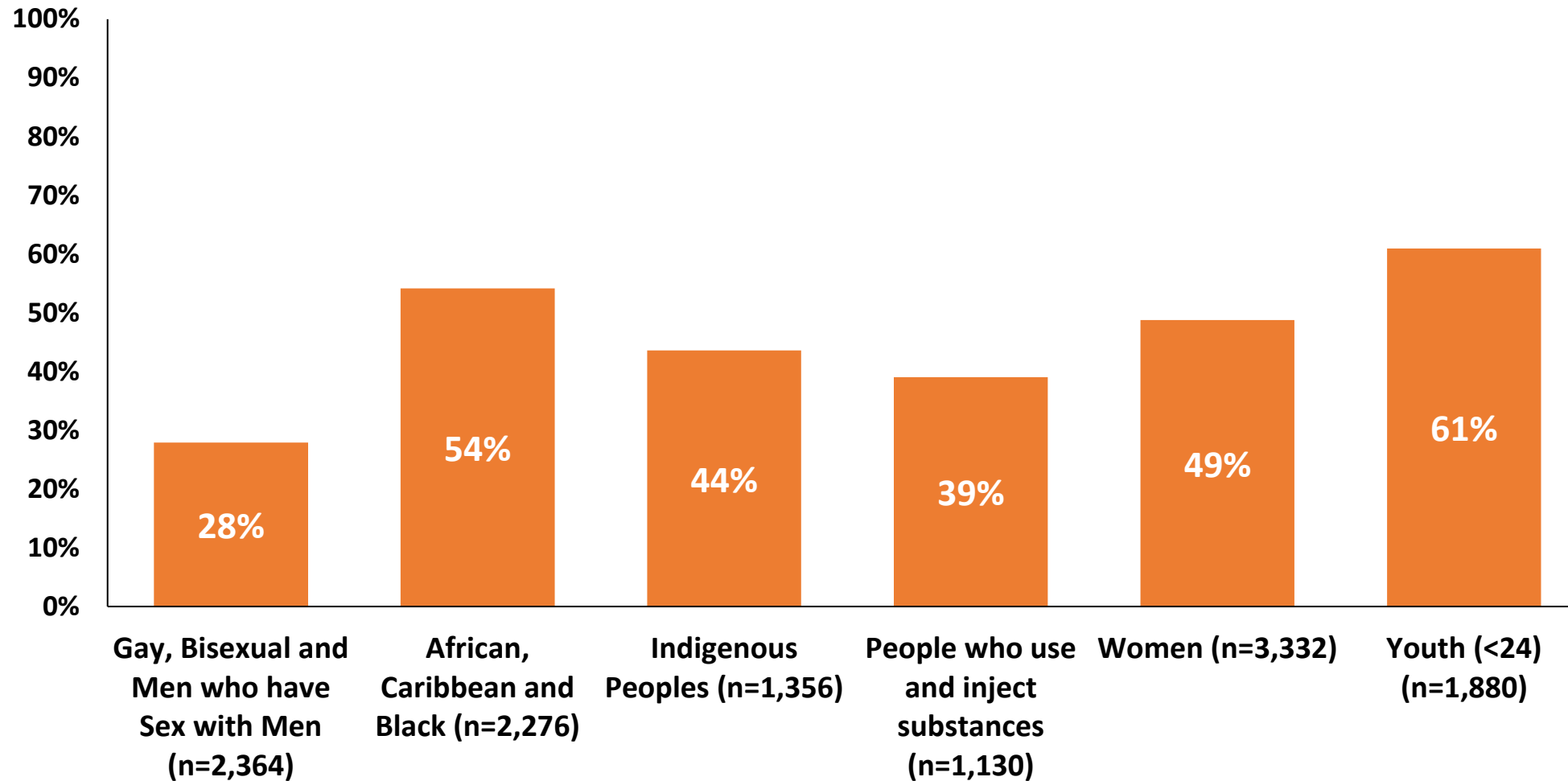


People Reached in Each Province

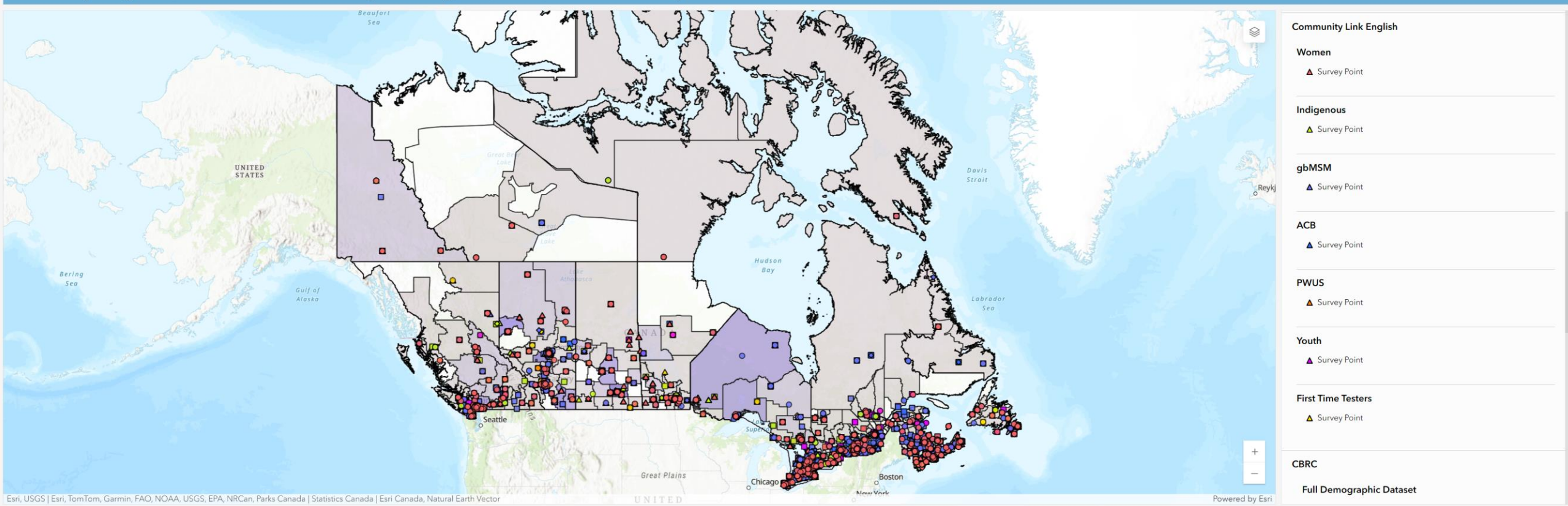


This includes all modes of distribution.

Key Populations by First-time Testers



This includes only people who received kits through REACH + CATIE. Categories are not mutually exclusive.



Esri, USGS | Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, NRCAN, Parks Canada | Statistics Canada | Esri Canada, Natural Earth Vector

Powered by Esri

Total Survey Respondents from Key Populations

<h3>African, Caribbean and Black</h3>			<h3>Men who have sex with men</h3>			<h3>People who use substances</h3>		
I'm Ready	Community Link	CBRC	I'm Ready	Community Link	CBRC	I'm Ready	Community Link	
1,084	2,666	475	3,930	2,471	4,149	272	1,235	
<h3>Women</h3>			<h3>Indigenous</h3>			<h3>Youth (<25)</h3>		
I'm Ready	Community Link	CBRC	I'm Ready	Community Link	CBRC	I'm Ready	Community Link	CBRC
2,240	3,205	318	366	1,521	276	1,902	2,081	779



Our Healthbox

Implementation of a novel interactive dispensing machine for low-barrier access to HIV self-test kits and harm reduction supplies to communities across Canada



Our Healthbox: So what is it?



Interactive Interface

(simple, helpful, no-judgement)

+

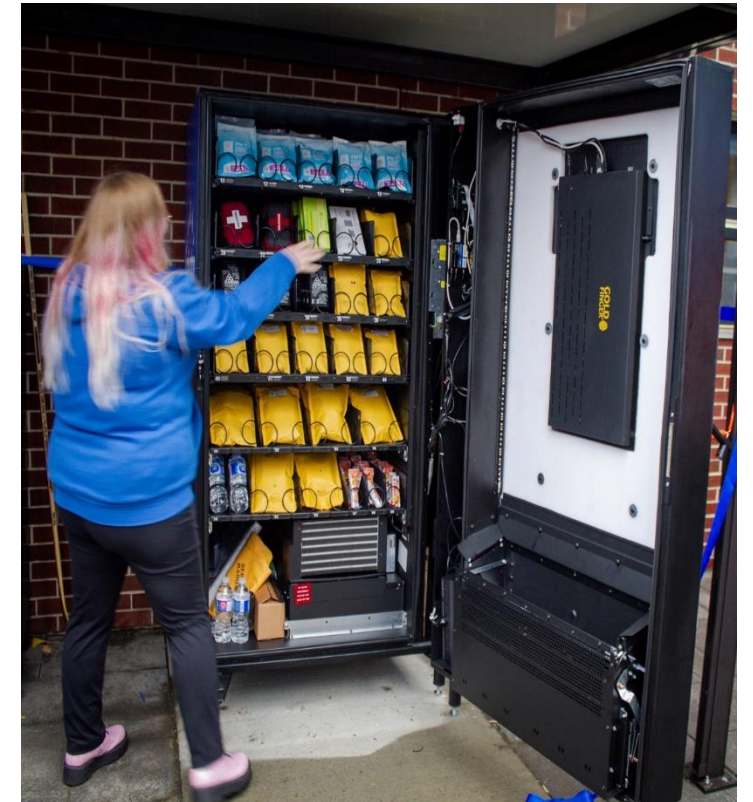
Integrated Dispensing Machine

(with inventory management)

+

Database Software

(near real-time data for decision making)



Our Healthbox: How the Program Works

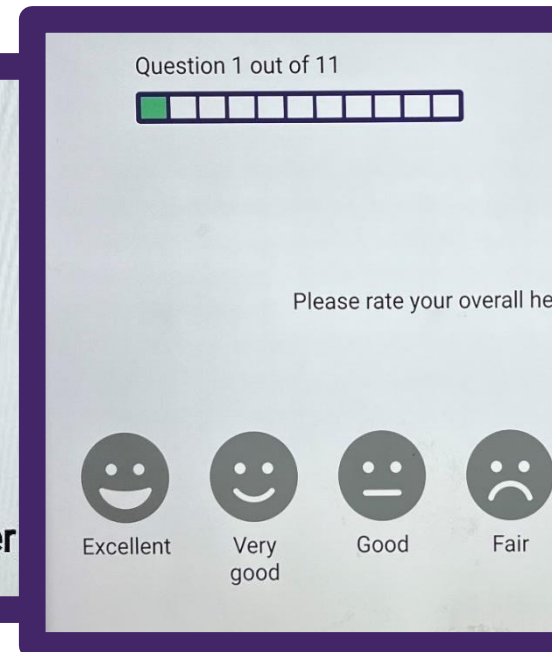


People join the program by self-referring at their local Healthbox machine. Participants are:

- Living in Canada
- At least 16 years of age (18 years in Quebec)
- Read and understand English or French



1994 - Red - Grasshopper



**Naloxone kits can be accessed without sign-in for emergency use.*

Helpful. Accessible. Without Judgement.

Our Healthbox: Interactive Interface



Welcome screen provides community announcements for engagement.

Supplies screen offers access to health items with product information, safety tips, videos (e.g. naloxone and HIV self-test kits use) and educational resources.

Health services directory (list/map) provides navigation to support services and resources to help people to connect to care they may need.

About page provides more program information.

Our Healthbox: Free Supplies



And more...



Self-Tests:

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

Harm Reduction Supplies:

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

Sexual Health and Wellness:

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

The community knows best and helps to decide what items to stock in their Healthbox

Program Implementation



Design:

Implementation science research program

Approach:

Partnering with CBOs and health agencies in communities where Our Healthbox is most needed.

- Phase 1 - Atlantic Region launch
- Phase 2 - Community health centres
- Phase 3 - Shelters and supportive housing

Goal:

Implement and scale up to **100 machines** in communities across Canada over **3 years**

Evaluation:

Guided by RE-AIM implementation science framework

Our Healthbox: Initial Look



63,000+ visits/encounters*

51,000+ viewed items*

20,500+ items accessed

16,000+ surveys completed*

4000+ participants created a profile

3500+ persons provided demographics

8 community Healthboxes

***Notes:**

Persons can view supplies, educational and support services resources without signing in or dispensing an item. Survey and individual survey question response rates varied across communities; no trends were observed. Some machines were out of service periodically due to screen vandalism and weather related damage.

Our Healthbox is Making an Impact



Our Healthbox

MAKING SURE THAT EVERYONE CAN GET WHAT THEY NEED TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN THEIR COMMUNITY.

OUR HEALTHBOX DELIVERS ON ITS PROMISE. HERE ARE THE REAL LIFE IMPACTS. WITH DATA IN REAL TIME.

Using state-of-the-art technologies to address health inequities.

4316
People reached

8
Community launches across Canada

661
HIV self-test kits accessed to 'know your status'

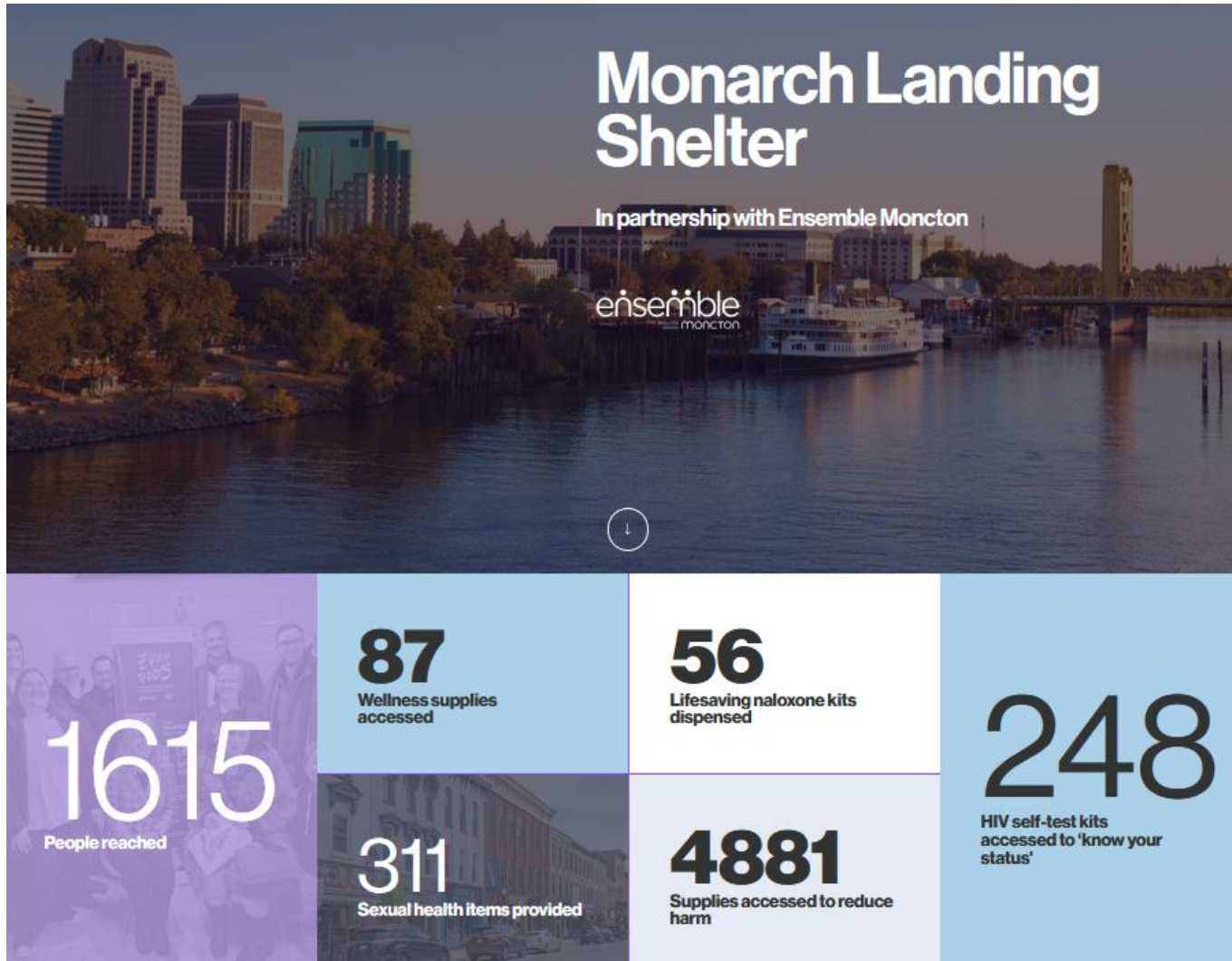
1714
Sexual health items provided

12837
Supplies accessed to reduce harm

701
Lifesaving naloxone kits dispensed

EVEN THE ODDS
Everyone deserves the opportunity to thrive in Canada

Our Healthbox: Moncton (NB)



“Our Healthbox has been a game changer for ENSEMBLE’s ability to provide harm reduction resources 24/7. During COVID people were having to re-use needles, but through our outreach (and media coverage) we were able to support many more people beyond those who normally accessed our Needle Distribution Service.”









Deborah R. Warren, Executive Director
Ensemble Moncton

LAUNCHED January 23, 2023:

Monarch Landing Shelter

55 Mark Avenue
Moncton, NB
E1C 7G8

Our Healthbox: Reaching People

-  **Young - Age:** 72% (n=2672) were <39 years old
-  **Women:** 40% (n=998) reported their sex at birth as female
-  **Heterosexual:** 44% (n=1016) identified as non-LGBTQ2SIA; 20% identified as gbMSM
-  **White:** 40% (n=959) self-identified as Caucasian; 28% were Indigenous and 12% ACB
-  **Educated formally:** 62% (n=1367) completed at least high school
-  **Unemployed:** 77% (n=1651) were not employed or earning regular income
-  **Urban living:** 87% (n=3356) lived in an urban area BUT 60% were under-housed
-  **PWUS:** 86% (n=2081) reported using a substance including opiates, crack, cannabis, meth

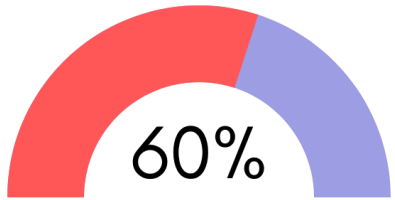
*Survey response rates varied by questions.

ACB = African, Caribbean and/or Black; LGBTQ2SIA = lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, two-spirit, intersex, asexual; gbMSM = gay, bisexual and men who have sex with men, PWUS = people who use substances

Access to: HIV Self-Test Kits

10%

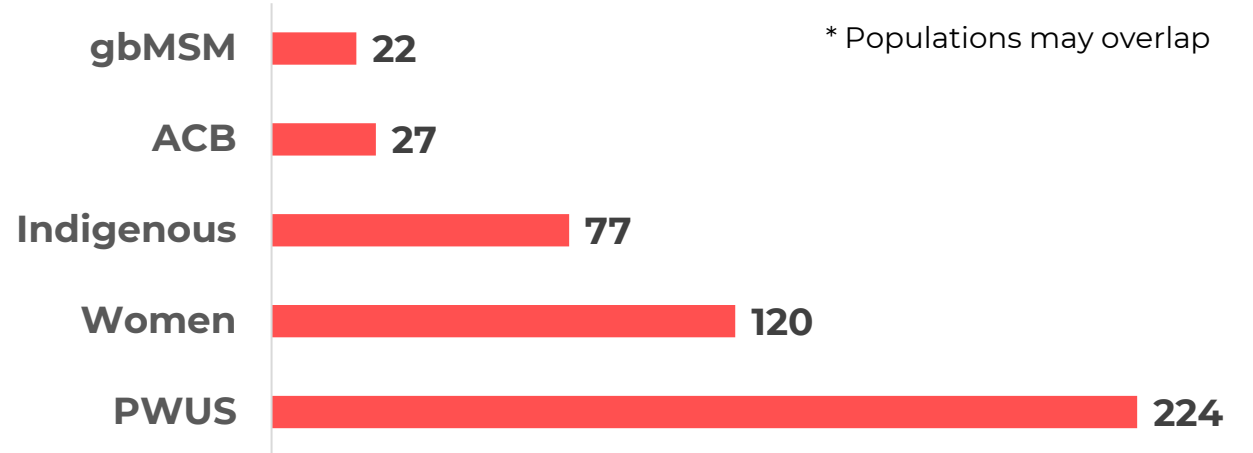
Participants (380+) accessed 645+ kits.
On average 2 kits/person.



Were First-Time Testers or last tested more than 1 year ago.

15persons ★
Had confirmatory HIV testing
(15/696 responses).

Persons who accessed HIV Self-Test Kits



Why get a HIVST?

Top reasons for wanting a kit:

1. To know my status
2. I am at risk/shared equipment/was exposed
3. Try the HIV self-test
4. To give to someone else

Participants: Acceptability & Outcomes

4 out of 5

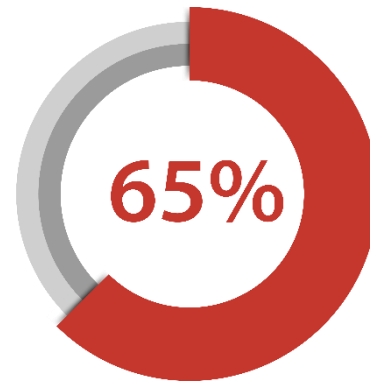
Rated their Overall Experience as **Good to Excellent**



3 out of 4 would Recommend Our Healthbox to Others

70%

Felt that Access to Our Healthbox **Improved** their **Overall Health**

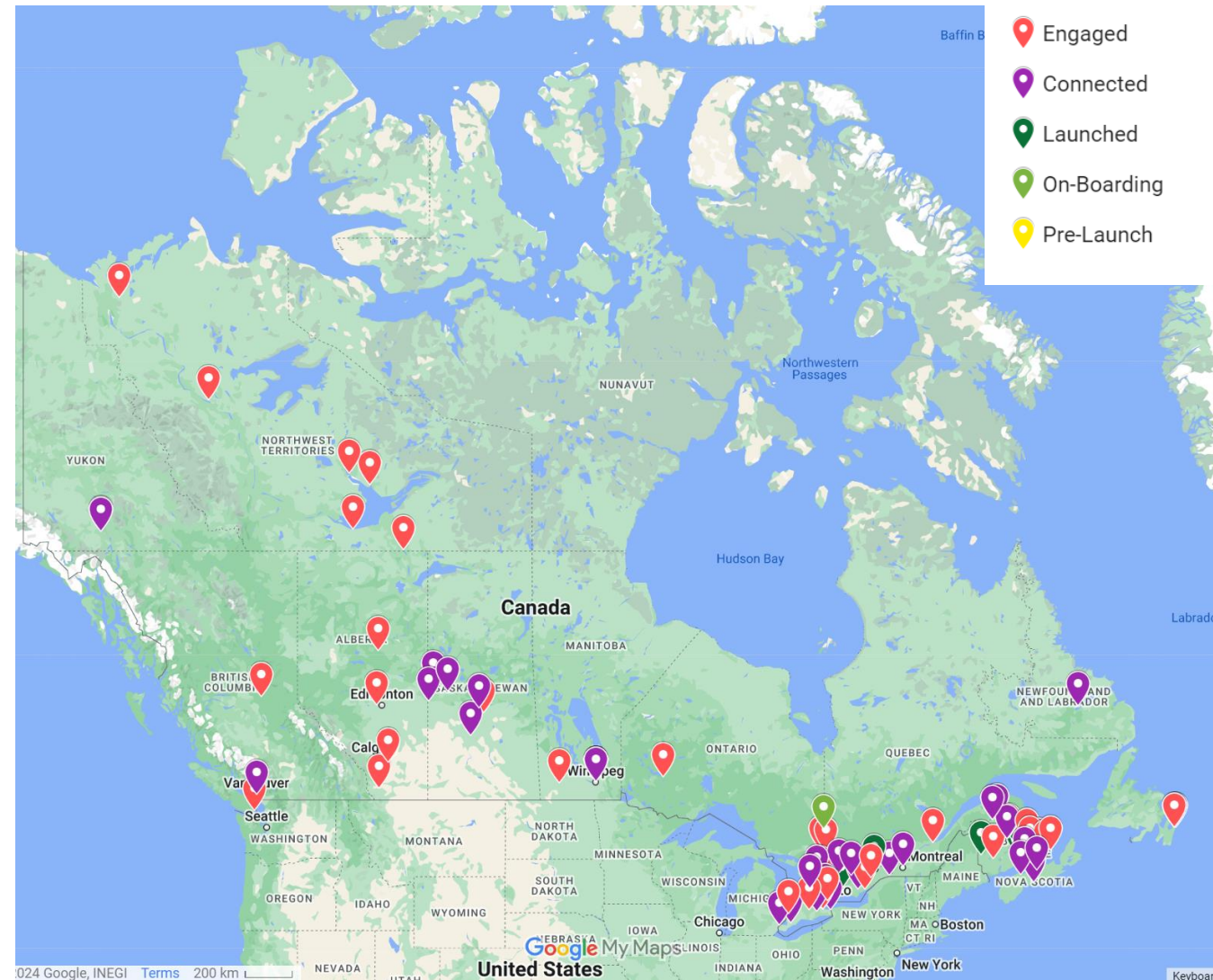


Felt Our Healthbox was helping to **Reduce Stigma** in their community **around Access** to:

- HIV Testing and
- Harm Reduction Supplies

Implementation & Scaling Continues

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



More Information



Helpful. Accessible. Without judgement



www.OurHealthbox.ca



Sean B. Rourke
Director, REACH Nexus
sean.rourke@utoronto.ca



@OurHealthboxMAP



@ourhealthboxmap



Thank you!