

**TECHNOLOGY**

# Rapid HIV testing

## OBJECTIVES

To improve access to the full range of evidence-based HIV testing technologies for people at risk of HIV across Australia.

## CURRENT ISSUES

- Testing is critical as it enables an individual to know their HIV status;
- Knowledge of status builds the capacity of individuals to, in the event of a negative result, minimise the risk of HIV acquisition or, in the event of a positive result, be linked to care to discuss treatment options and better understand the risks of onward transmission;
- Frequent, easy testing and early diagnosis are critical if Australia is to reach its target of virtually eliminating HIV transmission in Australia;
- There are significant benefits to facility-based testing, including access to a skilled and knowledgeable health professional who conducts a risk assessment, and provide customised information about prevention and access to treatment and care;
- However, there are barriers associated with facility-based testing, including the delay of several days or more between test and result, practical barriers such as time and financial constraints and concern about judgement from clinicians;
- Rapid HIV testing, by contrast, provides an opportunity to significantly increase frequent routine testing among key populations and for any individual who may be at risk of acquiring HIV. Rapid HIV testing returns results within 10-20 minutes and can be peer-led rather than clinician-driven;
- The current service system is not configured to capitalise on the opportunities presented by rapid HIV testing.

## PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

Seek a sponsor to initiate an application to the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) for public funding of an ARTG-registered product.

### IMPACT

- Improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life of individuals with HIV;
- Reduce barriers to testing, treatment and retention in care.

### COST-BENEFIT

This investment will contribute to the prevention of poorer health outcomes among people with HIV, thereby reducing pressure on primary care and public health, and reduce late diagnoses and the health care costs associated with a late HIV diagnosis.

### ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

As per Medical Services Advisory Committee advice