

## STRENGTHENING UGANDA'S SYSTEMS FOR TREATING AIDS NATIONALLY

~ SUCCESS STORY ~

# Use of Lay Testers in Implementing Targeted HIV Testing at Lira Regional Referral Hospital

With the strategic shift to test and treat and striving to meet the 1st 90 (identification of 90% of HIV positives) of the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets, there was an apparent need to provide more targeted HIV testing at facilities to increase the number of HIV positives identified, which would require more human resources to ensure testing coverage at all service delivery points. The need for additional human resources to conduct targeted HIV testing services (HTS) became evident during a mentorship visit at Lira Regional Referral Hospital (RRH), in which a meeting was held to review progress on delivery of HTS from the previous quarter to find and fix gaps and bottlenecks in service delivery.

The mentors interacted with HTS service providers at different entry points to determine gaps in service delivery. Some gaps identified included: irregular provision of HTS services, lack of patient screening for HTS eligibility in some departments (such as the male surgical ward) and poor health worker attendance; making it harder for the staff to increase and streamline targeted HIV testing and link new positive clients



A lay tester performs an HIV test in the out-patient department at Lira RRH

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to HIV care services. To address these gaps and ensure continuous coverage of targeted HTS, nineteen lay testers were strategically deployed at high volume entry points to minimize missed opportunities. In May 2017, three medical social workers were enlisted to streamline implementation of targeted testing and committed to ensure that all clients in need of HTS are served. Each of the medical social workers was assigned to take charge of critical service delivery entry points namely the in-patient unit, out-

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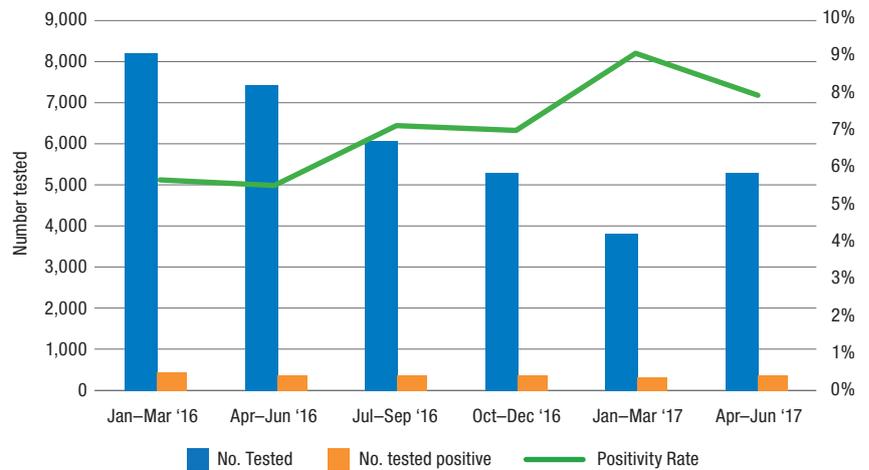
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patient department and implement the index client testing approach.

With guidance from the mentors, the team developed action plans to increase the number of eligible patients tested for HIV and linked to care. These actions include: separating screening and counseling stations to give patients privacy and reduce waiting times between screening and testing for non-eligible clients; increasing the number of HIV positive patients linked to care immediately by decreasing time between testing and post-test counselling.

Because of the commitment and teamwork by lay testers and healthcare providers to ensure all clients in need of HTS are served, Lira RRH has successfully streamlined targeted HTS and increased the number of HIV positive identified.

**Figure 1. HTS Results at Lira RRH After Lay Testers Started Targeted Testing**



USAID Strengthening Uganda's Systems for Treating AIDS Nationally (SUSTAIN) Project

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