



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Hassle Free Clinic

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hasslefreeclinic.org

Hassle Free Clinic

Annual Report Contact:

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

One thing that has remained constant in the Hassle Free Clinic's 43 years of providing health services is the continued growth in the number of client visits each year. In 2016, the clinic assisted an additional 1,629 clients, a 4% increase from 2015 and these numbers reflect the importance of providing hassle free STI health services in the communities it is pleased to serve.

In an STI landscape that continues to change, being and staying relevant has been one of the key drivers in Hassle Free Clinic's mission to deliver and adopt new sexual health services and education programs before others. While an integral part of a larger public health system, it is the Hassle Free Clinic's mandate to keep abreast of the newest STI treatments available, and provide these to its clients.

A dedicated, caring, and passionate team of health professionals and a large team of volunteers achieve our relevancy and success in the communities we service. We cannot thank them enough for making a difference to each client that enters into the clinic.

Regards,

Warren Ross

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MANY THANKS
TO THE
HASSLE FREE CLINIC
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VOLUNTEERS &
PHYSICIANS OF 2016!

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HASSLE FREE CLINIC SERVICES:

- Confidential Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) counselling testing and treatment
- Rapid Point-of-Care (POC) and standard Anonymous HIV antibody testing with pre- and post-testing counselling
- Safer sex counselling
- Birth control methods & information
- Pregnancy testing, decision counselling, abortion referrals & follow-up
- HIV support for newly diagnosed individuals
- Health Promotion/Nursing Clinic for HIV+ women/Trans

Hassle Free Clinic is a community-based agency providing medical and counselling services in all areas of sexual health. We are one of the busiest sexual health clinics and the largest Anonymous HIV test site in Canada.

Hassle Free Clinic has separate hours for men and women at the same location. Transgender clients can attend during the hours they feel most comfortable. The Men/Trans Clinic provides Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) testing/treatment and HIV testing, counselling and support. The Women/Trans Clinic provides the same STI/HIV services as well as birth control, pregnancy testing, abortion referrals and other services related to sexual and reproductive health. Each clinic is staffed by doctors, clinicians, counsellors and volunteers. A City of Toronto Public Health Nurse is assigned to work during the Men/Trans Clinic hours. The majority of STI testing is done at the Ministry of Health Laboratory and through a private lab. The Ministry provides treatments for most STIs free of charge. POC HIV testing is done on site.

The clinic has always promoted an integrated, comprehensive approach to service delivery. A full spectrum of sexual health issues – HIV, STI, birth control and pregnancy – may be dealt with at the same time, rather than dividing sexual health care into separate services.

Most importantly, we ensure that service delivery is informed by a non-judgmental, supportive attitude towards all sexual health concerns. We believe active client involvement in health care decision making is paramount. Therefore, we provide appropriate counselling and education to help clients make well-informed decisions.

The clinic is incorporated as a non-profit charitable organization with a nine-member community Board of Directors. The Board takes responsibility for overall financial and policy direction while allowing staff to make program and policy decisions.

The clinic is core-funded by the City of Toronto Public Health Division with additional funding from the AIDS Bureau, Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. The clinic also accesses the provincial STI billing program, a part of OHIP that does not require health cards.

We would particularly like to acknowledge and thank the many individual donors we have, primarily grateful clients. The amounts can be large or small, but we appreciate all of these donations, many of which are made anonymously.

WE ALSO PROVIDE:

- Bathhouse & community outreach testing
- Hepatitis A, B & C screen and Hepatitis A & B vaccinations
- Presentations to community groups, agencies, organizations and at conferences
- Referrals to HIV specialists, gynecologists, midwives, therapists, counsellors, AIDS service organizations (ASOs), and health and social services
- Services are provided in several different languages. Please call for information 416-922-0566

OVER 43 YEARS OF HISTORY!

LOOKING BACK...

- Starting from grassroots initiatives and growing while maintaining its community-based approach to sexual health care, Hassle Free Clinic celebrates its 43rd year of operation!
- Hassle Free Clinic's location has changed several times to meet the needs of our perpetually growing and ever changing population. Our present location is wheelchair accessible.

The main inspiration for Hassle Free came in part from the staff at the Rochdale Free Clinic. Hassle Free officially began operating in February 1973, when counsellors from Rochdale opened a 24-hour, 7 days a week street clinic on Yonge Street. The clinic was funded by a grant from the federal government's Local Initiatives Project, and offered drug crisis counselling and treatment in a discreet and non-judgmental manner as our name suggests.

By 1975, the drug-oriented street scene had largely disappeared. Meanwhile, the clinic had built a reputation for providing "hassle-free" medical care, particularly STI and birth control services. A small but significant step was taken in 1977 when the clinic's global budget was covered by a shared cost grant from the Ontario Ministry of Health and the City of Toronto Board of Health. The grant came as a dramatic last-minute intervention, when the clinic had exhausted its funds and was faced with imminent closure.

In January 1980, when Hassle Free Clinic moved to our previous location at 556 Church Street, it was reorganized into separate men's and women's hours. The separation was the result of increasing numbers of male (mostly gay) clients and limited space, making it difficult to serve men and women at the same time. By the early 1980s the reputation of the Men's clinic as a safe place for gay men to obtain sexual health services was well established, although in fact we have always served large numbers of heterosexual men. The majority of women seeking services are heterosexual. From the early days, staff had also identified some of the unique sexual health needs of transgender and gender fluid clients. This has now been translated into a comprehensive program of trans inclusivity.

Following the first wave of the AIDS crisis in 1983-84, the clinic began offering HIV education and prevention counselling. When HIV testing became available in 1985, the clinic immediately offered testing on an anonymous basis. At this time “anonymous” testing was illegal in Ontario. The number of male clients testing positive for HIV increased each year, reaching a peak of 230 in 1990. The seropositive rate in the Women’s Clinic was low and remained stable during this period. In the late 1980s, the clinic introduced HIV positive support group programs for women and men which were well received by clients, and highly regarded by other health providers.

In 1989 the clinic mounted a campaign to legalize anonymous testing. Under pressure from community organizations, Toronto City Council and the Board of Health publicly endorsed the program. The Ontario Ministry of Health, however, refused to support the program until January 1992, when the NDP government legalized anonymous testing. Having offered anonymous HIV testing for the previous seven years, HFC was relied on to develop Ontario’s Anonymous Testing Guidelines and train staff in designated sites across the province.

In 2001, Hassle Free became the first clinic in Canada to offer rapid point-of-care (POC) HIV testing on site, which was halted due to questions about the accuracy of the device. In May 2006, HFC once again became the first clinic in Canada to offer such testing with a newly approved device. This device has proven to provide consistently accurate results since that time. It is 99.5% accurate, similar to standard laboratory testing. Results are ready in a few minutes as opposed to waiting a week or more with the standard method. Individuals still have the choice of choosing either testing method but the vast majority of individuals choose rapid POC testing for obvious reasons. Based on our experience with POC

... LEADING THE WAY

- Did you know Hassle Free Clinic was one of the early responders at the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic?
- Did you know Hassle Free Clinic was the first in Ontario to offer “illegal” anonymous HIV testing?
- Did you know Hassle Free Clinic was the first clinic in Canada to offer rapid point-of-care HIV testing?
- Hassle Free Clinic often provides training and support to other agencies interested in providing rapid point-of-care HIV testing

“Thank you so much for helping me when I needed some help. I greatly appreciate it. I know I am not your usual target group – so please put this donation to good use so I won’t feel bad about taking your resources”

“Thank you for your kindness and consideration through a very difficult time. I can’t express how much I appreciate the caring and understanding you showed me”

– Quotes from
Hassle Free Clinic clients

testing and our lobbying efforts, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced in 2007 that it would be making POC tests available at designated sites across Ontario.

Another focus has been trans inclusivity at the clinic. With this goal in mind, we have redesigned our intake sheets, client service brochures, hour slips, data collection systems, STI information sheets, and website. Physician, staff and volunteer training about trans care is an ongoing process.

Since the beginning, Hassle Free Clinic has played an important front-line role in identifying and serving the sexual health needs of a large and diverse at-risk population. We are increasingly called upon as consultants in developing health policy and educational programming. Without compromising our front-line status, we are now firmly established as a partner in Toronto Public Health’s sexual health program, as well as the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s HIV testing program.

After 43 years of providing medical care to high-risk clients in a non-traditional setting, we are proud to be one of Canada’s largest and most influential sexual health clinics!



**IN MEMORY OF ROBERT TROW
NOVEMBER 23, 1948 – OCTOBER 21, 2002**

Robert Trow will always be remembered as one of the pioneer advocates of anonymous HIV testing, a leader within the AIDS movement and for his important role within Hassle Free Clinic’s history.

Hassle Free Clinic Philosophy

Hassle Free Clinic places great importance on maintaining equitable staff-client relationships and non-judgmental attitudes to sexually related health concerns. The Clinic is committed to maintaining the following values and principles in the provision of sexual health care:



Research Studies

Hassle Free is often invited to be involved in research related to sexual health. Some researchers want access to our patients to assess knowledge and attitudes on various sexual health matters. Sometimes staff members sit on steering committees developing research protocols for studies conducted at other agencies or institutions.

The Clinic is currently developing a formal research policy. This is meant to codify our current practice when assessing research proposals. The main criteria of this policy are to ensure the research will actually benefit the people being researched and that there is collaboration, rather than competition, between researchers.

The Clinic also participates in research conducted by private companies, often in product development. This year was busy with such a study. For eight months in 2016, and carrying forward, the Clinic recruited, sampled and reported parallel results in a large product development study for a private corporation. We ensured the Clinic and our patients were properly compensated, which provided us with income for some special projects. Staff worked very hard to incorporate the study into Clinic shifts, which meant our costs were kept very low. It also meant the number of patient visits was not reduced to accommodate the study.



Student Placement & Training

Clinical health education is an important part of our commitment to community learning. The Clinic supervises residents and medical students from various institutions; sometimes for block placements and sometimes for single days.

Most commonly, however, are the nursing student placements both the Men/Trans and Women/Trans clinics accept every year. They are generally here two days per week for eight months. Another annual placement is a one-month block placement from the Midwifery Education Program at Ryerson University. That program is very focussed, so students have welcomed the opportunity to have a placement with a broader sexual health perspective.

In addition, we have staff from various agencies attend the clinic for observation and training for various time periods. These requests often relate to HIV POC counselling and testing.

Creating greater
clarity and
accountability to
our clients,
communities
and funders

Year in Review

2016 was another hectic year at the Clinic; with in-clinic visits, outreach testing and outside activities.

From a staffing perspective, the year was very stable. There were no departures or changes in our permanent staff complement. We are very lucky to have extremely hardworking and long-serving Relief staff. That pool was also very stable.

From an organizational perspective, the final work on our Compensation Review was completed. The Board had initiated this review to look at internal and external equity in our compensation practices. An overarching motivation for this was to create a compensation model that would provide more predictability when doing long-term financial planning. The model also created another 'class' of employee to acknowledge the unique work of staff clinicians. The Board finalized the policy in the fall with the phase-in happening over time.

From April until the end of the year and beyond, staff was doing double duty on many shifts as we were running a product development study for a private corporation. (see Research Studies).

One project was further automation of our 'Stats and Logs' system. Last year we were able to automate Men/Trans billing and this year, finally include the Men/Trans STI positives. This is being tested and will be fully operational in early 2017. We eagerly wait for Public Health Ontario to adopt a full electronic medical record (EMR) system. Due to volume, the amount of clerical work managing charts and tests is formidable, and would be impossible without our volunteers. We also purchased and had a new server installed. This will provide better security and stability for our patient management and other administrative systems.



Did you know?

- Ontario positivity rate at Anonymous Test Sites is approximately 3 times greater than in other forms of testing (Nominal or Non-nominal).
- Ontario has one of the highest pre-natal testing rates in Canada based on a client-centred, express consent policy
- 1 in 120 adults in Toronto are HIV positive
- Women represent 1 in 5 new HIV diagnoses in Ontario

Anonymous HIV Testing Program

Anonymous and POC HIV testing continue to be the clinic's best-known programs. Counselling focuses on HIV transmission, willingness and ability to practice safer sex, identifying barriers to safer sex practices, and a rational understanding of relative risk. The impact of testing positive and dealing with an HIV positive result are discussed. As in all sexual health counselling, STI, birth control, pregnancy, assault and abuse issues are dealt with as appropriate.

Usually, HIV testing is conducted by appointment only. This is to ensure that adequate time is allotted for a potential positive result, as well as to ensure proper consent, counselling, and referrals. However, the clinic continues to offer walk-in HIV POC tests for individuals where appropriate. The Men/Trans Clinic offers immediate POC tests for all suspected and confirmed syphilis cases. This continues to be a challenge given the on-going high rates of syphilis.

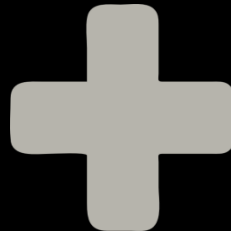
The total overall number of HIV visits for the year was 8,971 which is a decrease from last year's total of 9,332. There were fewer HIV visits at the baths which may account for the slightly lower number. However the number of visits actually increased in both the Men/Trans Clinic and Enhanced Testing sites. The total number of in-clinic HIV visits reached 4,901: this includes 1,367 in the Women/Trans Clinic and 3,534 the Men/Trans Clinic.

The total number of HIV positive results in 2016 was 98. There were 3 women that tested positive (one of which was already positive and therefore did not do a confirmatory test. There were a total of 95 positive HIV results from the Men/Trans Clinic. This number includes 3 positives from the Bathhouses and 43 from the Enhanced Testing Program and 49 from in-clinic testing.

HIV ANONYMOUS HIV TESTING - 2016

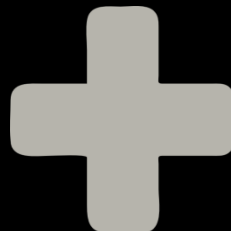
SITE	TOTAL VISITS	TOTAL POC TESTS		TOTAL P24Ag TESTS		CONFIRMATORY TESTS		STANDARD TESTS	
		NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS
W/T	1367	NEG	1250	NEG	53	NEG	0	NEG	46
		POS	3*	POS	0	POS	2	POS	0
		TOTAL	1253	TOTAL	53	TOTAL	2	TOTAL	46
M/T	3534	NEG	3314	NEG	287	NEG	2	NEG	1
		POS	49	POS	3	POS	40	POS	0
		TOTAL	3363	TOTAL	290	TOTAL	42	TOTAL	1
ET	3010	NEG	2967	NEG	162	NEG	0	NEG	0
		POS	43	POS	2	POS	35	POS	0
		TOTAL	3010	TOTAL	164	TOTAL	35	TOTAL	0
BATHS	1060	NEG	365	NEG	4	NEG	0	NEG	0
		POS	3	POS	0	POS	3	POS	0
		TOTAL	368	TOTAL	4	TOTAL	3	TOTAL	0

**TOTAL NUMBER OF HIV
POSITIVE RESULTS IN 2016
(ALL SITES)**



98

**TOTAL NUMBER OF HIV
VISITS IN 2016 (ALL SITES)**



8,971

**TOTAL NUMBER OF HIV
TESTS IN 2016 (ALL SITES)**



8,634

*Three women tested HIV positive, however one woman was already positive and therefore did not do a confirmatory test.



Enhanced Testing Program

The Enhanced Testing Program is our satellite HIV testing program for gay men/MSM across the city. This initiative is funded solely by the AIDS Bureau.

The Enhanced Testing program builds on the strength and momentum of the Testing Blitz of 2011-2012 and incorporates the same presence online, within social media, and on “hook-up” apps popular amongst MSM. Key messages of the Blitz promotion campaign, including awareness of seroconversion illness, early HIV testing and the relationship between STI’s and HIV infection, as well as the website come-on-in.ca and accompanying images and materials continue to be a large part of the program’s promotion.

Rapid anonymous HIV testing clinics are held twice-monthly at St. Stephen’s Community House in the City’s west end (Kensington Market), and South Riverdale Community Health Centre in the east (Leslieville). We are also at the 519 Church St. Community Centre twice weekly. These clinics have been extremely well attended and well received. Hassle Free Clinic is now able to offer at risk men more choice in where, when and how they test, and provide an important solution to the overflow of demand for in-clinic testing.

Moving forward, we intend to continue this program in our current locations, as well as filling requests for one-time clinics. We are expanding ‘Come-on-in’ to include information specific to MSM & trans sexual health, including PEP/PrEP, and the increase of rectal infections.

In an unfunded initiative, the Women/Trans Clinic offers bi-monthly sexual health ‘talks’ followed by a testing clinic at OASIS Aqualounge, a neighbourhood, all-genders sex club, completing between 6 and 10 tests per session. In addition, the W/T clinic is starting monthly testing clinics at Regent Park Community Health Centre at their sex worker drop in early in 2016.

- In 2016, the number of women and trans women attending the group was consistent throughout the year; averaging 20 to 25 people per session.
- The ages range from 30 to 62 with the majority in their 40's from diverse nationalities and backgrounds
- There were 85 individual nursing consultations

Popular group discussion topics included:

- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- Immigration
- Gender-based violence
- HIV stigma and discrimination
- Criminalization of HIV non-disclosure

Some sessions were occasionally facilitated by group members. Participants are very eager to share their experiences and expertise when they get the opportunity.

Health Promotion & Nursing Clinic Program

The Health Promotion/Nursing Clinic, partially funded by the AIDS Bureau, has proven to be very popular among women/trans women living with HIV. The program has been running twice monthly for six years. Collaboration with Casey House, who generously provide childcare funds and fabulous nursing staff; and PWA which provides space, has added to the success of the group. Volunteers from PWA have also been of great help; welcoming the group participants and preparing the room in advance.

A Program Evaluation, with the expert help of Maria Hatzipantelis of the OHTN, was completed in June of 2016. The evaluation provided a useful guide in keeping the group relevant and practical for the women/trans women. It was conducted through several interviews with stakeholders and culminated in an evaluative session with all of the participants, facilitated by a member of the Ontario Organizational Development Program. They had the opportunity to highlight their expectations from the group, which, according to their feedback, created a sense of ownership and appreciation of the program.

Maria also developed some excellent tracking tools for the group. It allows the Program Manager to keep accurate data on group activities and individual support sessions for monitoring and reporting purposes. At the beginning of each year, the participants also identify subject topics they wish to learn about. In most cases the desire is to cover urgent issues affecting the community like immigration, criminalization of HIV non-disclosure, gender-based violence and ODSP navigation, among others.

Throughout 2016, there were positive outcomes where women/trans women stopped participating because they enrolled in school or full-time employment. This outcome has not affected the attendance because we have new registrations almost every session.

Referrals to the group are from doctors' clinics, hospitals, and other agencies. Peer referral also has been another a very effective way through which more women come and benefit from the support, during and outside of the group. This aspect of peer referral, which goes as far as peer to peer language translation for non-English speakers, creates strong connections within group members.

Hassle Free Clinic has always been very active in engaging volunteer presenters from different agencies and qualified individuals from the community. Occasionally, some organisations have approached us to offer educational sessions, a good sign that people are realising the benefits of the program for women/trans women.

Links Statistics

- 169 individuals accessing the Links Program in 2016 relatively the same as last year (168 clients in 2015)
- There were 349 clinical encounters both in-person/over the phone counseling sessions (337 in 2015)
- More than a third (41%) of clients described difficulties with maintaining consistent condom use
- Slightly more than one quarter (26%) described on-going dependency issues with hook-up apps
- Average number times a client accessed the HIV Prevention counselling program was 4 times
- Average number of times a client accessed the HIV Aftercare program was 1.5 times

Making the Links Program

The “Links” Program, as it has come to be known, is a free, in-house, short-term counselling program for Gay, Bi and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM). It is funded in part by a Toronto Urban Health Fund (TUHF) Purchase of Service Agreement, with the rest being funded by the Clinic. Currently, we are able to offer the program three days per week.

The Program has two distinct components; HIV Prevention and HIV Aftercare. Both components use a brief, solution-focused therapy model. This intervention aims to explore underlying factors that impact the ability of GBMSM to negotiate and practice safer sex in prevention, and assists with internal and external barriers to moving forward when dealing with a new HIV diagnosis. An assessment is made to determine needs and suitability for the counselling program or community referrals.

HIV Prevention Program

Referrals to our Program Manager/Counsellor come mainly from Clinic physicians, clinicians and counsellors. When seeing a patient for STI or HIV concerns, if at-risk behaviour is a concern, the provider can offer Links’ services.

Some of the common themes in the Prevention Counselling Program include the prevalence of condomless sex and the use of hook-up apps. Clients have expressed frustration at feeling addicted to these apps, and sometimes feel the apps fuel compulsive behaviour that puts them at risk. There is a strong correlation between high risk behaviours and issues like low self-esteem, anxiety/stress, social isolation, depression, guilt/shame, racism and a history of childhood trauma. The goals of the program are to explore those issues with clients and help develop coping mechanisms. Many clients have expressed their appreciation for the ways this service has helped them to reduce HIV risks.

HIV Aftercare Program

This Program is offered to all clients who receive an HIV diagnosis at the Clinic. Hassle Free staff have always conducted post-test counselling and arranged referrals for aftercare. But this program has expanded and formalized the process. It involves assessing and addressing barriers a client might be experiencing when navigating HIV health and social service systems.

In addition to counselling the Program Manager offers referrals to HIV primary care as well as case management. Depending on needs, appropriate community referrals are made for issues like housing, immigration, income/employment, drug coverage, social supports, substance use and mental health issues.

A challenge that has always been there, but that has become more acute, is finding appropriate care for people who are uninsured and do not have status from an immigration perspective. It is particularly critical to help find the necessary medical and social supports for these clients. It is also extremely difficult, when people are dealing with so many other challenges in addition to their new HIV status.

This Program aligns perfectly with the new Ontario HIV/AIDS Strategy, which articulates the continuum from prevention to diagnosis to treatment, care and support, which all contribute to the ultimate goal of fewer diagnoses and ongoing viral suppression.

Testimonial from Making the Links Program client:

“Making the Links has and continues to play a huge role not only in my acceptance of my HIV diagnosis; but my overall mental health and attitude towards life. The program has empowered me with the community resources, tools, confidence & positive outlook, which have been important in this new chapter of my life. I am currently seeing an HIV specialist, sober and have a better outlook and thought process all thanks to the program and [my counsellor]. Without her assistance & guidance I would be continuing my old habits of having impulsive sex on an array of drugs, resulting not only in possibly infecting others but putting my own life at risk.”

Bath Stats for 2016

Total number of HIV tests conducted at the baths was 368: 397 were done in 2015

Total number of HIV Positive results: 3
2 Positive results in 2015

Total number of STI tests done (Syphilis & Hepatitis screening): 68
55 were done in 2015

Total number of clients seen during bathhouse outreach: 1104
Compared to 1569 in 2015

Peter Bochove Bathhouse Outreach Program

Since 1975, the clinic has provided anonymous STI testing and information at local baths for men who have sex with men (MSM). The service began as a routine STI testing clinic, with an HIV counselling component added in 1983, anonymous testing in 1995 and rapid POC testing in 2010. Clinics usually run for 3-hour sessions in four Toronto bathhouses. We provide free condoms and lube (provided by Toronto Public Health), and testing for HIV, syphilis and hepatitis. Bath management has always cooperated, offering space for testing, regular announcements and display areas for educational materials.

The program is aimed at all bathhouse patrons, but in particular at men who otherwise might not attend a clinic or their doctor for STI and HIV concerns. While many patrons are self-identified gay men who have no difficulty accessing services, others fall into a variety of hard-to-reach communities. Bathhouses have always attracted closeted bisexual and men who have sex with men (MSM). These individuals require the anonymity of this setting, as they may be unwilling to access sexual health services in their communities. The clinic has been actively cooperating with other agencies offering community-specific outreach services. The bath program offers an ideal opportunity for staff to provide information and testing to specialized groups within the MSM community. It is noteworthy that the number of HIV tests has more than doubled since we began offering rapid POC HIV testing at the baths. This year, 3 individuals tested HIV positive in the bath program.

The clinic regularly collaborates with the M2M network partners for several regular special-event Bathhouse testing nights. In particular, we partnered with Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS), Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP) and Centre for Spanish Speaking People (CSSP).

With each passing year the Clinic keeps getting busier. In 2016 the Clinic had once again more client visits than the previous year. The total overall number of sexual health and HIV in-clinic visits rose in both the Women/Trans and Men/Trans Clinics to 29,070 compared to 28,717 in 2015. The number of sexual health visits (not including HIV) for each clinic has steadily increased. STI positivity rates also appear to be on the rise.

Reasons for sexual health visits to the Women/Trans Clinic include contraception, pregnancy testing, abortion referrals, sexual assault and other miscellaneous gynecological concerns. There were fewer Pap smear tests this year as a consequence of the 2012 Ontario Cervical Screening Guidelines. These guidelines raised the age of first Pap to 21, and changed the normal screening interval from 1 to 3 years.

The total number of sexual health visits to the Men/Trans Clinic showed an increase from 15,712 in 2015 to 16,221 in 2016. Almost all non-HIV visits to the Men/Trans Clinic are for STIs and/or STI related concerns. We saw a growing number of individuals wanting information and/or accessing PEP and PrEP. There were 125 medical referrals made for PrEP (however this does not take into consideration clients who we have connected with primary care or other channels. As well, the clinic has seen an increase in the number of syphilis infections and rectal gonorrhea, chlamydia and LGV infections.

OVERALL SEXUAL HEALTH & HIV IN-CLINIC VISITS FOR 2016:

Women/Trans Clinic

9,486

Men/Trans Clinic

19,584

TOTAL

29,070

TOTAL SEXUAL HEALTH VISITS (NOT INCLUDING HIV):

Women/Trans Clinic

8,119

Men/ Trans Clinic

16,221

Interested in volunteering?

- Volunteer duties are mostly administrative such as filing, booking appointments and other tasks as needed
- Prospective volunteers are interviewed, must sign a confidentiality agreement and go through an orientation and training process provided by staff and other volunteers
- On-going training and support is provided
- Please note that volunteer applicants will be contacted on an as needed basis

APPLY IN PERSON

- Volunteer application forms are available at the front desk

APPLY ONLINE

- Volunteer application forms are also available online at:
www.hasslefreeclinic.org/VolunteerForm.php

Volunteer Program

Hassle Free is extremely thankful to have a very committed team of volunteers. There were 70 active volunteers in 2016, contributing well over 7,500 hours of service. They form an integral part of our perpetually busy clinic. From greeting people at the reception counter to booking appointments, they are in many ways the face of Hassle Free – the first voice and face with whom clients come in contact. This can be very challenging, as clients often are in crisis when they call or attend the clinic. We rely on volunteers to also assist with research, collating data, and the day-to-day maintenance of the clinic.

Many of our volunteers take initiative and go above and beyond the call of duty with regard to hours, added duties and responding to last minute requests. Our volunteers take great pride in their work and many have been extremely loyal for years.

Periodically the clinic facilitates Volunteer training to train new recruits and sharpen the skills of our more veteran volunteers. Front desk volunteers are trained to do appropriate screening when booking appointments. Even though this can involve complicated assessments of a variety of situations, it is working extremely well. Our volunteers have a strong knowledge base, but ensure staff are consulted when appropriate.

Hassle Free also works with a very solid and committed group of “behind the scenes” volunteers. Our nine-member, community-based Board of Directors continues to lend a wealth of expertise, skill and guidance to our overall operations. The staff is particularly grateful for the Board’s unwavering support.



Outside Activities

Hassle Free provides community and professional education on request as staffing permits. We believe strongly in knowledge transfer and exchange, and provide our staff at no cost to agencies requesting education. We also stay involved in coalitions and networking groups. These are essential to service coordination and information exchange.

Professional Education/Community Education

- EGALE – Sexual health and youth (presentation)
- Immigrant Women’s Health Centre – HIV Test (presentation)
- Ryerson School of Midwifery – HIV and STI
- Sprint – LGBTQ Seniors and sexual health (presentation)
- Toronto Public Health – HIV 101/Testing
- Women’s Health in Women’s Hands – POC HIV Training (presentation)

Networks, Working Groups & Consultation

- CATIE – Information Consultation
- Clinic Sharing Network
- Gay Men’s Sexual Health Strategy (GMSH)
- Gay/MSM Service Coordination (OHTN)
- M2M Network
- National HIV/STBBI Testing Working Group
- OHTN – Research Consultation, Women and HIV Trauma
- PEP working group
- Seaton House Test Planning Group
- Sexual Health Network
- Toronto HIV Network (THN)
- Toronto Public Health – STI Working Group
- Toronto Public Health, Dept. of Remembrance Consultation
- WON (Women’s Outreach Network; Women and HIV Initiative -- WHAI)

Staff Development

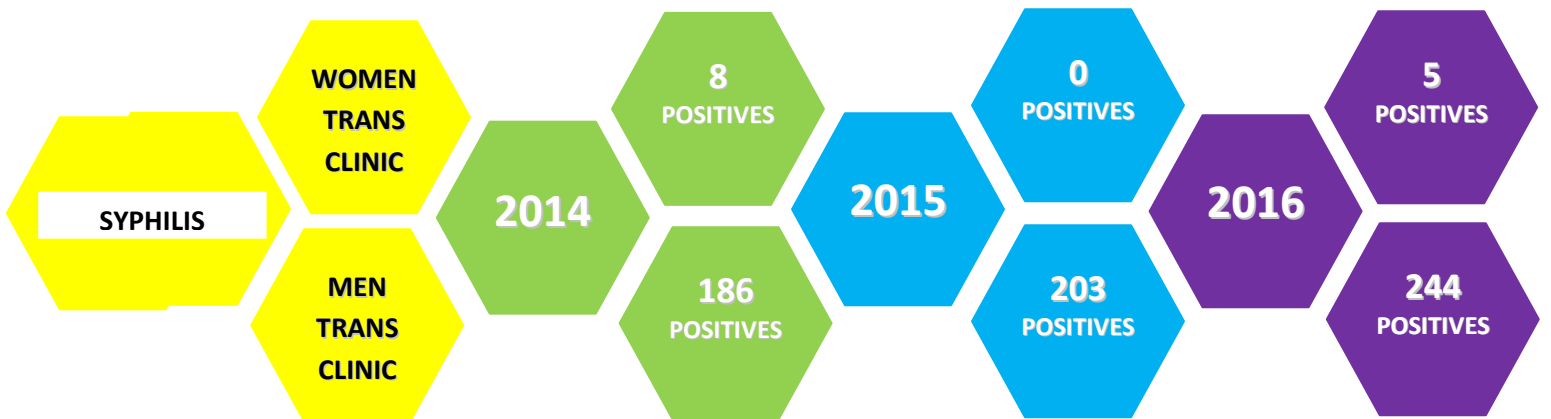
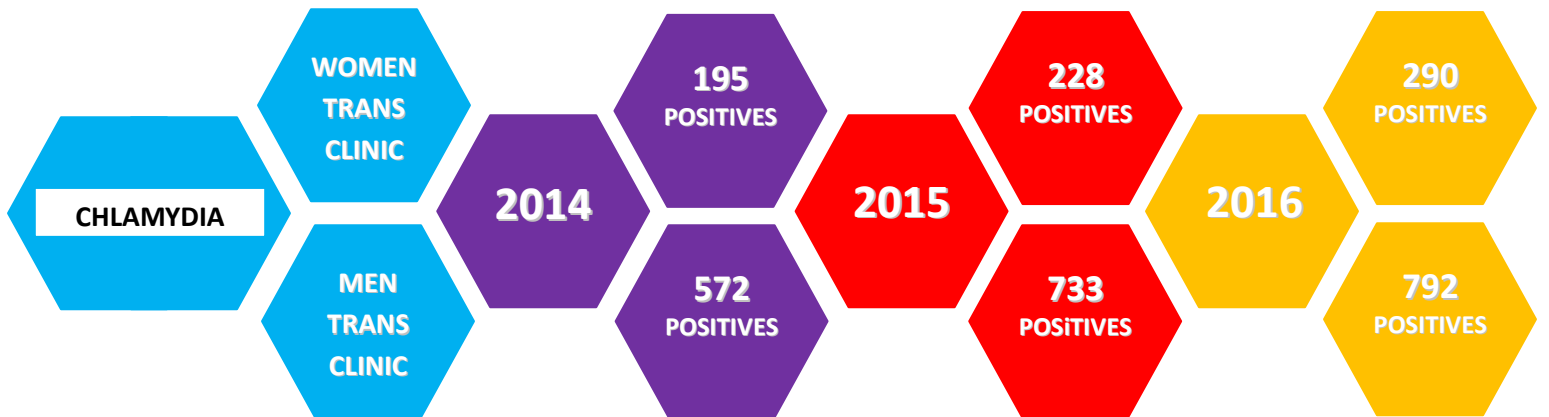
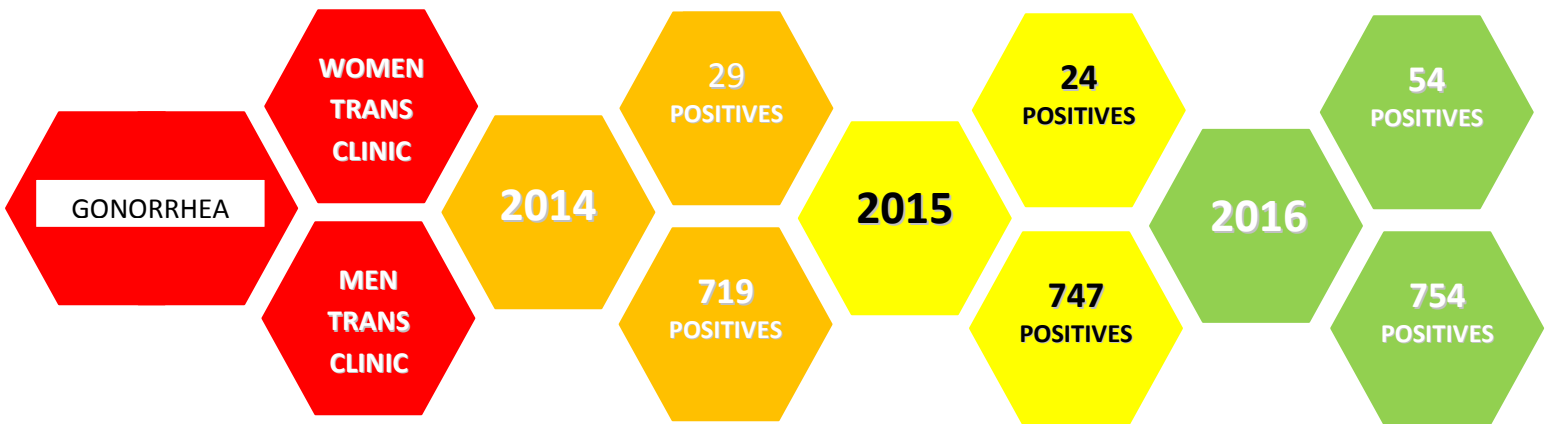
- IUC Option Presentation -- Bayer
- HPV – An Update
- Couples Counselling Training
- ‘Rewiring Our Responses’ – Counselling Training Seminar (2 day)

Special Event Testing

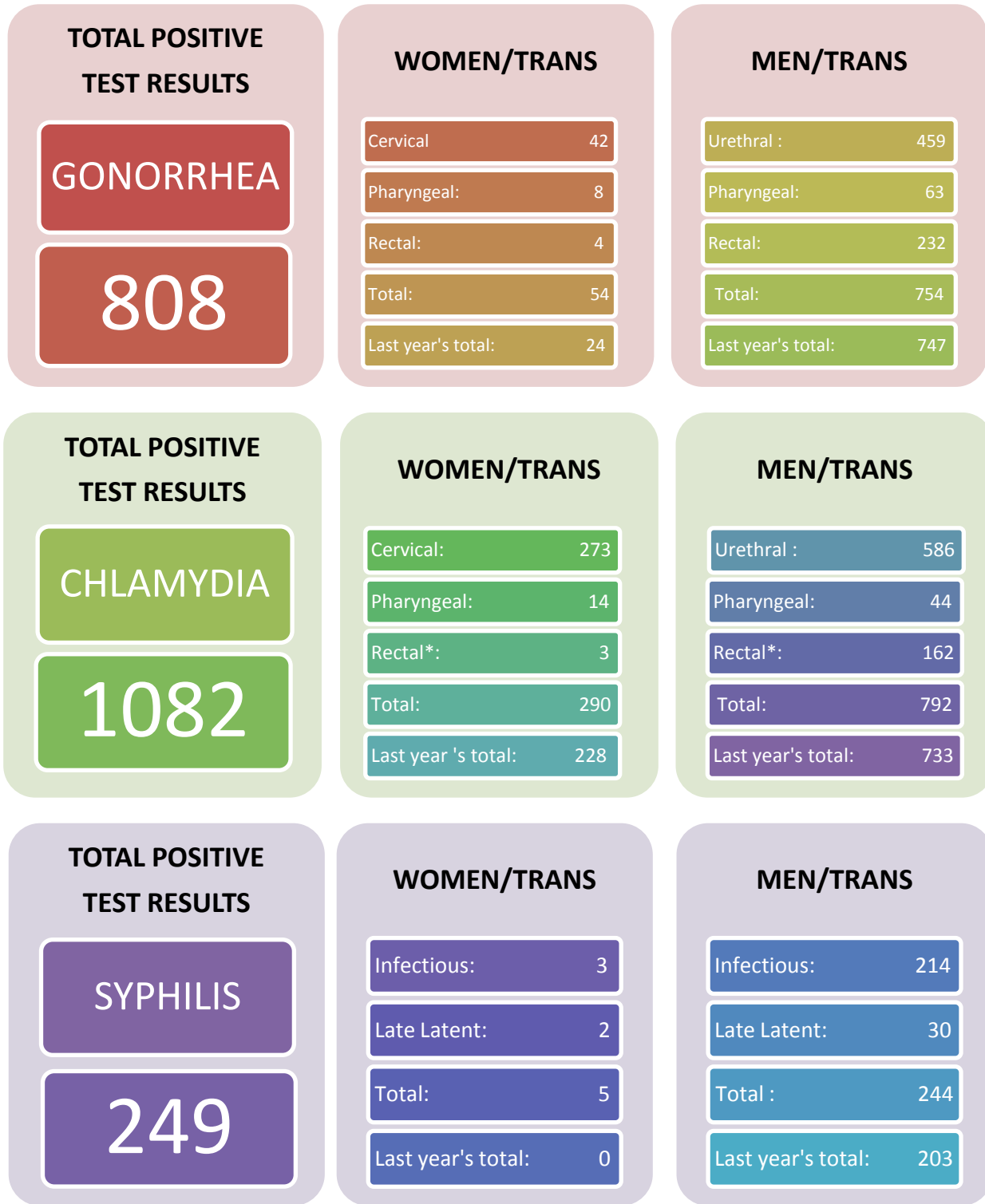
- World AIDS Day – York University
- Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS) – Sex, Love and Asian Men (SLAM)



POSITIVE TEST RESULTS YEARLY COMPARISON



POSITIVE TEST RESULTS



* All Rectal Chlamydia is processed for LGV

POSITIVE TEST RESULTS

