



# Linking Men to Post-Test Services

Framing remarks

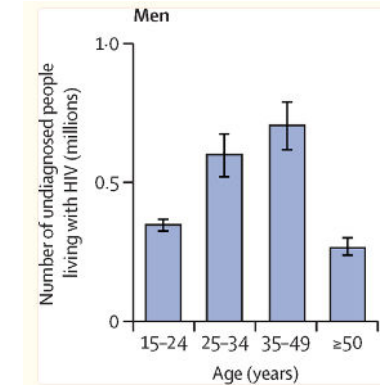
Dr Cheryl Johnson, WHO Global HIV, Hepatitis and STI programmes



CQUIN dHTS Meeting | July 9 - 12, 2024 – Durban, South Africa

# Why focus on men?

- Men (age 30-49) make up the largest absolute number of undiagnosed people with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)
- Vast majority not recent infections (> 1 year)
- WHO testing data shows men still less likely to be tested despite high positivity (28 countries in Africa)
- Gaps widening in some settings

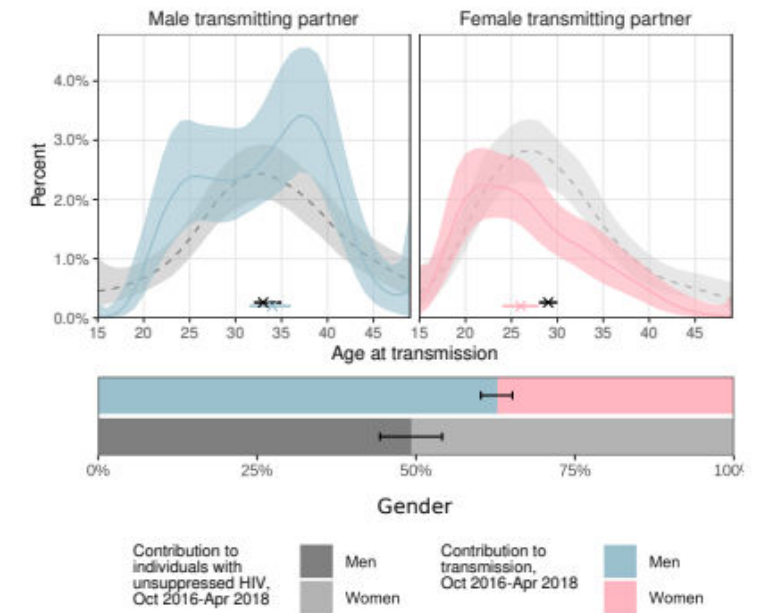


Source: Giguere 2021, Fraser AIDS 2022, Global AIDS Monitoring 2024, WHO 2024

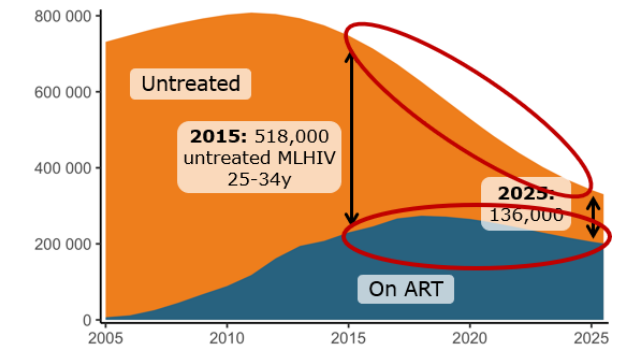
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# Why focus on men?

- **Men with HIV are less likely than women to be diagnosed, on treatment and virally suppressed**
  - 72% of men (age 15+) have access to ART compared with 82% of women of the same age
  - Recent data show viral suppression is 1.5–2-fold higher in women than men in some SSA settings
  - Advanced HIV disease and related mortality is high in men due to late diagnosis and treatment
  - HIV affects key populations most – a group comprised mostly of men
- **Reaching men with HIV is important to preventing new infections in women and achieving global targets**
- **Systems-level combination prevention for men in southern Africa may be the most efficient strategy for achieving global targets - but gaps are substantial**
  - Condoms, VMMC, harm reduction, PrEP/PEP under utilized



## Preventing exposure to HIV infection

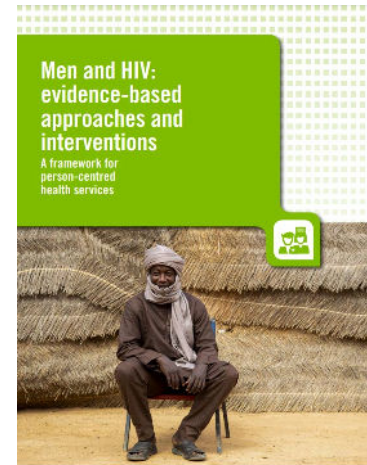


Source: WHO/UNAIDS 2023, WHO 2024, AVAC 2023, Monod 2023, Eaton AIDS 2022

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# Why gaps among men remain?

- **System level barriers**
  - Health system and resources often focused on women and children
  - Fewer male-friendly services
  - Limited or outdated HIV education/awareness
- **Societal level barriers**
  - Social pressures and cultural expectations, e.g. “bread winner”
  - High opportunity costs, e.g. lost wages, work
  - Restrictive laws and policies
- **Individual level barriers**
  - Self-stigma
  - Fear of losing relationships, respectability or social status
  - No symptoms, feeling healthy

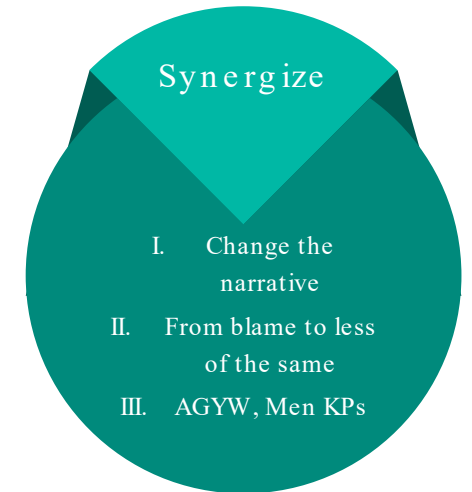


- Men reported spending twice as high as women
- **Lost income was the highest cost component** with men reporting a lost income that is twice as high as women

# WHO and UNAIDS strategy for focusing on men and HIV

## Priorities

- Change the narrative - considerations on stigma and perceptions
- Greater use of DSD approaches and models for reaching men
- Mix of approaches that is contextual and people centred
- Look across continuum and reaching men across the cascade including post-test

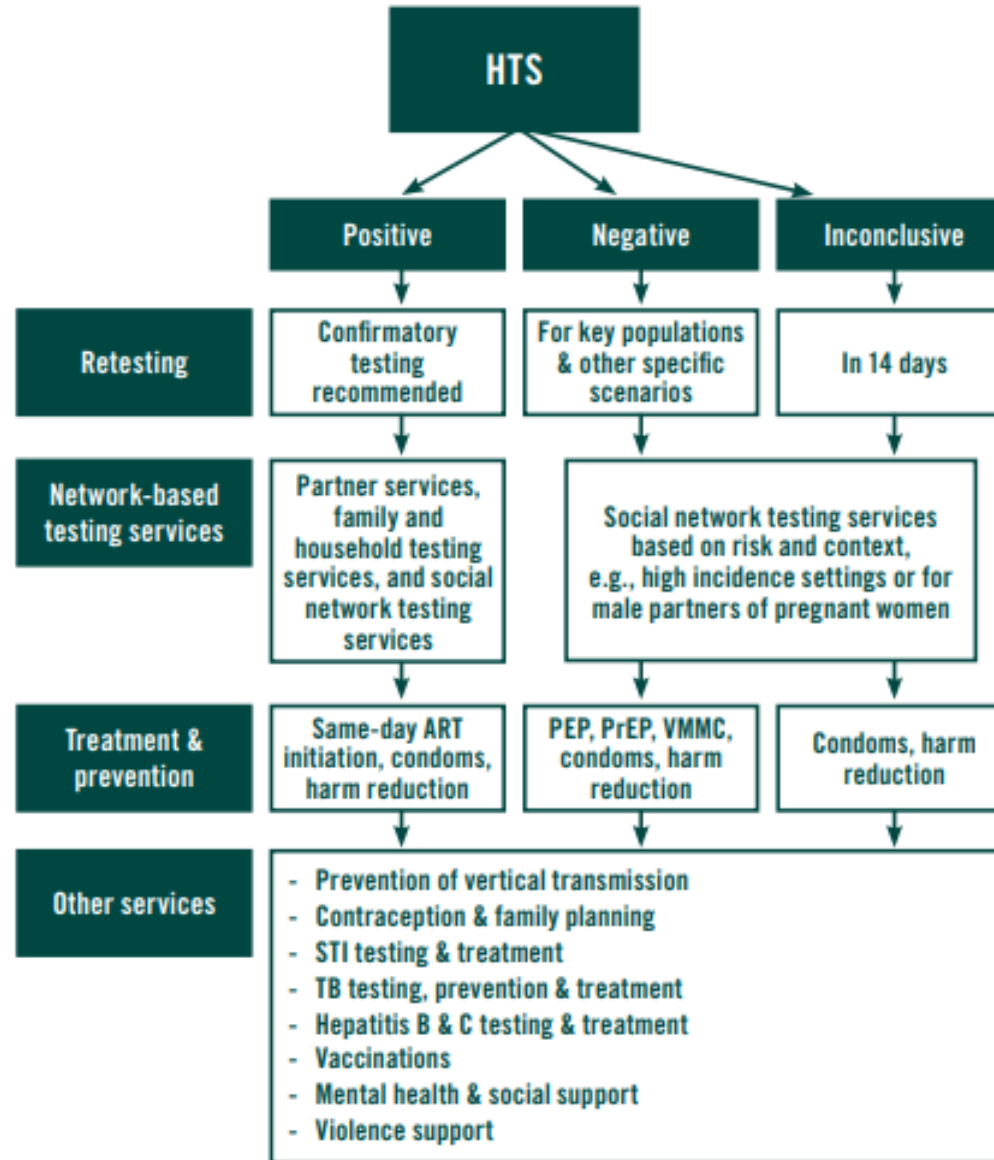


Slide adapted MEHNT, Dr Wole Ameyan WHO

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# Recommended post-test pathway



Source: WHO 2024

# Evidence-based principles for reaching men

## Access

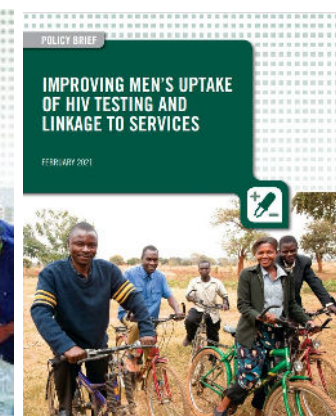
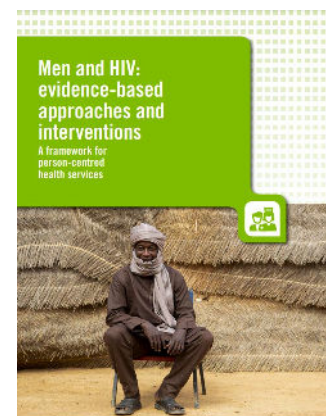
- Routine offer and entry points for men, e.g. OPD, partner services, self-testing, pharmacies
- Community-centred services, e.g. workplace, outreach, places of worship
- Flexible facility-based services, e.g. alternative hours, multi-month dispensing, differentiated care, rapid refills

## Quality

- Positive interactions with health workers
- Welcoming and accepting services
- Integrated services including things men care about

## Support

- Comprehensive counselling and facility navigation that address men's interests, goals, needs
- Peer-support or -led services
- Virtual interventions



Workplace is often a financial sustainable option

Source: WHO/UNAIDS 2023, WHO 2021, WHO 2022, WHO 2024

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World Health Organization



THE CQUIN NETWORK

# Specific recommendations for post-test services for men

## Enabling environment and service delivery

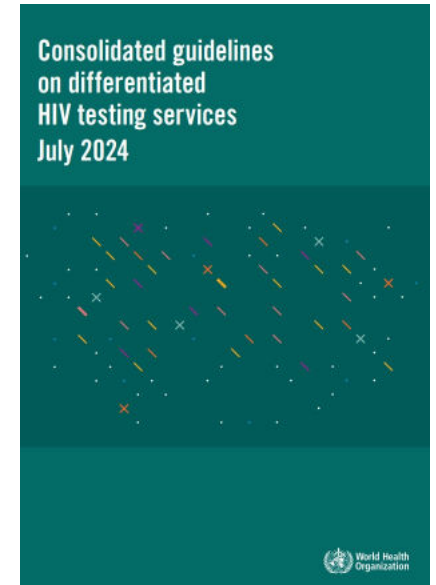
- Revised and enabling policies – task shifting, aligned age of consent
- Rapid tests/self-tests, same day diagnosis, prevention and care
- Peers and partners
- Virtual interventions (e.g. chatbots)
  - careful design needed as linkage outcomes can be variable
- One-stop shop, co-located, integrated and multi-disease
- Flexible, simple and continuous quality improvement

## Messaging

- Referrals with latest information on treatment and prevention options
- U=U messages and education increases testing & linkage in men
- B-Ok bottles
- Clear information on retesting, self-testing and inconclusive results

## Linkage services

- Case management, streamlined services, referral, navigation and accompaniment
- Welcome back services and retesting as needed for re-engagement
- Enhanced access to, uptake and effective use of PrEP and PEP (including with self-tests)

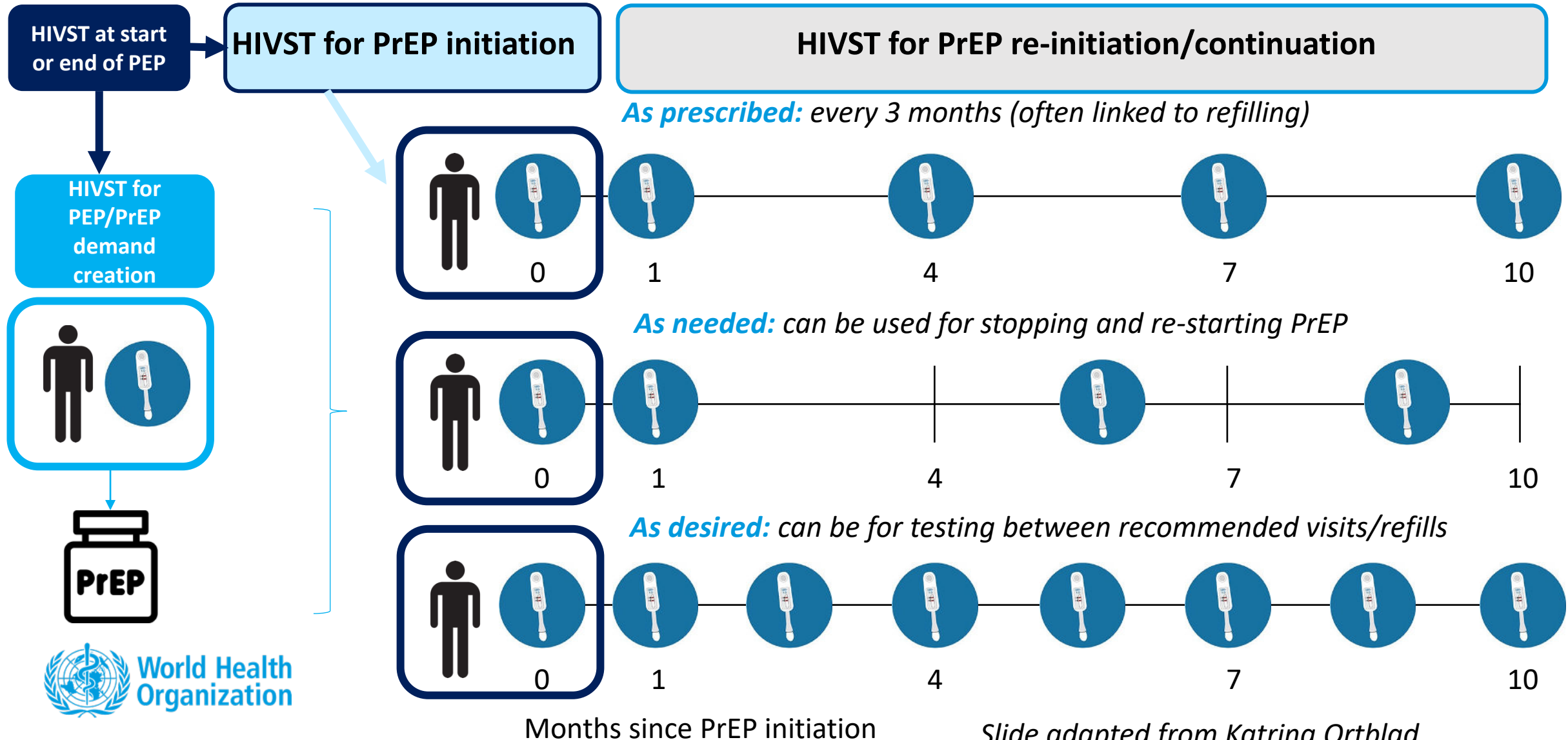


Compensation and incentives can be useful in some contexts, but caution needed as effects vary and programmes may need to prioritize UHC/PHC

Source: WHO 2024



# New recommendation: Self-testing for PEP and PrEP



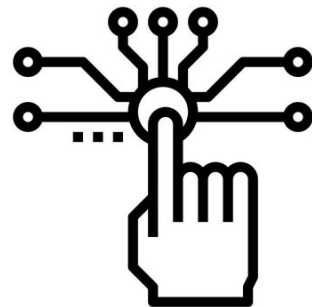
# Uptake of new WHO recommendation on HIVST-supported PrEP

- As of May 2024, WHO mapped country uptake of the new recommendation on HIVST-supported PrEP identified the following country reports.
- WHO will continue to follow-up and map experiences across countries to support broader implementation and adoption of current guidance.



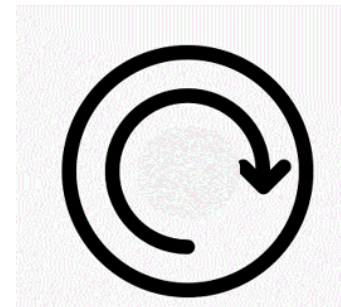
**HIVST for  
PrEP demand creation**

Nepal, Zimbabwe,  
Kazakhstan, Ghana, South  
Africa, Eswatini, Viet Nam



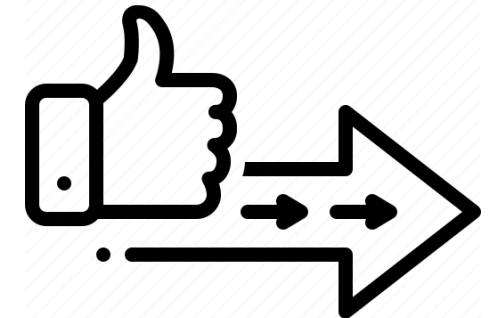
**HIVST for  
PrEP initiation**

Philippines, Eswatini  
& Thailand



**HIVST for  
PrEP re-initiation**

Brazil



**HIVST for  
PrEP continuation**

Zambia, Spain,  
Mozambique, Kenya,  
South Africa, Viet Nam\*

# Where do we go from here?



- Evidence-based strategy, principles and interventions for men are there
- Focus on early diagnosis and linkage, welcome back services
- Workplace partnerships and insurance schemes can offer financial sustainable options for men
- U=U messages and adapted interventions hold unique opportunities for men
- Implementation and scaled-up approaches need to be prioritized and should include men in all their diversity
- Don't forget linkage and engagement to prevention – strategic priority

# Thank you!

## For more information on HIV testing services

WHO HIV Testing  
Services Dashboard

WHO 2024  
HTS GL

Questions?

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