

# Mobilizing Men for HIV Testing in Ghana

Ghana Case Study

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# Outline

- Background
- The need for mobilizing men for HTS
- Mobilization strategies implemented in Ghana
- HIVST case study
- Lessons learned
- Challenges

# Overview of the HIV Epidemic in Ghana @2023

The first AIDS cases were reported in Ghana in 1986

**HIV Population**  
334,095  
(5% children)

**HIV Prevalence in General Population**  
1.53%

**New HIV Infections**  
17,742  
(10% children)

**AIDS Related Deaths**  
12,505  
(11% children)

# HIV Epidemic in Vulnerable Sub-Populations

**Key Population Size Estimate - 2023  
(FSW+MSM+TG)  
110,751**

## HIV Prevalence – Key Populations

**MSM 26%**  
**Transgender 48%**  
(Men's Study 2023)

**PWID 2.5%**  
(2022 Assessment)

**FSW 4.6%**  
(2020 BBS)

**Prisoners 2.3%**  
(2023 Prisons  
Assessment)

## HIV Prevalence - Other Sub-Populations

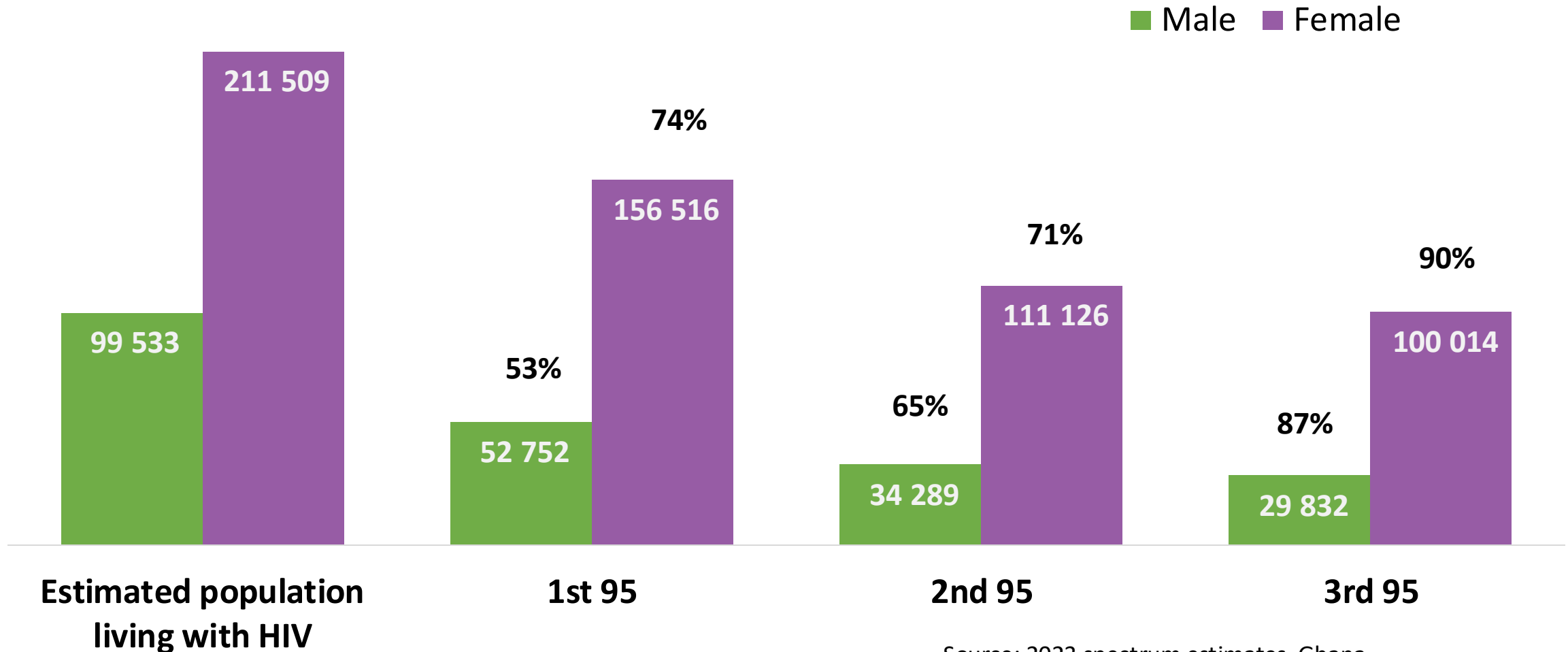
**Other Vulnerable  
Populations 4.3%**

**TB Clients 14%**  
(NTP 2022 Annual Report)

**STI Clients 12.3%**  
(GHS/NACP, HSS 2021)

**ANC Clients 2.0%**  
(GHS/NACP, HSS 2021)

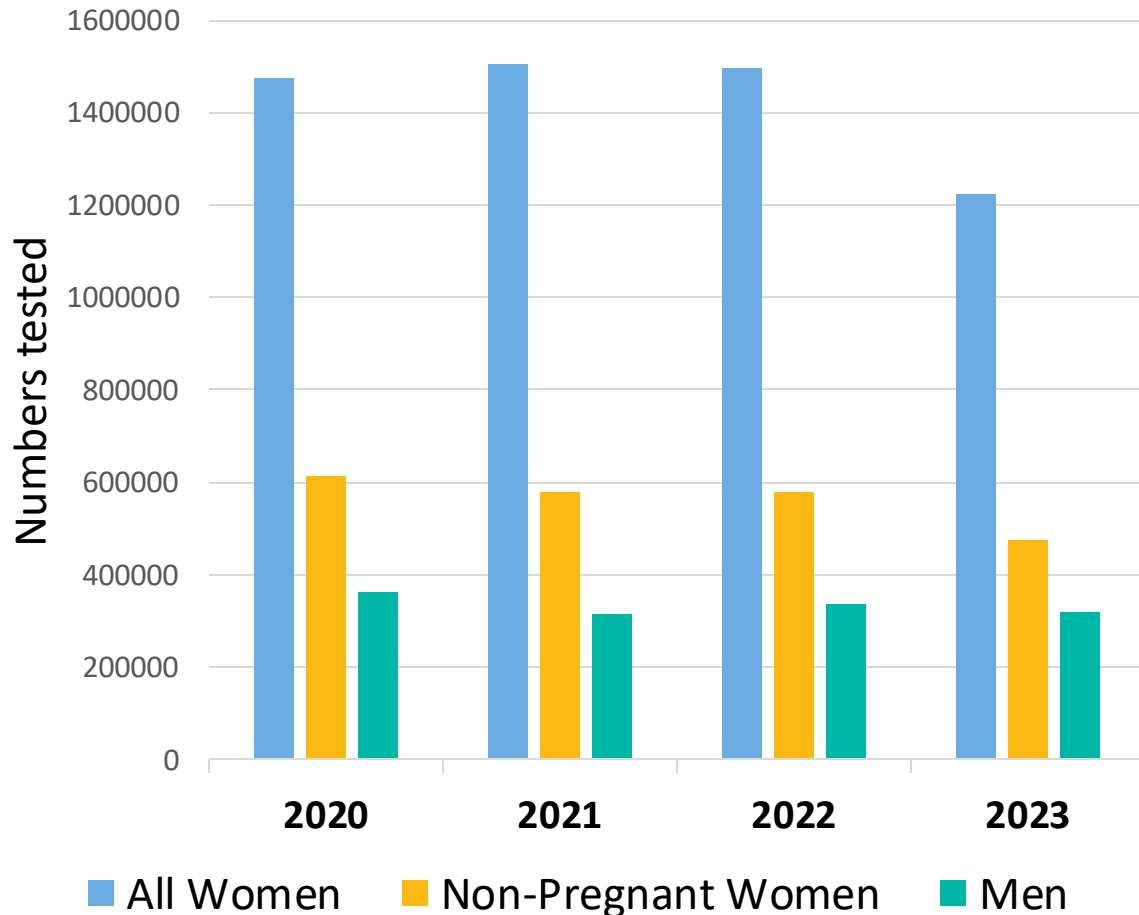
# Ghana's 95-95-95 Status by Sex @ 2023



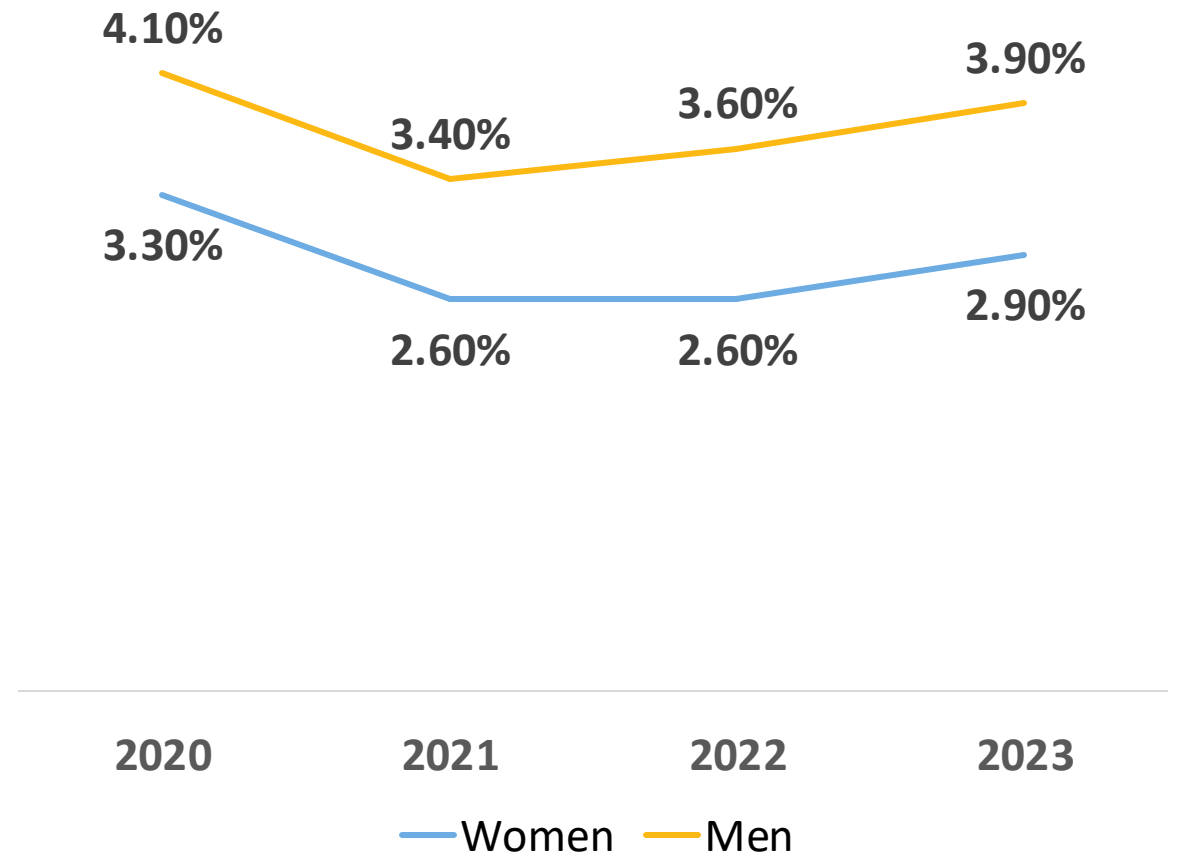
Source: 2023 spectrum estimates, Ghana

# Need For Targeted Approaches to Mobilize Men

## Numbers Tested for HIV by Sex



## Testing Yield by Sex



# Approaches to Mobilizing Men for HTS in Ghana

## Individual approaches

- Index/social network testing
- Peer-led mobilization/education
- HIVST kit distribution and linkage to confirmatory testing
- Incentives (free STI management)

## Group approaches

- Testing Parties
- Testing at male-dominated workplaces

# Individual Approaches-1/2

WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHERE	TARGETS
Index/social network testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HCW</li> <li>• Peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During clinical visits</li> <li>• During community outreaches</li> <li>• During drop-in center (DIC) visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health facility</li> <li>• Community               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home</li> <li>• DICs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sexual partners of HIV clients</li> <li>2. Sexual partners of clients with other STIs</li> <li>3. Non-paying partners of sex workers</li> <li>4. MSM and other high-risk men (HRM)</li> </ol>
Peer-led mobilization & education	Peer mobilizers & educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During community outreaches</li> <li>• During DIC visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home</li> <li>• DICs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Non-paying partners of sex workers</li> <li>2. MSMs and other HRM</li> </ol>



# Individual Approaches-2/2

WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHERE	TARGETS
HIVST kit distribution and linkage to confirmatory testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HCW (secondary distribution)</li> <li>• Peer educators</li> <li>• Community pharmacists</li> <li>• Online portals</li> <li>• Civil society organizations &amp; community volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health facility visits</li> <li>• During community outreaches</li> <li>• Social media engagements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health facility</li> <li>• Community               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pharmacies</li> <li>• Courier delivery</li> <li>• Home delivery</li> <li>• Workplace</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sexual partners of HIV clients</li> <li>2. Sexual partners of clients with STIs</li> <li>3. Non-paying partners of sex workers</li> <li>4. MSM and other HRM</li> <li>5. Tertiary students</li> </ol>
Incentives (free STI management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HCW</li> <li>• Peer educator</li> </ul>	During health facility visits	Designated KP-friendly health facilities	MSM

# Group Strategies

WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHERE	TARGETS
Testing Parties - open - closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer educators</li> <li>HCW</li> </ul>	During social events/activities	KP hotspots and closed meeting venues within the community	MSM
Testing at male-dominated workplaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HCW</li> <li>Peers</li> </ul>	During working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lorry stations</li> <li>Offices</li> <li>Gyms</li> <li>Barbering shops</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General population</li> <li>Index contacts</li> </ul>

# Case Study: Mobilizing Men Through Online Distribution of HIVST Kits

# Virtual Interventions for Men in Ghana

## Drivers of Success

- High mobile phone ownership (80%)
- High smartphone penetration (60%)

## Regulatory environment

- Ministry of Health
- National Communication Authority policies



See the DSD SI Progress Report Dashboards page (<https://whosi.vercel.app/>) for more details on each country activities and access key resources.

# Need for Virtual Interventions for HIV testing

## Significant gap in case finding

- 1st 95 in 2021 was 63%

## NSP 2021-2025 Goal

- “Increase access to HIV testing options outside of health facilities by 17%”
- HIVST policy developed (2021)

## Lessons from implementing partners

- HIVST and virtual intervention feasibility assessment by JSI - increased interest
- Successful HIVST pharmacy distribution and call center support

## Objective/Goal

- Improve testing and treatment coverage of key populations, and other risk groups, through the design and development of human-centered virtual interventions.

# Virtual Intervention

## User Journey

1

### Aware of the service

Hear about Self Test through online advertising, from discreet cards or through a friend



2

### Getting started

An easy to use chatbot will take you through the ordering process 24 hours a day



3

### Kit delivery

Kits are delivered by professional couriers the next day for orders placed before 3pm



4

### Opening the test kit

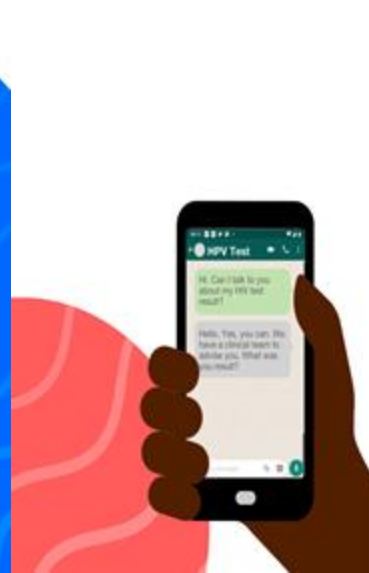
Prepare to use the kit in private by laying out the components and reading the instructions



5

### Using the test

Taking the HIV self test takes approximately 30 minutes watch Youtube how to video or Whatsapp support if needed



6

### Sharing my results

Talk to the Virtual Support Team on Whatsapp to share your result and get advice about next steps

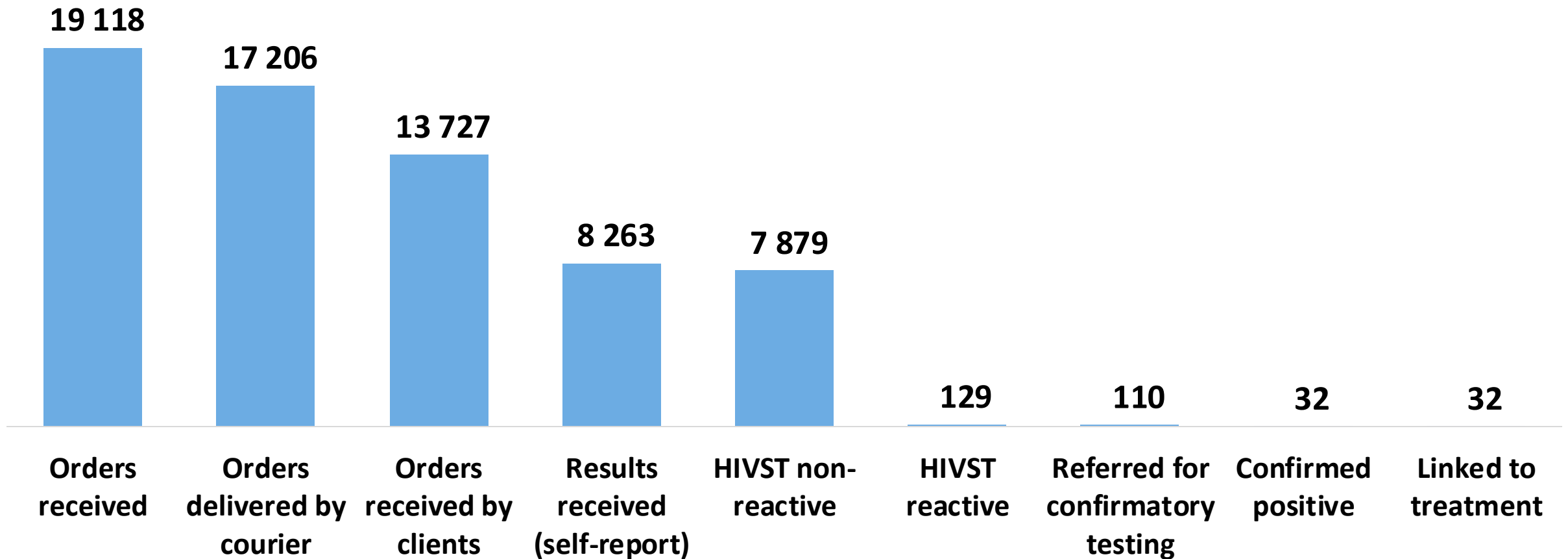


7

### Facility Follow up

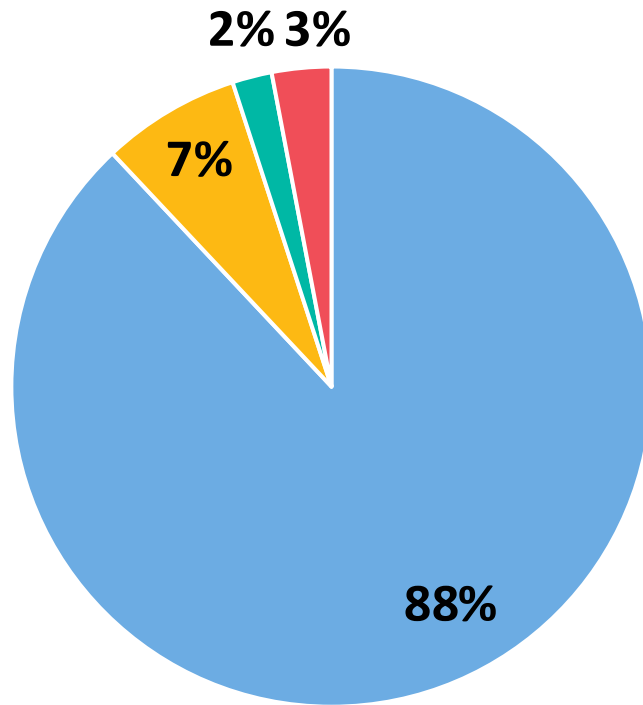
Get support for accessing confirmatory testing or advice about prevention

# Results (October-December 2023)-1/3



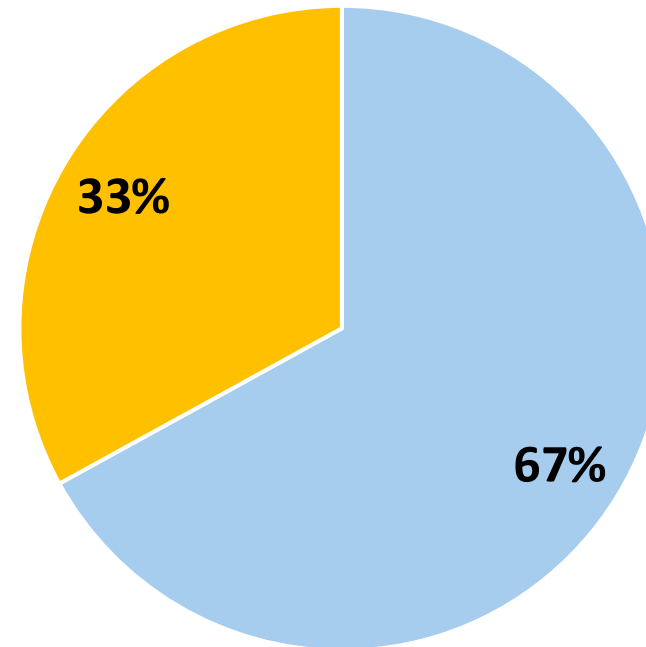
# Results - 2/3

## User Population



- General Population
- MSM
- FSW
- Preferred not to say

## Sex of Users

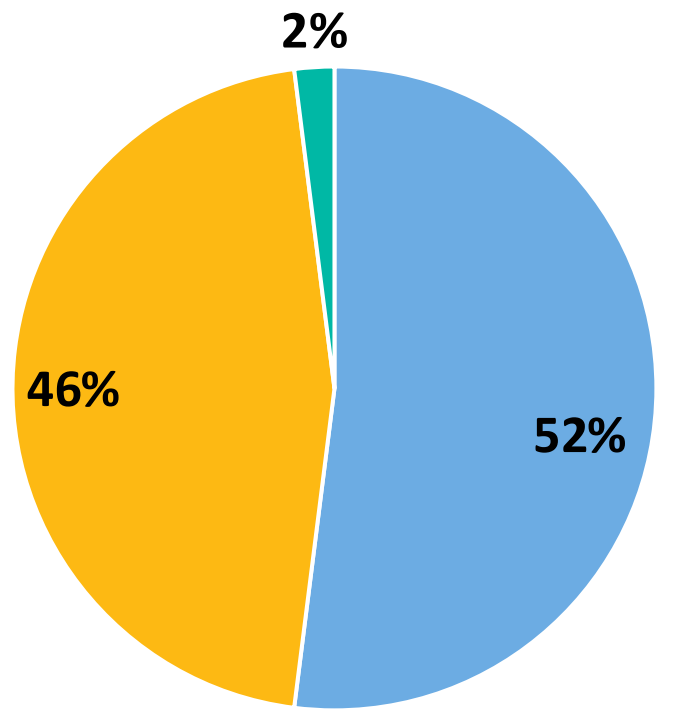


- Male
- Female



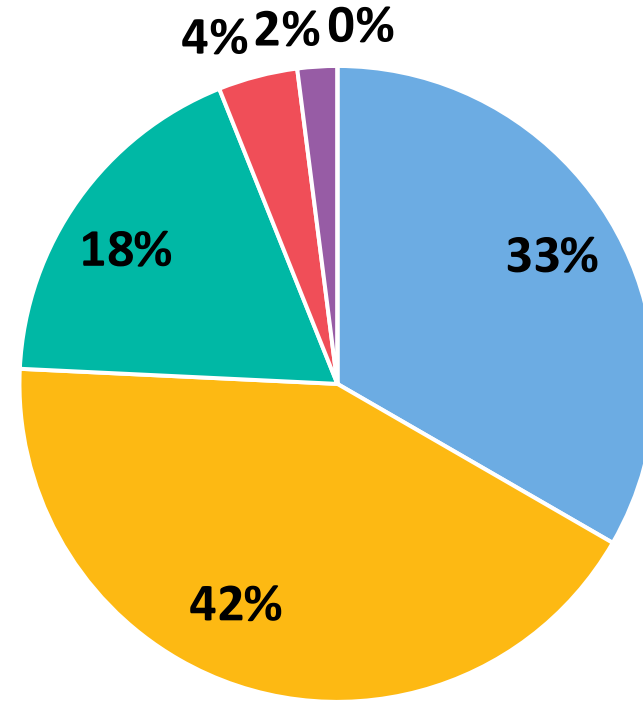
# Results - 3/3

### Previous HIV Test?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Prefer not to say

### Age Band (years)



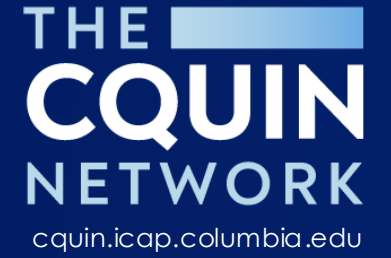
■ 20-24 ■ 25-29 ■ 30-34  
■ 35-39 ■ 40-44 ■ 45-49

# Lessons Learned

- To get men tested, services should be brought closer to them
- No approach is superior to the other when it comes to mobilizing men for testing
- Context influences the best approach to use
- If possible, use of multiple approaches gives better outcomes than using a single approach
- Assurance of confidential and friendly services is critical in mobilizing men for dHTS.

# Challenges

- ‘Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill’ (2021) has limited the use of group-based approaches for key populations
- Periodic stockouts of HIV testing commodities
- Lack of consent from index clients to reach out to partners due to disclosure challenges



# Thank You!

