



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Hassle Free Clinic

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hasslefreeclinic.org

Hassle Free Clinic

Annual Report Contact:

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Hassle Free Clinic has been providing sexual health programming, education, testing, and treatment in Toronto for over 42 years, and we are very proud to be recognized as one of Canada's most influential and busiest sexual health clinics.

Five years ago, the Board of Directors decided to undertake a structural review of the clinic so it could better serve its clients and provide a leadership structure to manage the complexities of a growing innovative health clinic. In 2015, the Board of Directors undertook the last step of this structural review and hired a consultant to analyze the Clinic's current compensation model. The consultant provided recommendations to the Board to consider creating a new long term competitive compensation strategy that met the requirements of the clinic staff and the sustainability of the Clinic as a whole. We are pleased to report that a new compensation strategy will be implemented starting January 2017.

We are a very busy Clinic and in 2015 the Clinic supported almost 29,000 client visits, an increasing over 2014. Our Enhanced Testing program conducted approximately 9% more tests than last year at 3 sites and our Peter Bochove Bathhouse Outreach program provided 8% more HIV tests than in 2014. To address some of the capacity issues, our Volunteer Program has also expanded. In many of the busy evening clinics there is now a team of 4 volunteers to manage the larger client numbers and we cannot thank these passionate and loyal individuals enough for their contribution to the Clinic's success.

As a past volunteer, and member of the board, I am aware that there are many who deeply care about and significantly contribute to the life of the Hassle Free Clinic and it is this energy that will see the Clinic evolve and continue to provide exceptional service to our clients in the years to come.

Regards,

Warren Ross

Board of Directors

Warren Ross: President
Corinne Hart: Vice-President
Mary Byberg
Hemant Gohil
Nicole Greenspan
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MANY THANKS
TO THE
HASSLE FREE CLINIC
BOARD MEMBERS
VOLUNTEERS &
PHYSICIANS OF 2015!

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Christine McGee

Men's/Trans' Clinic Physicians

Michael Bartucci (Medical Director)
Vanessa Abdelhalim
Jason Booy
Pinella Buongiorno
Arlene Chan
Charlie Guiang
Karen Jang
David Knox
Karen Ko
Edward Lee
Brian Minnema
Narges Nassirinejad
Jesleen Rana
Danyaal Raza
Kate Reeve
Kent To
Patrick Wong

Women's/Trans' Clinic Physicians

Nina Malayil (Medical Director)
Duarte Adegbite
Kirsten Dixon
Erin Johnston
Jane Kiraly
Sarah Mahmoud
Zeenat Patel
Brigit Swenson
Ashley Vandermorris
Sheila Wijayasinghe
Laura Winer

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

WHO WE ARE...

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 42 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 42nd 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.

History of Hassle Free Clinic

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 42 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 attitude 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 matters. Some of this research has been to assess knowledge and attitudes around biomedical interventions such as PEP and PrEP. Some of the research is conducted by private companies for the development of new products, such as point-of-care diagnostics for gonorrhoea and chlamydia, usually with compensation for our patients and the Clinic. We have been involved in many clinical trials, where testing devices are being studied parallel to laboratory testing. We have also engaged in prevalence studies to look at, for example, co-infections in our client populations.

Although we do not have a formal Internal Review Board, we only engage in research where the proposals have been approved through an ethics review process. We also ask how the research will improve the lives of those being studied, how the researchers will collaborate with others working in the same area, etc. to ensure the research is being conducted for the ultimate benefit of service users.

Student Placement & Training

Clinical health education is an important part of our commitment to community development. The clinic often supervises residents, nursing and medical students from several institutions. Most notably, the clinic often has nursing students taking part in their practicum placement within the clinic. Students gain valuable sexual health and community based experience. Over the years, the clinic has had many excellent students and over time, several have been recruited to work as relief staff, as well as for outreach and our bathhouse programs. Likewise, some medical residents proceed to be employed in our clinics.

Frequently, we also have staff from various agencies attend the clinic for observation and training, particularly around rapid HIV POC counselling and testing.

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

Year in Review

2015 was another hectic year at the Clinic, both with patient visits and many outside activities.

We were pleased to finally launch our re-designed website, which we hope will make navigation easier for those trying to get information about the Clinic. We also worked with our database team to automate the Men/Trans Clinic STI billing, which will provide more consistency in our billing practices.

2015 also saw the launch of a new outside HIV testing initiative at OASIS Aqualounge, a nearby club. It is a bi-monthly program; providing a general sexual health talk, as well as testing for those interested. We were preparing to launch an HIV testing program with All Saints' Church at their sex worker drop-in. They had to postpone it due to internal considerations, but we are hoping they will be able to pick it up again in 2016. The Women/Trans Clinic also planned outreach testing with Regent Park Community Health Centre's sex worker drop-in, which we will be starting early in the new year.

A big accomplishment this year was as a result of work done by staff on the HPV Vaccine Working Group, which resulted in the Province's announcement they would be funding the vaccine for boys, as well as a catch-up program for Gay men and MSM. This represents a major victory in sexual health promotion.

Although staffing was stable, we did have a few changes, with one of the Women/Trans staff moving over to run the successful "Making the Links" program for Gay men and MSM, which provides counselling for men at risk of HIV, as well as aftercare for those newly diagnosed. With that move, the Women/Trans Clinic had one new hire.

At the Board's direction, we also picked up the Compensation Review with our consultants, the Osborne Group. That report will go to the Board in the spring.





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 9,332 which is an increase from last year's 8,396. The total number of in-clinic HIV visits reached 4,821: this includes 1,530 in the Women/Trans Clinic and 3,391 the Men/Trans Clinic.

The number of HIV positive results in 2015 showed a slight dip (88 in total) compared to the past two years (97 positive results in 2014 and 105 positive results in 2013) despite the total overall increase in amount of tests conducted. There was a slight increase in the number of women who tested HIV positive: 9 new cases among heterosexual women. There were a total of 79 positive HIV results from the Men/Trans Clinic. This number includes 2 positives from the Bathhouses and 44 from the HIV/Syphilis Enhanced Testing Program and 33 from in-clinic testing.

OVERALL
TOTAL OF HIV
VISITS IN 2015

9332

WOMEN / TRANS CLINIC

TOTAL NUMBER
OF POSITIVES

9

TOTAL HIV
VISITS

1530

TOTAL HIV
TESTS

1447

MEN / TRANS CLINIC

TOTAL NUMBER
OF POSITIVES

33

TOTAL HIV
VISITS

3391

TOTAL HIV
TESTS

3208

TOTAL NUMBER
OF HIV POSITIVE
RESULTS IN 2015

88

BATHHOUSE OUTREACH

TOTAL NUMBER
OF POSITIVES

2

TOTAL HIV
VISITS

1569

TOTAL HIV
TESTS

397

ENHANCED TESTING

TOTAL NUMBER
OF POSITIVES

44

TOTAL HIV
VISITS

2842

TOTAL HIV
TESTS

2842

COMPARED TO 2014
97 HIV POSTIVE

COMPARED TO 2013
105 HIV POSTIVE



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.

Health Promotion & Nursing Clinic Program

Our successful Health Promotion/Nursing Clinic Program for HIV Positive women/trans women is now in its fifth year. The Program is made possible through the generous contribution of nursing staff and childcare funds from Casey House and funding from the AIDS Bureau. It is also made possible through the generous donation of space by PWA. We would like to give a special shout out to the PWA volunteers, who assist with set up for the clinics and welcome participants as they arrive.

The number of participants has remained consistent, between 18 and 24 per session. What is interesting is the number of new participants each year. While some women/trans women have been coming for a long time, we have many new referrals from HIV clinics and primary care doctors. Although there are some newly diagnosed, the majority have known of their positive status for some time. It often takes some time for newly diagnosed clients to feel ready for group programming.

As the program has been running for almost five years, we decided to conduct an evaluation to ensure the program continues to meet the participants' needs. The Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) has provided us with an excellent evaluator who is developing criteria and methods for the evaluation. In addition, she is developing tracking tools for the program, which will be invaluable.

Another exciting development this year was the revival of the Women's Outreach Network (WON) with the leadership of staff from the Women and HIV/AIDS Initiative housed at ACT. This group, which hasn't met for many years, is reviving itself as a network to ensure the needs of positive women/trans women are met, and their voices are heard.

- In 2015, the number of women and trans women attending the group was consistent throughout the year; averaging 20 people per session.
- 18 new participants registered for the group in 2015.

Popular group discussions 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.

Links Statistics

- The number of individuals accessing the Links Program increased in 2015 to 168 clients (99 clients in 2014)
- There were 337 clinical encounters both in-person/over the phone counseling sessions (240 in 2014)
- 98% of clients who responded to client feedback surveys were satisfied with the overall program
- More than a third (38%) of clients described difficulties with maintaining consistent condom use
- One fifth (20%) 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/men who have sex with men (MSM). Using a brief solution focused therapy model, this HIV prevention intervention aims to unpack the underlying factors that impact the ability of MSMs to negotiate and practice safer sex with partners, and help clients strengthen and/or develop insight, coping mechanisms and risk reduction strategies. A comprehensive psychosocial assessment is conducted to determine suitability for the short-term counselling program and/or community referrals.

The Links Program was initiated in July 2010 and has quickly evolved and grown to include aftercare support and services to those recently diagnosed with HIV. Informed by innovative research on the HIV treatment cascade and best practices in the delivery of HIV care, the Making the Links Program Manager implemented a comprehensive follow-up process for recently diagnosed clients in early 2014. This process involves assessing and addressing any barriers a client might be experiencing when navigating HIV-related health care and social service systems. Every client who tests positive at Hassle Free Clinic is eligible to access: a) a referral to an HIV primary care physician; b) upwards of 8 free and confidential counselling services; and c) case management/referral coordinator services: housing, drug coverage, income/employment, social supports, mental health, substance use etc.) The services provided, as well as the frequency of meetings between the Program Manager and client, are tailored to meet each client’s unique needs.

In 2015 the number of overall clinical encounters and clients who accessed the Links Program increased from the previous year. There were a total of 202 encounters in the HIV Prevention Program and 135 encounters in the HIV Aftercare Program for an overall total of 337 clinical encounters. On average clients sought out counselling for HIV Prevention 4 times and those seeking counselling after their HIV positive diagnosis sought out counselling on average 1.5 times.

Clients had a number of presenting issues. Some of the common themes in the HIV Prevention Counselling program include the prevalence of the use of hook-up apps e.g. Grindr, Squirt, Scruff (20%), and of “bareback” condomless sex (38%). Clients often describe feeling frustrated that they are “addicted” to hook-up apps, or that they are fueling sexual compulsion through those apps. There is a strong correlation between high-risk behaviours and these issues: low self-esteem (52%), anxiety/stress (62%), loneliness/social isolation (48%), depression/sadness (51%), guilt/shame (39%), racism (19%), childhood abuse and history of trauma. The Making the Links Counselling Program strives to explore these deeper psychosocial issues with clients. As well, we aim to help clients develop coping mechanisms in facing these issues. Many clients expressed their appreciation for finally addressing the core psychosocial issues that have affected their abilities to reduce HIV risks.

The most common issues in the Aftercare Program are as follows: Acceptance of diagnosis (39%), linkage to HIV primary care doctors (58%), drug coverage (39%), stigma and discrimination against HIV diagnoses and immigration/settlement issues.

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 2015

Total number of HIV tests done increased to 397: 368 were done in 2014

Total number of HIV Positive results: 2
The same number as 2014

Total number of STI tests done (Syphilis & Hepatitis screening): 55
72 were done in 2014

Total number of clients seen during bathhouse outreach: 1569
Compared to 882 in 2014

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, 2 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).

Sexual Health Program

With each passing year the Clinic keeps getting busier. In 2015 the Clinic had 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 28,717 compared to 25,119 in 2014. 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 a slight increase from 14,905 in 2014 to 15,712 in 2015. 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 accessing PEP and PrEP. As well, the clinic has seen an increase in the number of syphilis infections and rectal gonorrhoea, chlamydia and LGV infections.

TOTAL OVERALL SEXUAL HEALTH & HIV IN-CLINIC VISITS FOR 2015:

28,717

Women/Trans Clinic Total

9,614

Men/Trans Clinic Total Number

19,103

TOTAL SEXUAL HEALTH VISITS (NOT INCLUDING HIV):

Women/Trans Clinic

8,084

Men/ Trans Clinic

15,712

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 form 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 65 active volunteers in 2015, contributing well over 7,000 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.



Professional Education

- AIDS Bureau HIV Test Conference (Presentations x 2), and Group Facilitator
- AIDS Committee of Toronto (Presentation)
- ACAS HIV Prevention Video
- CATIE National Forum (Presentation x 2)
- GMSH (Staff shadowing)
- International AIDS Society Satellite (Presentation)
- National POCT Working Group KTE Day (Presentation)
- Opening Doors Conference, Central West (Presentation)
- Options Clinic in London (Training)
- Ottawa Public Health (Staff shadowing)
- Pharmacy Student training
- Ryerson Midwifery Faculty (Presentation)
- Sherbourne Health Centre (Presentation)
- Trans Sex Worker Group @ 519 (Presentation)
- U of T CHIME Project (Simulated Clinical Encounters with Nursing Students)
- Unison CHC (Staff shadowing)
- Women's Health in Women's Hands (Staff shadowing)

Staff Development

- ACB, PHA KTE Day (Participant)
- Circle of Care, Reintegrating into the Workplace (Participant)
- CPR Certification (all staff)
- GMSH Conference (Participant)
- HIV & Pregnancy KTE Day
- HIV Positive Women & Trauma Community Forum (Participant)
- OHTN, KTE Event (Participant)
- Sexual Health Network, Reproductive Trauma (Participant)

Working Policy and Networking Groups

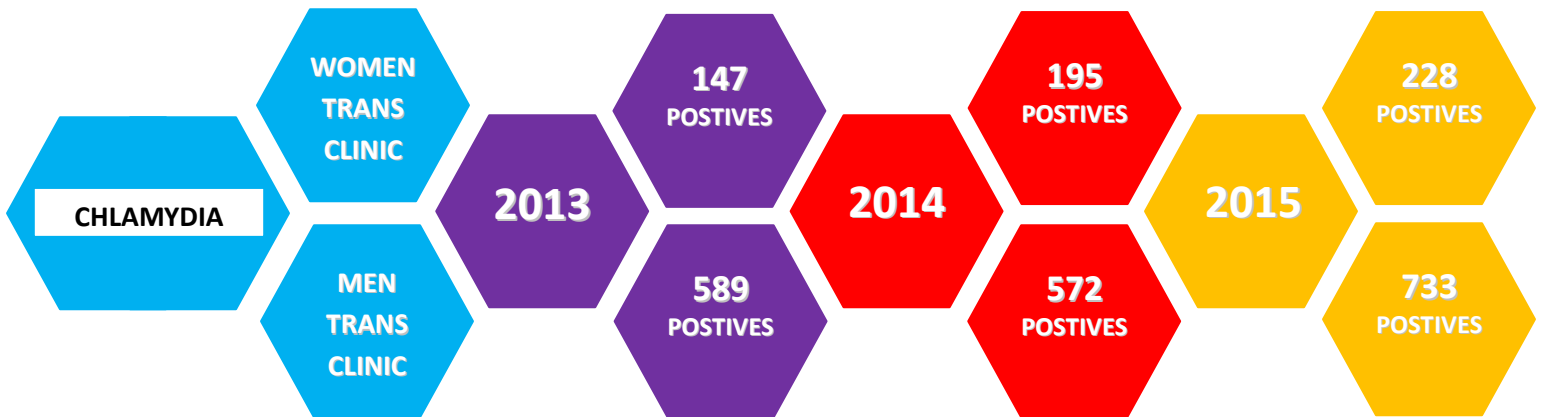
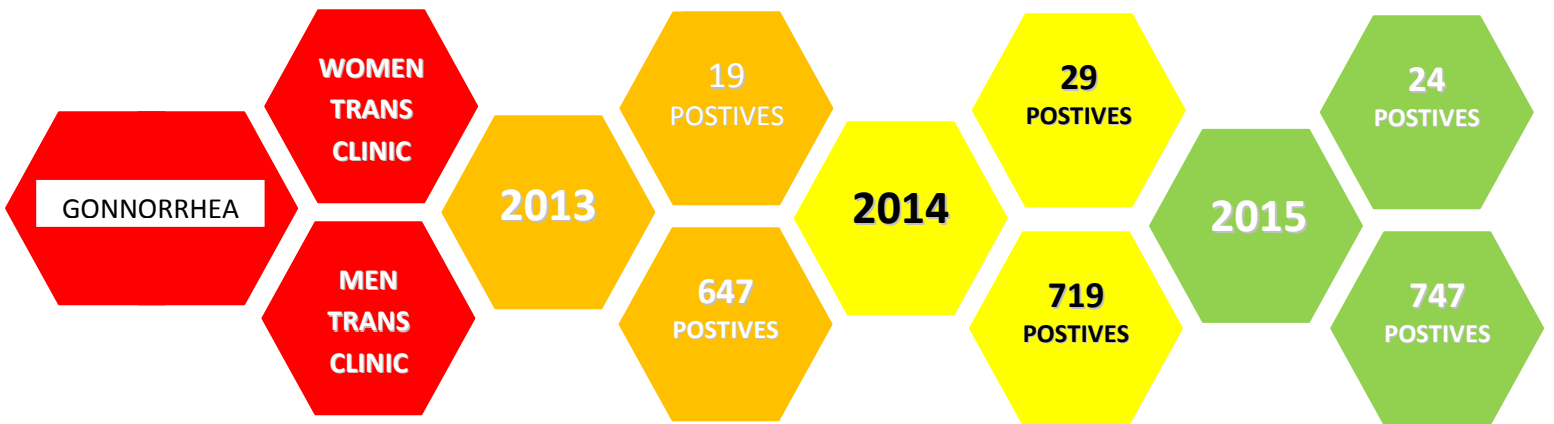
- Clinic Sharing Network
- Gay Men's Sexual Health Strategy
- HPV Vaccine Working Group
- M2M Network
- National POCT Working Group
- PRIDE Testing Working Group
- Sexual Health Network
- 'The Sex You Want' Working Group
- Toronto Gay Men's Health Service Coordination Working Group
- Women's Outreach Network

Special Event Testing

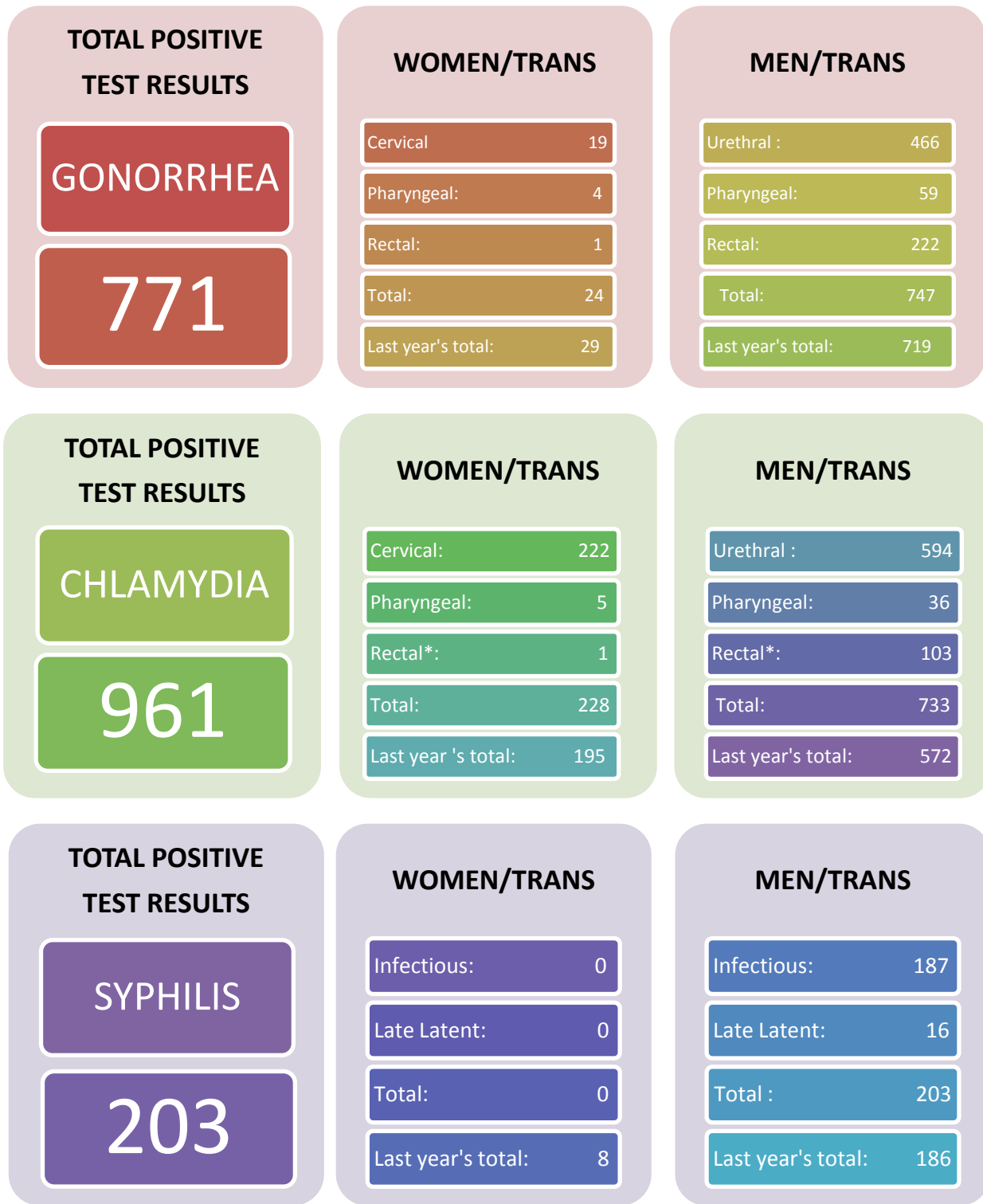
- ACAS – Testing Event (x 2)
- Black CAP
- York University



POSITIVE TEST RESULTS YEARLY COMPARISON



POSITIVE TEST RESULTS



* All Rectal Chlamydia is processed for LGV

POSITIVE TESTS RESULTS

POSITIVE TESTS RESULTS

ABNORMAL PAPS

BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS

TRICHOMONAS

UTI

WOMEN/TRANS

157

535

19

153

MEN/TRANS

0

0

0

0

POSITIVE TESTS RESULTS

HEPATITIS A

HEPATITIS B

HEPATITIS C

WOMEN/TRANS

0

1

3

MEN/TRANS

0

1

3

POSITIVE TESTS RESULTS

HERPES I & II

LGV

PARASITES

WOMEN/TRANS

122

0

0

MEN/TRANS

88

17

0