

## Index Testing - Breaking the chain of HIV transmission

*Comprehensive strategic prevention approach for HIV case detection*

### Background

India's health response to controlling HIV epidemic in the country over last two decades has been recognized globally. By implementing focused high impact prevention, accelerated linkage to treatment and an honest partnership with the community members and stakeholders, National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) has been able to achieve remarkable results. To further accelerate the HIV epidemic control UNAIDS has set the goal of "95-95-95" fast-track targets by 2030; of diagnosing 95% of HIV-infected individuals, 95% of whom will be on anti-retroviral therapy (ART) and 95% of whom will achieve sustained virologic suppression. It has been witnessed that achieving these goals in addition to comprehensive prevention packages like, harm reduction, condom and PrEP have a huge impact on the epidemic control goals for a country. To achieve the UNAIDS 95-95-95 goals and the first 95 is vital, and the most challenging part. To achieve this target, I-TECH India, with support from PEPFAR, is piloting with various innovative and focused strategies for enhancing the new HIV case detection.

'HIV Index Testing' has been found to be a very effective case finding strategy globally is being used effectively by I-TECH India through Project Sunshine in the North-Eastern states of Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland.

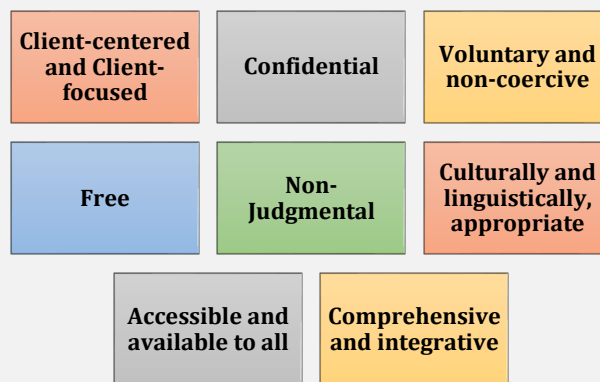
**Index Testing** is focussed on testing people with a known exposure to HIV through hereditary links, sexual relationships, or drug use exposure. An HIV positive Index Client is motivated/encouraged by a trained counsellor to give information about the clients' sexual/needle sharing partners and children below the age of 19 years in case the Index Client is HIV positive woman. These elicited contacts are then counselled and motivated/encouraged to get tested. This form of concentrated and focussed HIV testing has shown near 20-30% new HIV case detection rates in the sites where it has been implemented by the Project Sunshine.

### Steps to Index Testing

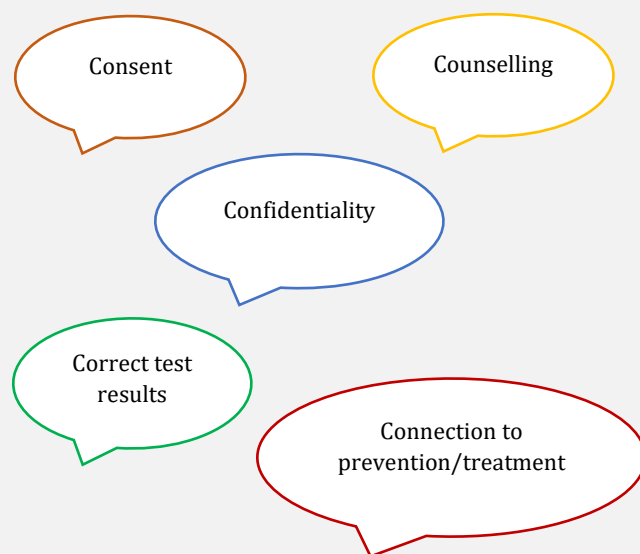
Considering the safety and security of the PLHIV Index Client, PEPFAR mandates that in order to implement ethical Index Testing services, the following 10 steps needs to be followed.

Step 1	A trained counsellor introduces the concept of Index Testing Services during pre-test counselling
Step 2	Offer Index Testing as a voluntary service to all clients testing HIV-positive
Step 3	If client accepts participation, obtain consent to inquire about their partner(s) and biological child(ren)
Step 4	Obtain a list of sex and needle-sharing partners and biological children <19 years with unknown HIV status
Step 5	Conduct an Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) risk assessment for each named partner
Step 6	Determine the preferred method of partner notification or child testing for each named partner / child
Step 7	Contact all named partners and biological children <19 with unknown status using preferred approach
Step 8	Record outcomes of partner notification and biological children
Step 9	Provide appropriate services for partner(s) and children based on HIV status
Step 10	Follow-up with client to assess for any adverse events associated with Index Testing services

### Guiding Principles for implementing Index Testing



**Key principles of Index Testing** are that it is a voluntary process and follows the WHO's 5Cs



### Prominent outcome of the index testing

- Increase HIV case detection and greater number of PLHIV on treatment thereby preventing onward transmission and breaking the chain.
- Cost effective outreach case detection approach.
- Increased prevention support to HIV negative contacts of PLHIV with known exposure to HIV

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