

# 20 in 2020: Looking for the Outliers

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## Background

Waikiki Health is a leader in HIV care in the State of Hawai'i. Staffed by three American Academy of HIV Medicine credentialed providers and one credentialed HIV Pharmacist. As a Federally Qualified Health Center, we also provide full primary care, intergrated behavioral health, dental, optometry, two homeless shelters, homeless youth outreach program, and a specialty clinic for people who are pregnant with substance use disorder.

With the formation of our Health Equity Department, we are seeking to expand our services to provide care to people, when they need it, where they need it, and how they need it. During this transformation we examined the need to broaden our HIV rapid testing scope beyond the normal parameters of "high-risk" targeted testing, instead following the "everyone should be tested once in their lifetime" theory. This led to us producing the 20 Thousand in 2020 initiative.

## Rationale

Hawai'i is home to a rainbow of cultures across its publicly inhabited Islands of Hawai'i, Maui, Lāna'i, Moloka'i, O'ahu, and Kaua'i. These cultures immigrated here from the Pacific Islands, Asia, Puerto Rico, and Portugal. They came to work the plantations that were owned and operated by the British and Americans as a part of the illegal occupation of the Nation of Hawai'i. The Native Hawaiians have endured many cultural shifts with each wave of immigrants, including the modern-day immigration of people from the Compact of Free Association (COFA) countries.

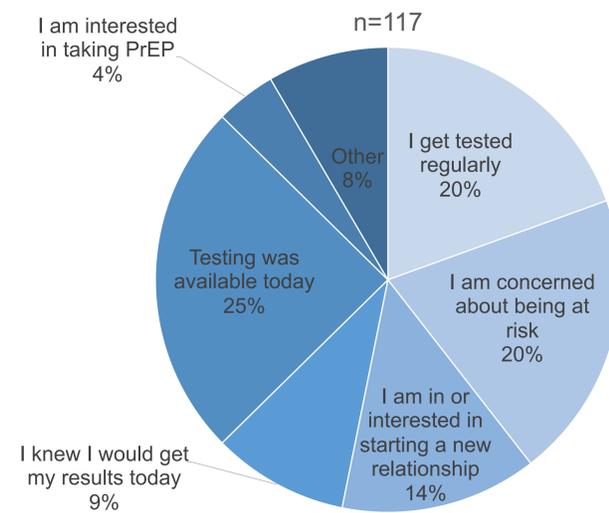
Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders are more likely to have a lower socio-economic status compared to their white, Black, and Asian counterparts. In Hawai'i, the median household income was \$69,515 and of the five largest race groups in Hawai'i, Native Hawaiians have the lowest.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that Asians and Pacific Islanders account for 50% of all chronic hepatitis B infections in the United States. Since mandatory reporting of HIV/AIDS was established in 1983, the cumulative total of cases in Hawai'i is 4,779 as of 2016.<sup>2</sup> Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders are the third largest group of people diagnosed with HIV from 2014-2018 in Hawai'i.<sup>2</sup>

Access to healthcare is another concern across the State of Hawai'i. Honolulu County is the most densely populated of all the Islands, serving as the state capital and urban center; while the remainder of the islands remain rural. The Island of Hawai'i had no HIV primary care providers on island. This prompted Waikiki Health to partner with the Clint Spencer Clinic (CSC) to provide care to the island twice a month. This required the team from CSC to fly with medical supplies to Hawai'i Island to serve the second largest prevalence of HIV in the state. The State of Hawai'i is also the most isolated populated land mass in the world. Many of these factors combined lead to unique health disparities across all people in Hawai'i, exacerbated by the lack of a sufficient number of medical professionals and the high cost of living.

## Results

As of July 31, 2020, The 20 in 2020 program has tested 739 people. This does not include our partner organizations. As we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, we have not collected data from them yet. Our data shows that 32% of people who were tested during that time had not received an HIV test prior to that day.

During testing we asked, "I planned to get tested today because:"



Race	
<i>Multiple races can be chosen by participants</i>	
White	289
Hawaiian	219
Black	60
Native American/Alaskan Native	13
Portuguese*	14
Don't Know/Not sure/Refused	48
Not asked	2
Other Local Race	18

Asian	
Chinese (incl. Taiwanese)	126
Filipino	144
Japanese (incl. Okinawan)	115
Korean	23
Vietnamese	3
Asian Indian	6
Southeast Asian (incl. Loatian Thai Malaysian)	9

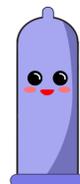
Pacific Islanders	
Hawaiian	219
Samoan	24
Guamanian/Chamorro	6
Marshallese	2
Chuukese	3
Tongan	10
Other Pacific Islander (incl. Polynesian Fijian)	12

Ethnicity	
Puerto Rican	32
Mexican	20
Other Hispanic/Latino	15

## Targeted Partnerships



2 of the Kawaii Con Mascots for materials.



Partnership	Rationale	Outcome
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa	The campus University of Hawai'i at Mānoa was our first 20 in 2020 site. This was basically our trial run to attract younger folks to engage in testing services	On January 28, 2020 we conducted 5 tests at the University. All 5 tests were first time testers, with some risk.
Hawaii State Capital Building	This was a unique partnership to engage our state congresspeople and their staffs to engage in HIV testing.	On February 10, 2020 we conducted testing in the State Capital Building. Lt. Governor Josh Green, tested live on Facebook
Fellow AIDS Service Organizations	We offered free test kits to our fellow ASOs.	Two of our partners are using our one-minute test kits on the Island of Hawai'i and in the prison system on the Island of Oahu.
Fellow Federally Qualified Health Centers	At the Hawai'i Primary Care Association, we presented our 20 in 2020 idea to all the FQHCs across the state.	We currently have two FQHCs conducting testing using our one-minute rapid test. One of the FQHCs has committed to testing every patient for HIV, using our tests to fill in the gap for the uninsured.
The Honolulu Humane Society	We discussed offering testing on an adoption day.	Unfortunately, COVID-19 happened.
Kawaii Kon & Comic Con	We reached out to our local "con" promoter and asked if we could set up a booth to offer testing. In addition, we created unique "Kawaii Characters" to attract more people.	Unfortunately, both cons were cancelled due to COVID-19. To the left are two of the characters created for marketing materials.
A list of over 100 conventions occurring in Honolulu	We reached out to the staff of other conventions that would have occurred in 2020	Unfortunately, all of them were cancelled due to COVID-19.
Gay Bowl 2020: National Gay Football League tournament	We were providing the first aide to the players.	Unfortunately, it was cancelled due to COVID-19

## Discussion

Following our initial success, our program got derailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our partner healthcare organizations have resumed testing on a limited basis. This will allow us to gather more information as the year closes.

Overall, we saw a larger than expected number of people tested in just two months. We also saw larger numbers of first-time testers at our unique sites including the Hawaii State Capital. This was our most successful site during the time we were doing onsite testing. We look forward to resuming our testing when we can safely do so.

One thing that was quite interesting was that most of our testing occurred in people 30-65 years old. Even with our initial site being a college campus.

## Implications/ Lessons Learned

What we learned is that in partnering with organizations or events that are normally not places HIV rapid testing occurs, we encountered populations that previously had not sought out HIV testing services or knew they were available. We tested everyone who asked to be tested because our funding allowed us to be free from the targeted testing normally prescribed by our state and federal awards.

*Our biggest lesson learned was to try not to do 20 thousand tests during a pandemic.*

## Next Steps

As we modify this program, we are looking at conducting "drive-thru" testing combined with our COVID-19 testing, and HIV concierge services for the many hotel guests in Waikiki. This service would target people who are either in quarantine for 14 days or just want a test in the privacy of their own hotel room. We also plan to offer this testing service to the staff of all the hotels.

Currently, we are awaiting a stabilization of the pandemic, at which time we will adapt our screening process to the resulting public health landscape to meet the needs of our population.

## Conclusions

When we began, we thought that people would not see the benefit of universal HIV testing, and we would be met with consistent "noes." Many of our potential partners in this adventure were very excited to be offering free testing through their convention or organization. They saw the benefit to serving communities that were often underserved by HIV testing or not aware of testing.

As we move forward, we also see the need for culturally appropriate education and testing with the various communities within Hawai'i. Especially those who arrived from locations with constrained medical care and entrenched HIV stigma.

*Anecdotally: When a person from Micronesia who tested positive was linked to care and received ART, they asked the provider, "How long do I have to take this?" This was an indication to us that not only was testing needed but expanded HIV education and prevention outreach was missing in our state, especially in marginalized communities.*

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