

# Why Wait? Start Now!

## Rapid Start Key Messages for HIV Testing Providers

**Did you know? Rapid Start is the standard of care in the Twin Cities!**

Rapid Start is the **initiation of HIV treatment on the same day or within 7 days** of a new HIV diagnosis or re-engagement in care. The ability to start medicine quickly can empower clients to feel in control of their health and push back against HIV stigma.

All HIV testing providers should counsel their clients about the availability of Rapid Start.

### **Messaging you can use to discuss Rapid Start:**

- You are in control of your care.
- ART for HIV treatment is safe, effective, and has very few side effects.
- People with HIV can lead long and healthy lives by taking medicines that keep the virus undetectable. People who maintain an undetectable viral load for at least six months can't transmit HIV through sex. This is known as "undetectable equals untransmittable," or "U=U."
  - Starting HIV treatment now can help you become undetectable sooner.
- You have the final say about what treatment options are best for you.
- Everyone deserves high-quality, compassionate care.
- Everyone deserves access to treatment right away when they're diagnosed with a new condition, including HIV.

**Remember:** How you store, use, and transport rapid HIV tests can impact their accuracy. For example, INSTI tests are sensitive to hot and cold weather. In the field, conduct two rapid HIV tests from different manufacturers to minimize the likelihood of a false positive, and counsel your clients about the need for confirmatory testing during their first Rapid Start visit.

### **Rapid Start services are available at these locations in the Twin Cities:**

- Positive Care Center
- Healthcare for the Homeless
- The Aliveness Project
- North Memorial Infectious Disease Clinic
- Native American Community Clinic
- M Health Fairview Infectious Disease
- HealthPartners
- Children's MN\* (<18 years)