

**I Want the Kit: Addressing the Burden of STIs in Indian Country**

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Johns Hopkins  
University

hot topics in practice [www.nwcenter.org/practice](http://www.nwcenter.org/practice) **Northwest Center FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE**

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**Question for the Viewers**

How familiar are you with the impacts of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in American Indian and Alaska Native communities?

- A. Very familiar
- B. Somewhat familiar
- C. Not familiar
- D. Other (please type in chat)

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**Background**

**STIs in Indian Country**

**Intervention: Self-Collection STI Testing**

**Preliminary Data**

**Limitations, Successes, and Next Steps**

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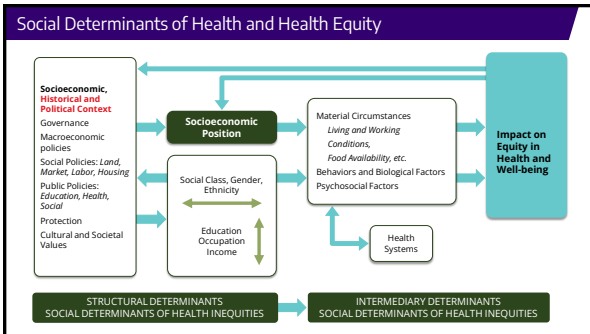
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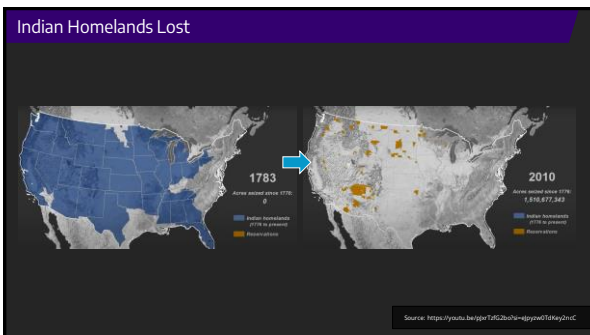
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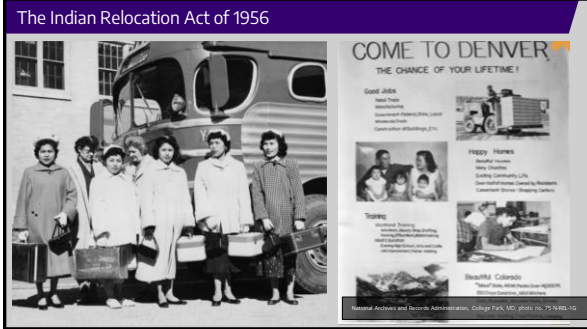
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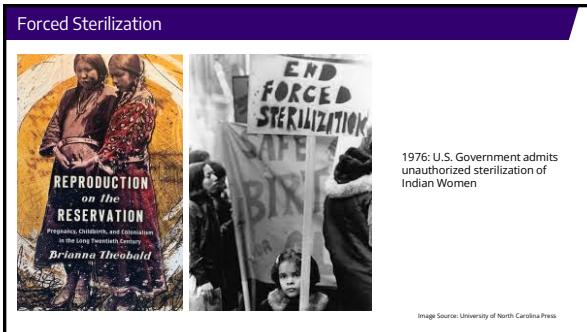
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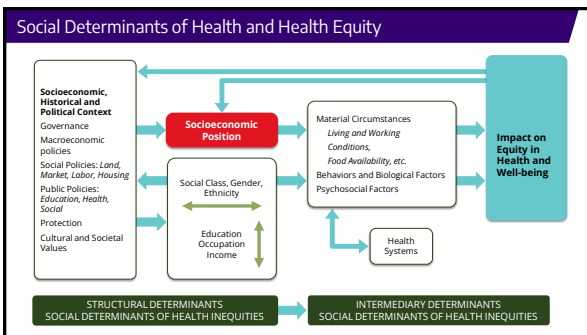
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Education



- In 2019, **84.4** percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives alone or in combination had at least a high school diploma, as compared to **93.3** percent of non-Hispanic whites.
- **20.8** percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives aged 25 and over had at least a bachelor's degree compared to **36.9** percent of non-Hispanic whites.
- **7.6** percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives held an advanced graduate or professional degree, as compared to **13.9** percent of the non-Hispanic white population.

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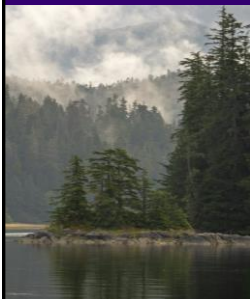
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Economics



- The median household income for American Indian and Alaska Natives is **\$49,906**, as compared to **\$71,664** for non-Hispanic white households.
- In 2019, **20.3** percent of this population live at the poverty level, as compared to **9.0** percent of non-Hispanic whites.
- In 2019, the overall unemployment rate for American Indians/Alaska Natives was **7.9** percent, as compared to **3.7** percent for non-Hispanic whites.

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Housing



- The most significant percentage increase of people experiencing homelessness between 2022 and 2023 was among people who identified as AI/AN, which increased by **18%**
- Unsheltered homelessness is elevated for American Indian and Alaska Native people. **56%** are sleeping in locations not meant for human habitation, compared to **37%** of homeless individuals overall

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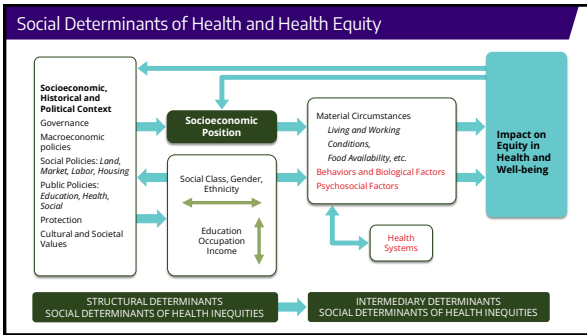
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### 2021 Budget Data Year Comparisons

	Veterans Affairs (VA)	Indian Health Service (IHS)	Ratio
Patient population	9.2 million	2.6 million	4:1
Total budget	243 billion	6 billion	41:1
Medical budget	91.8 billion	4.5 billion	20:1
Physicians	23,869	776	31:1
Outpatient visits/physician	5k/119m	18k/14m	1:4
Mental health/Substance Use	9.4 billion	364 million	27:1
EHR	1.6 billion	125 million	13:1
IT	4.3 billion		N/A
HIV	1.3 billion	\$400k	3250:1
Opioid Use Disorder	397 million	~\$6 million	66:1
Hepatitis C	37 million	0	Infinite N/A

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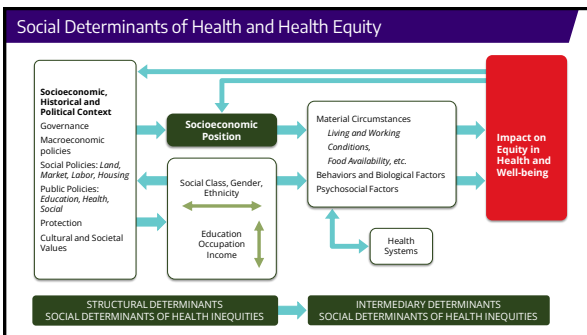
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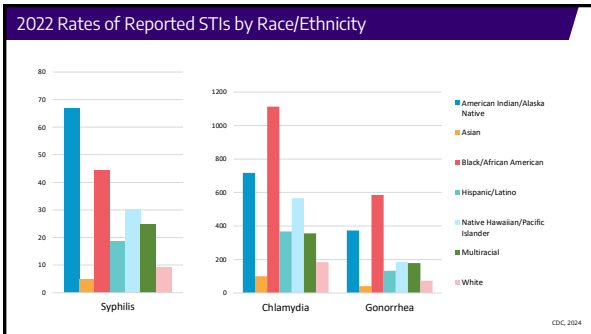
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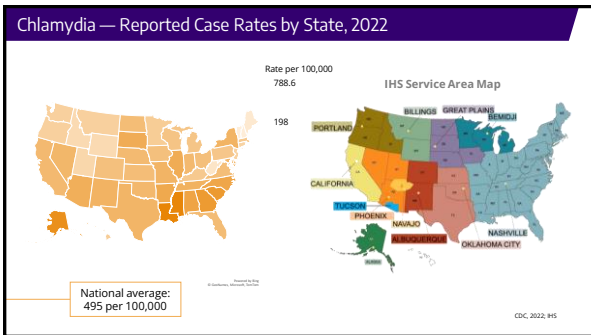
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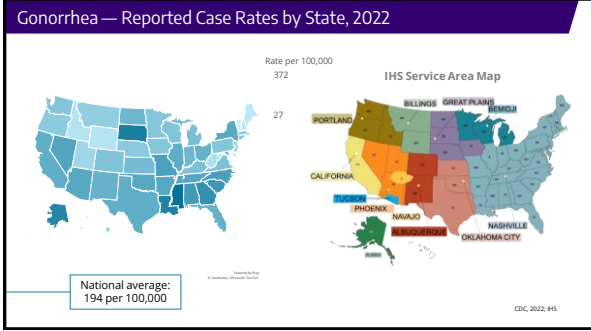
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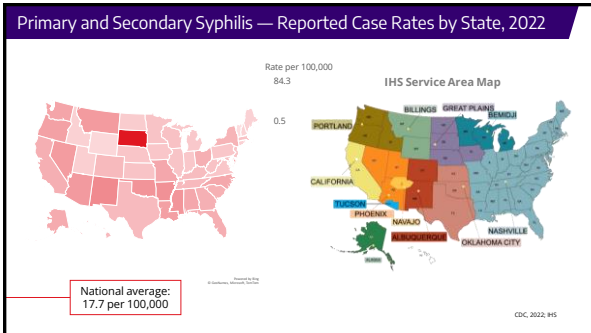
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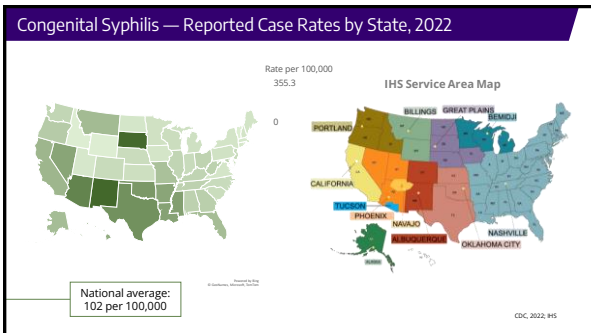
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**Syphilis Headlines**

**U.S. syphilis numbers haven't been this high since 1950**  
STATISTA JAN 25, 2024 1:00 PM EDT

**Syphilis on the rise in Arizona**

**Tribal Leaders Urge HHS Secretary to Declare Syphilis Emergency**  
PRESS RELEASE - FEB 27, 2024

**Native Americans are hardest hit by syphilis surge**  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
 MARCH 21, 2024 - 7:07 AM ET  
 By Cecilia Nowell  
 FROM KFF HealthNews

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**What Does This Data Say?**



- We need to acknowledge that numbers alone are not meaningful to us.
- Numbers and data need to be put into context for us to understand it.

Image: James Starling, New Indigenous Communities Use Digital Media to Tell Their Stories

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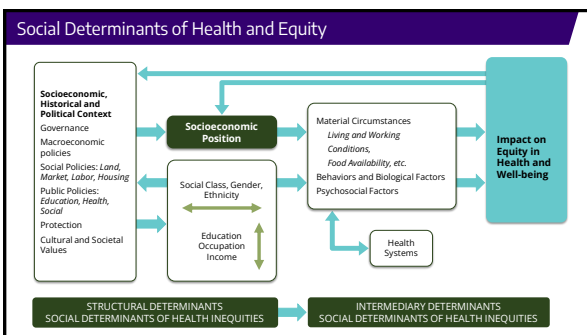
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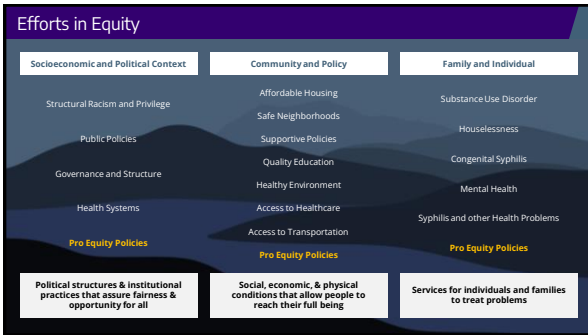
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**Collaborating Partners**

NORTHWEST PORTLAND AREA INDIAN HEALTH BOARD  
*Indian Leadership for Indian Health*

**spihb**  
 SOUTHERN PLAINS TRIBAL HEALTH BOARD

OKLAHOMA AREA TRIBAL EPIDEMIOLOGY CENTER

CENTER FOR INDIGENOUS HEALTH

JOHN HOPKINS MEDICINE

*Supported by the Indian Health Service with resources from the Minority HIV/AIDS Fund.*

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### I Want The Kit (IWTK) Overview



IWTK ([iwantthekit.org](http://iwantthekit.org)) was founded in 2004 at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

- Tests currently offered:** Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Trichomoniasis (female vaginal samples only), Hepatitis B\*, Hepatitis C\*, Syphilis\*, HIV\*
- Anatomical sites tested:** Genital, Rectal, Pharyngeal, Blood\*
- Specimen collection devices:** Flocked Swabs in Dry Tubes (Vaginal Swab, Rectal Swab, Throat Swab), Urine container, Microtainer
- Cost for a client:** Free (including postage)
- Age requirements:** 14 years old\* to order an STI kit

\*Expanded blood testing offered in certain states only.

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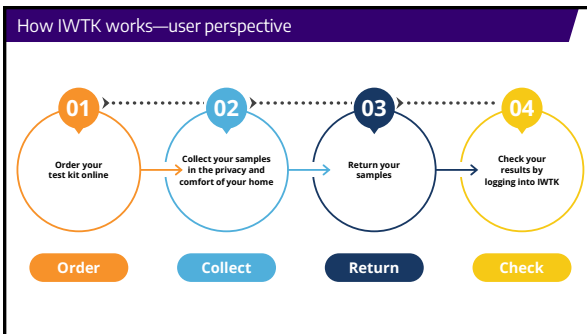
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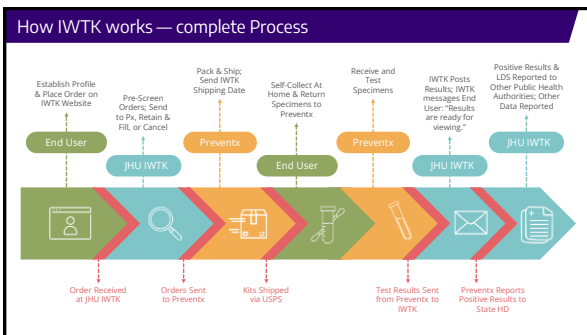
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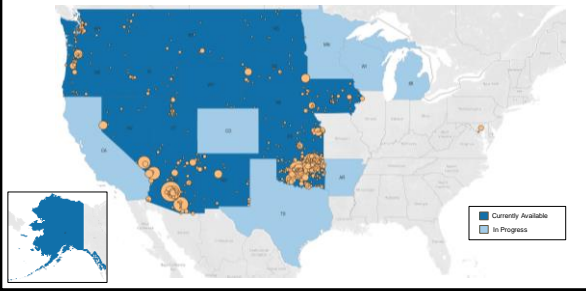
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### IWTK Availability & Expansion



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### Order Page

#### Option 1: "The Works"

*Recommended*

Includes Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Trichomonas (vaginal samples), Hep C, Syphilis, HIV

- Hep B – can be added as an individual test

#### Option 2: Individual tests

*Best for re-tests*

Individuals have the option to select individual tests they would like to order

**PLACE ORDER**

Select Tests

**Bundles**

The Works - Kit for people with vaginas  
Includes testing for vaginas, throat, and butt (Chlamydia and Gonorrhea, vaginal Trichomonas, HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis C. To order a hepatitis B test, please select it under the Individual Tests list.

The Works - Kit for people with penises  
Includes testing for genital, throat, and butt (Chlamydia and Gonorrhea, HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis C. To order a hepatitis B test, please select it under the Individual Tests list.

**Individual Tests**

**Vaginal Swab**

Have you received vaginal sex (meaning someone put their penis or sex toys into your vagina OR have you touched your anal if the answer is you order a vaginal swab. This swab will be tested for Chlamydia, Gonorrhea and Trichomonas.

Have you received butt (anal) sex? This means someone put their penis or sex toys into your butt if the answer is yes, order a butt swab. This swab will be tested for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea.

**Throat Swab**

Have you given oral sex? This means you have given someone a blow job, given someone head, gone down on someone if the answer is yes, order a throat swab. This swab will be tested for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea.

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### Packaging



Dimensions: 9" x 4.5" x 1.2"

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### Kit Contents

#### For Blood Samples (if ordered):

- Alcohol Wipes
- Safety Lancets (3)
- Collection Tube
- Tube Holder
- Bandage
- Small Transport Bag

#### For Swabs and Urine (if ordered):

- Swabs (1-3 depending on order) labeled by body part
- Transport Bag for Each Swab
- Pouch (Male Urine Sample Only)
- Bottle (Female Urine Sample Only)

#### Additional Items for All Kits:

- Condoms
- Welcome Card
- Resource Booklet
- Pregnancy Tests (2) (Only if Vaginal Swabs Ordered)



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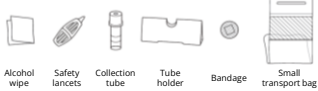
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### Blood Testing

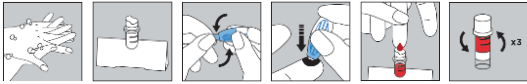
#### Provided Materials



#### Sample Quantities

- 450 µL minimum required
- 650 µL preferred

#### Procedure



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### Welcome Card

#### Welcome to Indigi-IWTK!

At Indigi-IWTK we believe that getting tested for STIs (sexually transmitted infections) is an act of care, responsibility, and respect. We encourage you to read the information on this card and the instruction sheet that is included in your kit.

#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**How do I know what's happening with my order?**  
You will receive an email or text notification from Indigi-IWTK when:

- 1) We receive your order.
- 2) We mail your kit to you.
- 3) We receive your specimens on the mail.
- 4) Your test results are ready for viewing.

**What will the notification email?**  
To protect your privacy, every message is the same. "You have a new message from IWTK. Please login to <https://www.iamwithtk.org> to read it."

**How do I find out my test results?**  
Click to <https://www.iamwithtk.org> and login. Your order will show as Complete. Click on View Results.

#### More questions about IWTK?



#### Contact us at any time.

Please scan the QR code with your smartphone. Email [iamwithtk@iwtk.edu](mailto:iamwithtk@iwtk.edu), call us at 413-590-3071, or visit the QR code for our contact page. We will respond within 1-2 working days.



This kit is special for you to take control and know your status. Please do not give your kit to anyone else. Everyone must order their own kit. Here is the QR code for the privacy page. Please share information about Indigi-IWTK with others who may want to use the service!

JOHN HOPKINS  
UNIVERSITY



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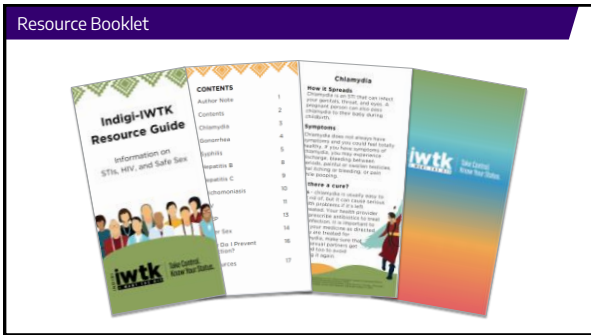
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### Expanded Results Reporting

**Results sheet for clients:**

- Provides guidance on the next actions to take
- Includes supportive resources

Chlamydia Result	Result Text for Client
<b>Empregnated Ab+ A RPR Inevadit</b>	<p>Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection that can cause serious health problems if it is not treated. It is transmitted through direct contact with a chlamydia sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex or from a pregnant person to their unborn baby. Early chlamydia treatment may include antibiotic therapy such as azithromycin or doxycycline. If untreated, chlamydia will go latent (hidden) in the body with no symptoms. However, the infection will prevent and can cause serious medical problems. Syphilis is curable with penicillin injections. The number of shots you need will depend on your syphilis stage.</p> <p>Your screening test is positive but we did not have enough sample to confirm whether it is a current or previous syphilis infection. We are sending you another kit. Please Contact Us, send <a href="mailto:gonorrhealab@iwtk.edu">gonorrhealab@iwtk.edu</a>, or call 845-500-1071 for more information and contact your care provider.</p> <p>We were unable to complete full testing. We are sending you another kit. Please Contact Us, send <a href="mailto:gonorrhealab@iwtk.edu">gonorrhealab@iwtk.edu</a>, or call 845-500-1071 if you do not receive it within 7-10 working days.</p>
<b>Unserotified Ab+ RPR Inevadit</b>	<p>We were unable to complete full testing. We are sending you another kit. Please Contact Us, send <a href="mailto:gonorrhealab@iwtk.edu">gonorrhealab@iwtk.edu</a>, or call 845-500-1071 if you do not receive it within 7-10 working days.</p>
<b>Unserotified Ab+ RPR Inevadit</b>	<p>We were unable to complete full testing. We are sending you another kit. Please Contact Us, send <a href="mailto:gonorrhealab@iwtk.edu">gonorrhealab@iwtk.edu</a>, or call 845-500-1071 if you do not receive it within 7-10 working days.</p>

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### Indigi-IWTK – Marketing

- A new campaign led by our coalition, called Indigi-IWTK, launched in 2023 to expand IWTK services across Indian Country.
- Outreach material designed by Native communities for Native communities.
- Localized linkage to care provided by regional partners
- Incorporation of priority areas into implementation plan

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Updated IWTK Logo



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Indigenous-Centric Marketing



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Indigenous-Centric Marketing



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### Question for the Viewers

What are some strategies your organization has implemented to ensure that your outreach and programming is culturally responsive to the populations you serve?

Please type your answer in the chat

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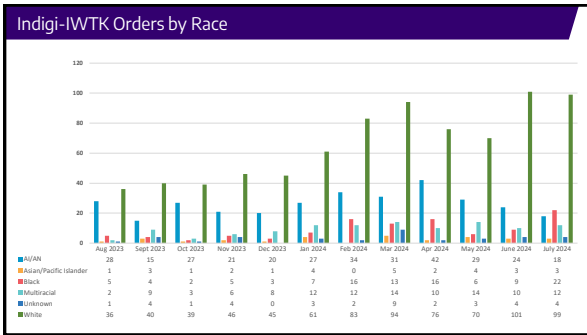
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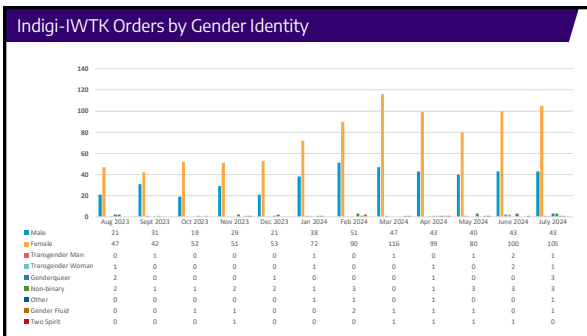
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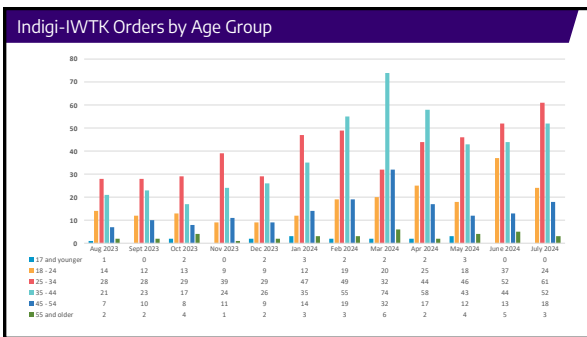




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Limitations

- USPS service times when mailing to and from rural communities**
  - Specimens, especially blood, must be received at the laboratory in a timely manner while the sample is still viable
- Client learning curve with expanded testing mechanism**
  - Self-collection of blood via a fingerstick may be difficult for some individuals
- Healthcare provider acceptance of test results**
  - Some providers may decide to retest due to lack of familiarity with IWTK and concern regarding laboratory and test quality
- Delays in testing and treatment due to transit times**
  - Mail-in testing may not be best for symptomatic individuals

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Accomplishments

- IWTK and Native Test offer an alternative to clinic-based testing
- Our multisectoral partnership with culturally congruent messaging is launched and orders are starting to rise
- Close working relationship with Preventx, our laboratory, to bring about quality improvements such as reduced shipping times
- Linkage to care model: really the meat of the program
  - Each region has customized to meet the needs of their communities

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Indigi-IWTK: Return on Investment

Costs

- Salaries
- Kit supplies
- Laboratory
- Web design
- Advertisement

Cost-Savings

- Using CDC STIC FIGURE model
- **Direct** medical costs and indirect productivity costs saved:
  - Averted PID, epididymitis, congenital syphilis, syphilis sequelae
  - Averted ongoing transmission of chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, STD-attributable HIV

$$\frac{\text{Total cost}}{\text{Number of tests}} = \text{cost per person tested}$$

$$\frac{\text{Total cost}}{\text{Number of positive cases}} = \text{cost per case identified}$$

$$\frac{\text{Total cost}}{\text{Estimated cost-savings}} = \text{cost-benefit ratio}$$

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Opportunities

Next Steps (3-5 years)

- More rural-based, Native individuals may complete testing, know their status, receive treatment → reduce STI/HIV incidence
- Further expansion is needed to maximize reach for all states/regions
- Evaluation to improve service & implementation approach
- Evaluating new testing technologies

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Contributors

**Southern Plains Tribal Health Board**  
 Cody Knight  
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 Christopher Kemp

**Indian Health Service**  
 Rick Haverkate  
 Andrew Hu  
 Jodee Brewer  
 Bethany Johnson

**The Raven Collective, LLC**  
 Jessica Leston

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Thank You!



Contact Information:

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[jknight@spthb.org](mailto:jknight@spthb.org)

Alicia Edwards  
[aedwards@npaihb.org](mailto:aedwards@npaihb.org)

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### Key Takeaways

- ✓ There are different ways to be tested for STIs. Self-collection with laboratory testing is one important tool to include in the testing toolbox.
- ✓ Tailored self-collection STI testing programs can meet individuals where they are while acknowledging their social determinants of health.
- ✓ Using community and familiar imagery in the marketing creates a more relatable and accessible program.
- ✓ Continuous community feedback, evaluation, and adaptability are important pieces of IWTK's success and sustainability.

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### A Chat with Alicia, Cody, and Gretchen



**Sue**  
Grinnell



**Alicia**  
Edwards



**Cody**  
Knight



**Gretchen**  
Armington

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### QUESTIONS?



To ask a question, please click the  icon in the Zoom toolbar to open your Q&A Pod.

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## Resources

**I Want the Kit**

<http://www.iwantthekit.org>

**IWTK Demo Video**

**I Want the Kit**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53w6bqpw714&list=PLum6aflpm>

**The Invasion of America**

eHistory.org

<https://www.ehistory.org/bergsr/cf/2ba3m7qywoT6ey2nc/>

**Uprooted: The 1950s plan to erase Indian Country**

APM Reports

<https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2019/11/01/uprooted-the-1950s-plan-to-erase-indian-country>

**Forced Sterilization**

<http://www.aectnative.org/articles/history-of-the-sterilization-of-native-women>

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/timeline-543.html>

**Homelessness**

<https://endhomelessness.org/blog/state-of-homelessness-a-look-at-race-and-ethnicity/>

<https://health.org/0246193/new-report-shows-increase-in-homelessness-disproportionately-affects-american-indian-and-alaska-native-people/>

**American Indians travel great distances for obstetrical care: Examining rural and racial disparities**

Thorsen, et al.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272795362300254/>

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