Vending Machines as Stigma-Free Access Points for HIV/Syphilis Testing and Condoms

R-04

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BACKGROUND

Memphis ranks second in the U.S. for new HIV diagnoses, highlighting the need for innovative prevention strategies. Stigma remains a major barrier to HIV and STI testing, particularly for marginalized populations, and clinic-based models often miss individuals who fear judgment or disclosure.

To address these gaps, Friends For All launched free vending machines that dispense at-home HIV and syphilis test kits and condoms, providing a private, convenient, and stigma-free way to access sexual health resources.

METHODS

From **May 6 through August 14, 2025 (100 days)**, three vending machines were installed in community locations, primarily public libraries. All items were provided at no cost.

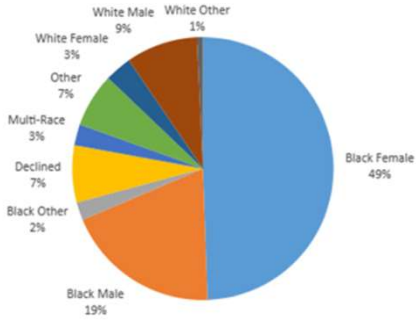
Clients completed confidential surveys using QR codes on the machines or via a web link accessed in advance. Surveys collected information on demographics, sexual behaviors, and HIV testing history.

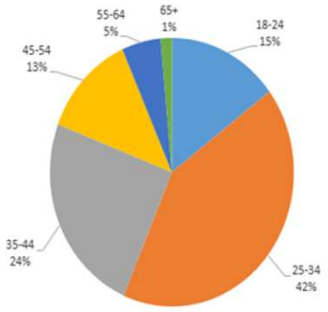
Follow-up text messages were sent to assess test use, results, and linkage to care needs. Aggregate vending data and survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

Reach & Demographic	Risk Indicators N=178	Outcomes
326 Unique Clients	51% Drug/Alcohol use	2 new HIV diagnosis linked to care
62 Zip Codes	39% use condoms less than half the time	17 PrEP appointments
42% 25-34 year old	29% had not tested in the last year	29 additional STI test appointments
49% African American Female	15% never tested	Increased response from <2% to 40%

Free vending machines in trusted community locations allowed people to access HIV and syphilis test kits and condoms without fear of judgment. The program reached first-time testers, identified new HIV cases, and generated strong interest in PrEP.







CONCLUSIONS

Free vending machines offering at-home HIV and syphilis test kits alongside condoms successfully reached individuals with unmet prevention needs, including those who test infrequently or use condoms inconsistently.

Libraries proved to be highly effective placement sites, functioning as trusted community spaces that reduce stigma and increase accessibility.

The program identified new HIV cases, ensured linkage to care, and generated strong interest in PrEP services. Discreet distribution models can normalize testing, expand reach, and empower individuals who may avoid traditional healthcare settings.

These findings support vending machines as a **scalable, community-centered strategy** to advance HIV prevention and sexual health equity.

ADDITIONAL KEY INFORMATION

For additional information, please contact us at:
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More information about the vending machine program is available at:
www.friendsforall.org/vending

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