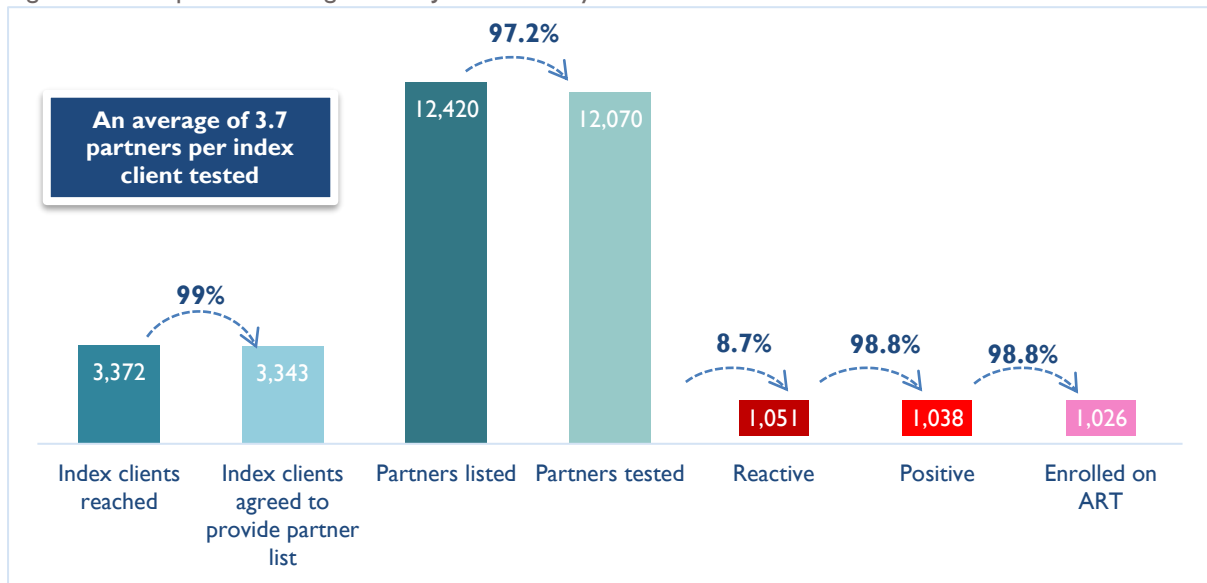


KEY RESULTS: FROM TESTING TO TREATMENT

As of May 2019, community-based testing service providers had tested **12,070 (97.2%)** of the **12,420 partners listed by people diagnosed or living with HIV (Figure 1)**. Of those tested, **1,051 (8.7%)** had a reactive test and **1,038 (98.8%)** were confirmed as having HIV. This represents a positive case yield of 8.6%, a much higher yield than the new positive case yields from HIV lay and self-testing combined (4.6%). Of those diagnosed with HIV, **1,026 (98.8%)** were enrolled in antiretroviral therapy (ART). Healthy Markets continues to monitor and provide service providers with hands-on coaching so they can provide their clients with high quality services.

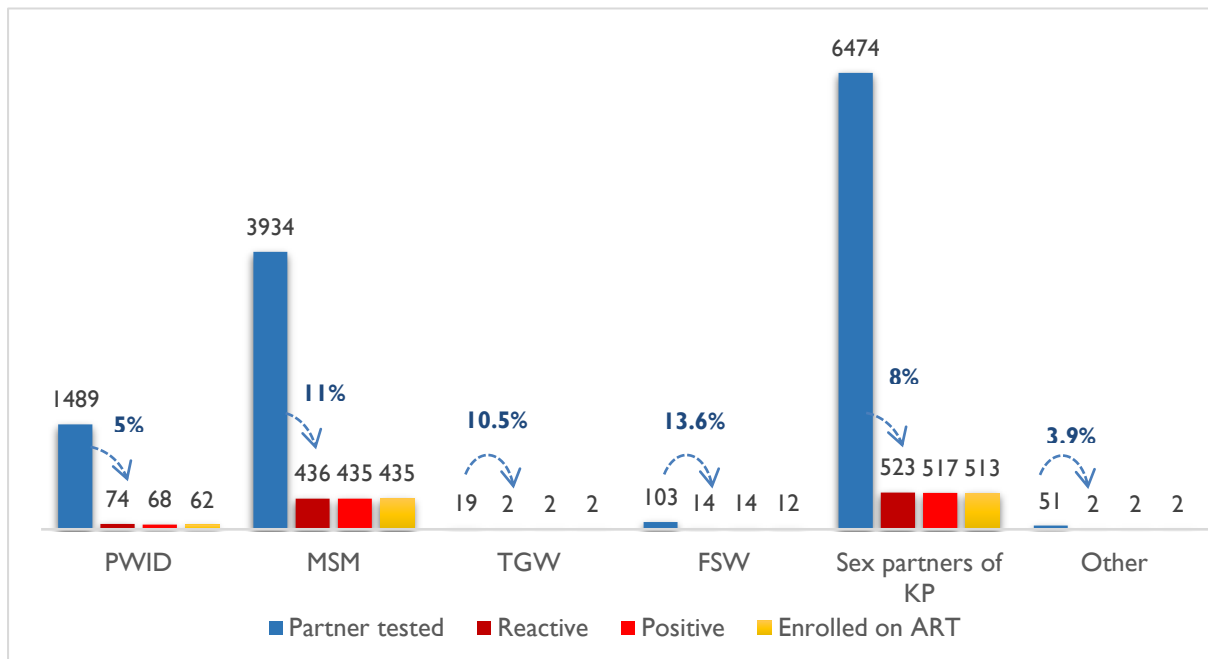
Figure 1. Index partner testing cascade June 2017-May 2019



Abbreviation: ART, antiretroviral therapy.

Through index partner testing services, 11% of the partners identified by MSM were reactive, as were 10.5% of partners of TGW, 13.6% of FSW, and 5% of partners listed by PWID (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Cascade of tested index partners by key population, June 2017-May 2019



Abbreviations: ART, antiretroviral therapy; FSW, female sex workers; KP, key population; MSM, men who have sex with men; PWID, people who inject drugs; TGW, transgender women.

LOVE AND RESPECT: AN INDEX PARTNER TESTING SUCCESS STORY

When Anh (not his real name), a young man who has sex with men, first decided to get tested for HIV, he carefully vetted his options online before landing on Ho Chi Minh City-based CSO, Glink. Due to Glink's reputation as a prestigious, confidential, and friendly establishment, Anh felt confident in trusting them with this most private sexual health matter. In between getting tested and receiving the test results, Anh's mind was eased by the professionalism of the staff at the Glink clinic, and the comprehensive counseling services provided.

When the test results came back positive, Anh's partner was his first concern.

“The G-link staff seemed to understand what was happening to me. At that moment, I really was not thinking about my own health. The first thing I thought of was my partner who has been with me for over four months now. G-link's staff encouraged me to inform my partner about this situation, and I wholeheartedly agreed because of the importance and necessity of it.”

Glink gave Anh several ways to help him inform his partner about his test results and the options available to them as a next step. All scenarios were thoroughly explained by the staff, allowing Anh to feel well-equipped to choose the best plan to disclose his HIV-positive status to his partner. Even so, Anh was not nervous and apprehensive.

“I was thinking that I may lose my relationship. However, if I can do something to keep my partner safe, I will do it. After all, I also believe that our love will let us still be together and solve any problem. And with the supportive counseling and treatment from the clinic, I will know what we should do.”

As it turned out, Anh's worries were unfounded. His partner, Minh (also not his real name), did not test positive. He was very understanding of the situation and grateful for the honesty in their relationship. Glink was there every step of the way to support the couple and provide information about treatment and prevention options for them. Minh is now considering enrolling in pre-exposure prophylaxis, and has committed to being Anh's advocate in his treatment adherence.

"I appreciate his courage and respect for me. Informing your partner about your HIV status is not wrong...it would be wrong to destroy your relationship just because of something you cannot change. The truth sometimes won't make us happy, but we have to accept it. I did not completely blame him or feel like I should leave him because of it. It's important to put yourself in the other person's position, to understand how difficult it is for them to struggle with this problem."



Anh and Minh receive counseling at G-link. PATH

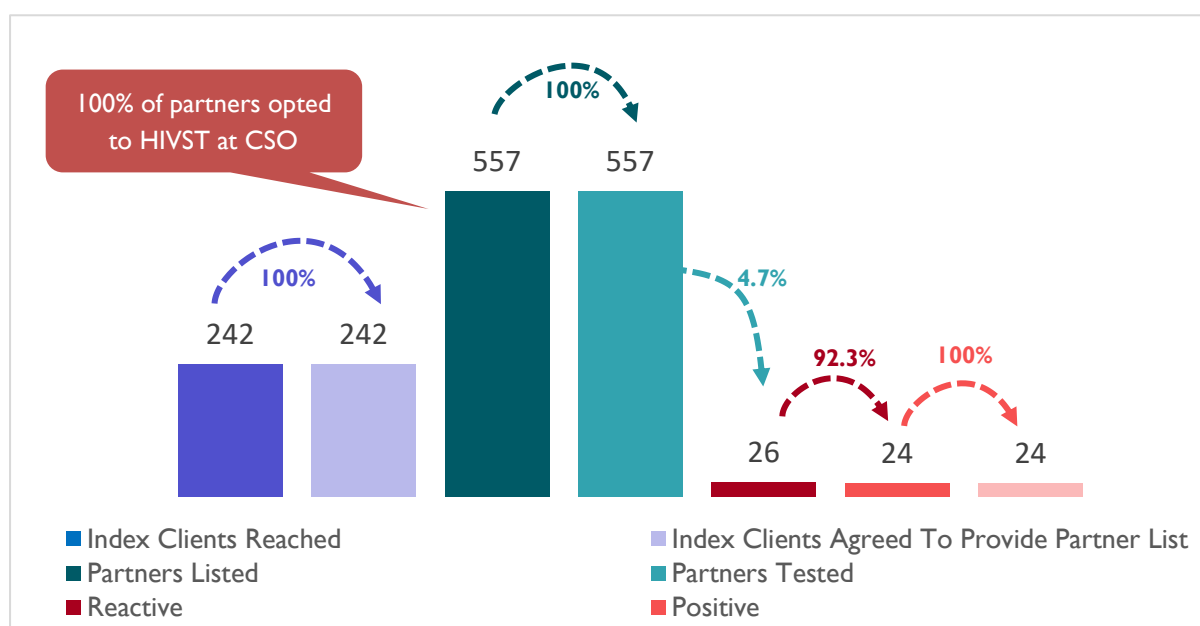
Now having been through the entire procedure of HIV testing and partner notification, Anh encourages others who may be on the fence about partner notification to get counseling and take care of their partner’s well-being.

“I know there are many barriers, but you will find peace of mind once you have successfully informed your partner about your HIV status. I would have felt guilty and not been able to work or study if I hadn’t told my partner. We have some responsibility for them. Whatever happens next doesn’t matter.”

INTEGRATING HIV-SELF TESTING INTO PARTNER NOTIFICATION SERVICES

In order to increase the number of people opting for PNS, Healthy Markets has introduced HIV self-testing (HIVST) as an option for HIV testing in general and for PNS. From August to December 2018, four CSOs in Hanoi felt their clients would be more accepting if oral fluid HIVST services were offered. These tests were offered to clients and their partners, with 242 opting for assisted HIVST and 100% agreeing to list partners, and 100% of their listed partners presenting for assisted HIV testing at the CSO (Figure 3). Healthy Markets also offered an online mail order option of HIVST; this will be continued along with partner distributed HIVST as part of PNS later in 2019.

Figure 3. Cascade of index partner testing using HIVST, August-December 2018



Abbreviations: ART, antiretroviral therapy; CSO, civil society organization; HIVST, HIV self-testing.

MOVING FORWARD: SCALING-UP INDEX PARTNER TESTING

Healthy Markets has successfully advocated for the inclusion of index partner testing in the National Guidelines for Community-based HIV testing, developed by the Vietnam Administration for HIV/AIDS Control. These guidelines provide a legal and technical foundation for the government of Vietnam and health care service providers to deliver innovative and high quality HIV services that will help Vietnam achieve the 90-90-90 goals.

For more information about index partner testing in Vietnam, contact the Healthy Markets team at HM@path.org.

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