

## **MyCheck telehealth pilot: A new service modality supporting asymptomatic clients to navigate on-demand BBV/STI testing directly with commercial pathology providers.**

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**Background:** Regular testing for blood-borne viruses (BBVs) and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is important as early detection and treatment can help prevent transmission and health complications. Providing alternative testing modalities increases access and reduces barriers for priority populations. This study aims to evaluate the implementation of a pilot at Sydney Sexual Health Centre offering asymptomatic clients a telehealth assessment and direct referral to commercial pathology without a clinic appointment.

**Methods:** Evaluation data was derived from three key sources including: SHOE (the clinical patient management software utilised by SSHC), survey data from clients who accepted testing via MyCheck (Survey Monkey), and qualitative interviews with stakeholders, including SSHC management, nursing, IT personnel, MyCheck clients, and pathology personnel.

**Results:** Between 1 June 2021 and 3 Feb 2022, 9.8% (718) of eligible clients contacting Sydney Sexual Health Centre (SSHC) were offered testing via the MyCheck pathway. Of those who accepted the offer (65.7%), two-thirds (315) attended a pathology collection centre. The positivity rate of those tested was 17.8% (56). There was similar uptake by age, MSM/non-MSM, overseas-born/ Australian-born and with/without history of injecting drug use. Proportionally, females were more likely to accept testing via MyCHECK compared with males. Clients on PrEP were less likely to accept testing via MyCHECK. Staff and clients reported MyCheck to be a useful option especially during service restrictions and allowed face-to-face appointments to be prioritised for symptomatic patients. Client feedback was predominantly positive. Technical issues were tracked and navigated successfully. Integration of MyCheck with existing record management systems improved efficiency.

**Conclusions:** This study demonstrates a telehealth based BBV/STI testing option is an acceptable and effective model of service delivery. Appropriate targeting of the service along with managing technical and training issues is required.

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