

HIV ALLIANCE/END HIV OREGON

Linn County Communications Campaign: Final Evaluation



HIV
Alliance





Background

A Response to Rising Cases of HIV/STI in Rural Oregon

Oregon is experiencing an increase in new diagnoses of HIV infection and syphilis in many parts of the state, including Linn County. The largest increases per population have been in rural and frontier areas of the state.

Between 2018-2023, 27 new HIV diagnoses were reported in Linn County, which has the 7th highest rate of new HIV diagnosis by county in Oregon. Moreover, syphilis is at epidemic rates in Oregon. In 2023, Linn County reported 40 cases of syphilis. These infections are serious and can have long-term effects, but testing is easy and there are effective treatments.

Rural Oregonians experience social and structural barriers that may place them at increased vulnerability to HIV and STI infections. These include delayed HIV testing, late diagnosis, and lower utilization of essential prevention and treatment resources. However, people who live in rural Oregon also cite many advantages to living rurally, including a strong sense of local community.



The Small Town Campaign: Planning & Development

National campaigns like Let's Stop HIV Together have developed materials for many different specific populations, but we were unable to identify any multi-modal campaigns designed to increase HIV testing among people living in rural communities. The multi-modal 'Small Town' campaign — designed by media firm Coates Kokes, supported by End HIV/STI Oregon, and led by HIV Alliance — was created with the input of rural Oregonians, who told us that they identified most strongly with messaging about testing to protect the community. Campaign photography features Oregon settings and models who are Oregonians. Some of the following messages were used in billboards, social and digital media, and radio/streaming products:

- HIV isn't just a big city issue.
- Rural Oregonians care about community. HIV is a community issue.
- Testing for HIV is a way to keep our community healthy.
- Getting tested is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Models chosen for the initial campaign include men and women, white and Latino/Latine, to match the demographics of most new cases in rural Oregon.

The Small Town Campaign: Implementation

The 'Small Town' campaign ran in Linn County from Sept.-Nov. 2024, leading up to World AIDS Day (Dec. 1). Campaign messages were delivered in English and Spanish using billboards, digital and terrestrial radio, social media, digital advertising, and posters.

A new page on the End HIV Oregon website (www.endhivoregon.org/rural), available in English and Spanish, provided specific resources for Oregonians seeking testing, prevention, treatment, and mail-order services like condoms, lube, and HIV self-testing kits.



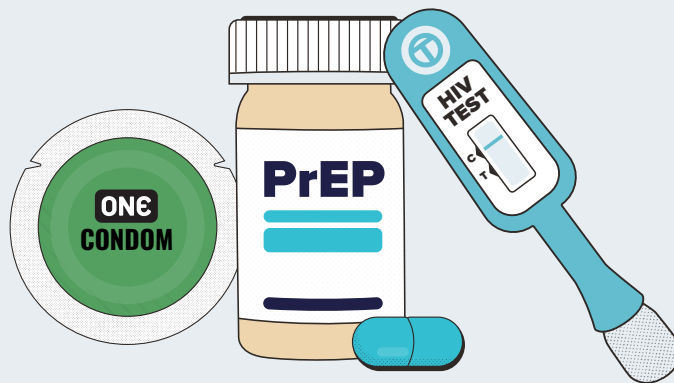
The Small Town Campaign: Results

Because many rural Oregonians are in an early stage of behavior change related to HIV/STI (e.g., precontemplation, contemplation), the primary aim of the campaign was increasing awareness; a secondary aim was increasing HIV testing.

Campaign Reach: Increasing Awareness

The 'Small Town' campaign was highly visible and received a significant amount of attention in Linn County. Specifically:

- Outdoor boards yielded **over 4.3 million impressions** (e.g., the number of times billboard messages were seen).
- Total combined viewing for Instagram, Facebook, and digital advertising/display ads was **more than 2.6 million impressions**. Of these, there were 4,875 clicks on the ads, a .19% click-through rate, and 109 conversions (e.g., outbound visits to resources for HIV testing, free condoms, and AIDS service organizations). The conversion rate of .04 is considered an indication of successful campaign reach.
 - The highest number of impressions and conversion rates were identified in the following Linn County ZIP codes: 97355, 97321, and 97322.
- The campaign had **94,917 impressions** through audio streaming.
- There were an additional **288,372 impressions** through traditional radio and **108,000 impressions** from posters in public restrooms.
- For the three months of the campaign, **EndHIVOregon.org visitor traffic from Linn County ZIP codes was 1,446 active users**.



Campaign Impact: Increasing HIV Testing & Use of Prevention Resources

Condom orders through the One at Home Program, which was advertised on www.endhivoregon.org, remained stable during the months of the campaign. In Sept.-Nov. 2023, 73 Linn County residents ordered condoms through One at Home compared to 77 residents in Sept.-Nov. 2024, while the campaign was active.

Similarly, the number of mail-order HIV tests ordered through the Take Me Home program during the campaign remained stable (30 tests in Sept.-Nov. 2023 vs 29 tests Sept.-Nov. 2024). However, Linn County residents may have requested or plan to request HIV/STI testing from private medical providers, which is rural Oregonians' preferred site for HIV/STI testing, according to the formative research. There are also a number of other mail-order testing services available online, which OHA is unable to track.

Staff at Linn County Public Health reported that 1 in 3 people coming in for HIV/STI testing during the campaign months reported that they had seen or heard campaign messages and this motivated them to seek testing — a notable, though anecdotal finding. This may mean that mail-order services are not as urgently needed in these areas if people are inclined to find resources like condoms at clinics and social service agencies.



Conclusions

A multi-modal media campaign led by HIV Alliance aimed at increasing HIV/STI awareness and testing was highly visible and reached a significant number Linn County residents. For the three months of the campaign, health messages were seen millions of times by Linn County residents. Traffic to the End HIV Oregon website from Linn County residents was 1,446 and mail order condom orders rose, indicating increased interest in HIV/STI prevention during the months of the campaign. The campaign received positive feedback from local partners and a notable portion of community members who visited Linn County Public Health for HIV/STI testing mentioned they had seen or heard campaign messaging.

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