Background

CDC’s Program Collaboration and Service Integration (PCSII) initiative was a mechanism for organizing and blending interrelated health issues, activities, and prevention strategies to facilitate comprehensive delivery of services (National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, CDC, 2012). The recent expansion of New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) AIDS Institute funding initiatives to integrate STD and hepatitis screening with HIV/AIDS testing services and a 2010 realignment of HIV, STD, and hepatitis programs under a single leadership structure within NYSDOH has contributed to a paradigm shift supporting the PCSII model of full integration of services at the client level. As NYSDOH continues to integrate STD and hepatitis testing services into initiatives that previously focused primarily on HIV prevention, an understanding of integrated testing practices among HIV testing providers, the barriers to integrated testing, and the technical assistance needs of providers is key to accomplishing PCSII goals.

Methods

• The Integrated HIV, STD, and HCV Testing Survey was administered using the web-based data collection tool, Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com).
• The survey contained sixty-seven questions and took 20 minutes to complete.
• Forty-six people responded to the survey. After removing ineligible and duplicate responses from the dataset, our sample contained responses from 40 agencies that provide HIV counseling and testing in ROS. All ROS regions of New York were represented in the study.
• Most of the participating agencies (65%) were hospitals or community health clinics, and 35% were AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) or Public Health Departments (PHDs).
• Almost all agencies in our sample (N=37) offer routine STD screening.
• Specific funding for STD and HCV testing resources and staff
• The ability to perform STD testing with a urine sample versus serum
• Broadened clinical staff to initiate offers and perform screenings
• Close referral relationships with agencies that offer free walk-in testing
• Increasing access to free testing

Results

Seventy percent of agencies surveyed provide some form of integrated HIV, STD, and HCV testing. While just 15% provide truly integrated testing, 55% routinely offer at least two of the three screening tests to clients in the same visit. As anticipated, the most common among them was offering HIV and STD testing to clients at the same time (47%). Forty-six people responded to the survey. After removing ineligible and duplicate responses from the dataset, our sample contained responses from 40 agencies that provide HIV counseling and testing in ROS. All ROS regions of New York were represented in the study.

Conclusions

Seventy percent of agencies surveyed provide some form of integrated HIV, STD, and HCV testing. While just 15% provide truly integrated testing, 55% routinely offer at least two of the three screening tests to clients in the same visit. As anticipated, the most common among them was offering HIV and STD testing to clients at the same time (47%).

Providing routine HCV testing was more of a challenge for participants. When asked why all three screening tests are not offered at the same time (results not shown), cost or lack of funding for HCV testing was the most common reason; lack of provider motivation was the next most common response. HCV rapid testing technology presents a potential opportunity to overcome both of these barriers. Provider and patient education around the rationale for integrated HIV, STD, and HCV testing is also needed to enhance motivation to test.

Our study is limited by its small sample size. In addition, 63% of agencies included in our sample were hospitals and clinics that may already have the capacity to provide, or be charged with providing, integrated HIV, STD, and HCV testing. The results highlight opportunities for further promoting and expanding STD and HCV services among HIV testing providers, particularly among ASOs, CBOs, and other agencies that previously had limited capacity to carry out integrated testing.