



PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

CITY OF BANGOR

JENNIFER GUNDERMAN
DIRECTOR

To: Healthcare Providers, Physicians

From: Bangor Public Health & Community Services

Subject: HIV Outbreak, Testing and Next Steps

Date: 1/2/2026

Dear Bangor area Healthcare Providers,

This letter is to update you about the ongoing HIV outbreak in Penobscot County, ME. As of 12/23/2025, there are 33 confirmed cases of HIV. Most of the cases are among people who inject drugs (PWID) and are coinfected with Hepatitis C. In an effort to increase HIV testing, various community partners and organizations are collaborating to reduce barriers to testing, prevention, and treatment/care. We are requesting your assistance in increasing HIV and HCV testing and also improving access to Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP).

Recommended action steps

The following are recommendations from the US CDC to clinicians;

1. Increase HIV testing for the general population

The US CDC recommends that clinicians and health professionals test patients for HIV at least once a year and regularly

2. Increase HIV testing for at-risk populations

People with the following risk factors should be tested more regularly, such as every 3 months:

- The patient is a man who has had sex with another man.
- The patient had anal or vaginal sex with someone who has HIV.
- The patient has had more than one sexual partner since their last HIV test.
- The patient shared needles, syringes, or other drug injection equipment (for example, cookers).
- The patient exchanged sex for drugs or money.
- The patient has been diagnosed with or treated for another sexually transmitted infection, hepatitis, or tuberculosis (TB).
- They have had sex with someone who has done anything listed above, or they don't know their sexual history.



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3. First and Third Trimester Testing

The US CDC recommends testing pregnant people for HIV during the first and third trimesters for people who are at high risk for acquiring HIV infection and people who receive health care in jurisdictions with high rates of HIV. Given the current HIV outbreak in Penobscot County, providers are encouraged to follow this guidance while also educating patients on the benefits of testing for both parent and baby's health. Providers should also offer testing for other STIs. Pregnant people who haven't been tested for HIV, Hep C, Syphilis, Gonorrhea, and chlamydia should be tested at delivery.

4. Offer PrEP and PEP to patients

The US CDC advises providers to prescribe **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)** to prevent HIV infection in patients who are at risk, including pregnant people. PrEP should be prescribed to any patient who asks for it, even if they do not report HIV risk factors. PrEP can be prescribed by any provider as part of preventative care. PrEP should be administered after a negative HIV blood test has been confirmed. For more information on how PrEP should be administered, please refer to this link: [Clinicians' Quick Guide: What Is HIV PrEP?](#)

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) should be prescribed to a person without HIV who may have been exposed to HIV through sex or sharing needles. PEP **cannot** be administered if the exposure happened more than 72 hours ago. For information on how PEP should be administered, please refer to this link: [Clinical Guidance for PEP | HIV Nexus | CDC](#)

5. Resource from Bangor Public Health and Community Services

Bangor Public Health and Community Services has enhanced HIV prevention, testing, and care resources. We can assist in the following ways:

Self-tests: We currently distribute oral HIV self-test kits to various partners in Bangor. These tests are free and accessible to anyone who prefers testing at home instead of visiting a healthcare provider. To request HIV self-test kits, please email elizabeth.muana@bangormaine.gov

Testing incentive coupons: We supply testing incentive coupons to individuals who visit the Bangor Public Health Clinic, the PCHC clinic, and the Wabanaki Clinic for HIV testing. These incentives serve as a motivating factor for some people to get tested. If you need testing incentive coupons, please reach out to elizabeth.muana@bangormaine.gov

Educational materials: We have developed a variety of flyers and posters on different health topics such as STDs, vaccine recommendations, food safety, mosquito and tick-borne diseases, and more. Please contact us if you need any educational materials.

Presentations: We have prepared presentations with resources to educate and inform community members about where they can access services like warming shelters, food pantries, general assistance, and others.



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Case Management: Bangor Public Health has launched a new intensive case management program with two case managers working directly with people with HIV. They will assist with housing and health insurance applications and provide transportation to help individuals attend healthcare appointments. They also advocate, educate, and provide support to help clients improve their quality of life. To connect with case management services, please call (207)-992-4561 or email casemanagement@bangormaine.gov

Medication Adherence Program: We have an HIV medication adherence program that offers incentives to clients in the outbreak who visit their healthcare providers. We provide \$15 for blood draws, \$15 for HIV injections, and \$50 when the client reaches viral suppression. This program helps motivate clients to stay on top of their health appointments and treatments to maintain their health.

If you have any questions, concerns, or requests for resources, please contact Elizabeth Muana, Bangor Public Health and Community Services Infectious Disease Specialist at elizabeth.muana@bangormaine.gov.

