

PROVIDER

HIV Screening

HEALTH CENTER ASSOCIATION OF NEBRASKA



Purpose

Best practice for HIV screening centers on routine, opt-out testing for all persons aged 15–65 years at least once, with repeat screening for individuals at higher risk.

Routine screening helps identify HIV earlier, improves linkage to care, and reduces missed opportunities for diagnosis.

Who Should Be Screened

Routine Screening

The following individuals should receive HIV screening:

- All adolescents and adults aged 15–65 years at least once
 - Supported by the USPSTF Grade A recommendation
 - Included in the HRSA UDS eCQM (CMS349v8) quality measure
- Younger adolescents and older adults who are at increased risk for HIV infection
- All pregnant persons at the first prenatal visit
 - Repeat testing during the third trimester is recommended for:
 - Patients at high risk
 - Patients in high-prevalence settings
- All persons seeking STI evaluation or treatment, regardless of reported behavioral risk

Opt-Out Approach

The CDC and USPSTF recommend an opt-out screening model for HIV testing. Research demonstrates that opt-out screening identifies more HIV infections than physician-directed, risk-based testing.

Under this approach, HIV testing is incorporated into routine medical care unless the patient declines.

The key elements of an opt-out script:

- **Notification:** The patient needs to be informed that HIV testing will be conducted.
 - Example Language: "As part of our standard health screening, we include an HIV test for all patients."
- **Normalization:** Providers should emphasize that HIV screening is a routine component of preventive healthcare and clarify that this is a standard process.
 - Example Language: "This is something we offer to everyone, just like checking cholesterol or blood pressure."
- **Consent:** Separate written consent for HIV testing is **not required**. General informed consent for medical care is sufficient.
- **Counseling:** Mandatory pretest counseling is **not required** (patients should be offered the opportunity to ask questions and receive an explanation)
- **Opt-out:** Patients must be informed that they may decline testing and can choose to opt-out
 - Example Language: You can chose not to have the HIV test today if you prefer."

www.hcanebraska.org