

EXTENDED CLINIC HOURS

SPOTLIGHT ON CASE FINDING

uThukela | Alfred Duma Sub-District | Sigweje Clinic | PHC
Average Monthly Headcount: 4100



IMPROVEMENT AREA & AIM

Normal clinic hours at Sigweje Clinic were from 07:00 to 17:00, Monday to Friday, with appointments ceasing at 1630. These hours, however, were problematic for the working population who were unable to attend clinic during normal operational hours. This, in turn, limited their ability to access HIV testing services which affected the overall facility HIV case-finding rate.

The aim was to improve the HIV case-finding median from 28 to at least 30 newly identified patients per month by targeting working patients.



DESCRIPTION

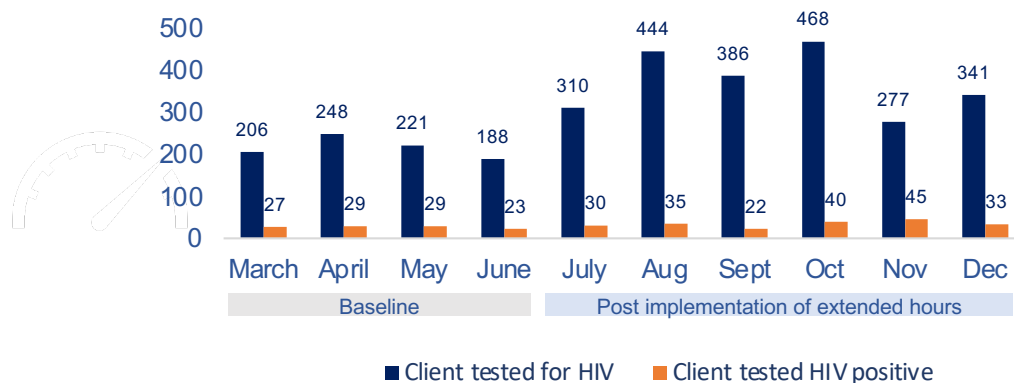
To accommodate patients unable to visit the clinic during normal operating hours, we tested the extension of facility service hours to include at least 1 weekend day and extended weekday operating times by 2 hours in the evening (from 1700 to 1900). During the extended hours, limited clinical services were available, including HIV testing.



OUTCOMES

After introducing extended hours, Sigweje Clinic's overall HIV testing numbers increased from a baseline median of 214 per month to a median of 364 per month. Case-finding numbers also improved from a baseline median of 28 per month (March –June 2019) to a post-implementation median of 34 per month. As a result of this performance, Sigweje Clinic was recognised as being among the top 10 CDC-supported Siyenza (now POPS – PEPFAR Operation Phuthuma Support) facilities in the country for HIV case-finding and linkage.

Sigweje Clinic Testing & Case-Finding
(March–December 2019)



STEPS TO IMPLEMENT

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

- ❑ Operational Manager (OM) orients all HIV care staff to the extended hours QI project.
- ❑ OM requests volunteers to work during extended hours, offering compensatory time off in exchange for after-hours service.
- ❑ Lay Counsellors (LC) and Community Caregivers (CCGs) raise awareness about the extended hours through health talks at the clinic and community forums. Also, emphasize the importance of knowing one's HIV status.

PATIENT ARRIVES AT THE CLINIC

- ❑ LC triages patient seeking an HIV test.
- ❑ Filing Clerk opens a file for new patients.
- ❑ LC conducts the test.
- ❑ If an HIV-positive case is identified, a Nurse Clinician (NC) will offer the patient same-day ART initiation.
- ❑ If the test result is negative, the patient is encouraged to return for retesting in 6 weeks.

MAINTENANCE

- ❑ Quality improvement (QI) team meets weekly to review performance on testing, case-finding, and linkage.
- ❑ LCs and CCGs continually raise awareness about extended hours and the importance of HIV testing at clinic and community forums.

FACILITATORS

- Offered compensatory time to staff working during extra operating hours.
- Made sure to understand the needs of the patient population and found ways to accommodate them (e.g., adjusted hours of service as much as possible to align with patient preferences).

CHALLENGES & ADAPTATIONS

- A few clients declined to initiate into care → **A social worker provided psychosocial support to these clients.**
- Burnout with staff working extra hours → **Communication between staff and management ensured shared burden and equitable distribution of shifts.**

ABBREVIATIONS

- ✓ CCG – community caregivers
- ✓ LC – lay counsellor
- ✓ NC – nurse clinician
- ✓ OM – operational manager
- ✓ QI – quality improvement

OTHER FACILITY ADAPTATIONS

- ✓ Other facilities embraced this approach, varying the operating hours and days to suit the needs of the clinic and population.
- ✓ Some settings preferred adding an additional weekend day rather than longer hours on weekdays.
- ✓ Others expanded community-based testing efforts as an alternative for improving case-finding.

RESOURCES

No additional human resources were needed. Staff who worked extra hours were given compensatory time off during the week as an incentive.

LESSONS LEARNED

It is important to know when your patients can come to the facility, when and how community programmes may be effective, and how to best accommodate patient needs.