

The Kern County Health Officer's Clinic At-A-Glance

The Kern County Public Health Services Department operates out of Bakersfield, California, providing services to people in this rural, primarily agricultural county. The Kern County Health Officer's Clinic (HOC) provides immunizations and is a comprehensive sexual health and family planning clinic, offering testing for HIV and other STIs, Rapid Start, PrEP and PEP services. With funding and technical support from the California Department of Public Health Office of AIDS Branch, the Kern County HOC began providing their Rapid Start services in 2019.

The Kern County HOC identifies people who are newly diagnosed through onsite testing, surveillance data, and referrals from local hospital emergency departments (EDs). The Kern County HOC provides Rapid Start services and then refers clients to other community clinics for ongoing care.

Key Rapid Start Service Characteristics

Year of Implementation 2019

Urban-Rural Classification Rural

Care Setting Local health department

RHWAP Funding Part B

Population Size Approximately 100 people newly diagnosed with HIV per year

Clients Served Newly diagnosed and re-engaging in care



Priority Population Early intervention services for people newly diagnosed with HIV

Medicaid Expansion State (Yes/No) Yes

Starter Packs Available (Yes/No) Yes

Onsite Pharmacy (Yes/No) Yes

Onsite Lab Draws (Yes/No) Yes

Onsite HIV Testing (Yes/No) Yes

Unique Features of Kern County HOC's Rapid Start Program

Kern County HOC, part of the California Department of Public Health, plays a critical role in providing ART rapidly to clients and then **linking them to ongoing HIV primary care**, without being their ongoing source of care.

Kern County HOC utilizes a small **disease intervention specialist (DIS)-led staffing model**, in partnership with Nurse Practitioners, which is effective in linking people to Rapid Start services, ongoing HIV primary care, supportive services, and in following up with clients once linked to ongoing care to support efforts to retain clients in care.

Kern County HOC has a **partnership with a local emergency department (ED)** that provides opt-out HIV testing and, together, they have developed a streamlined process to link people to care, and address gaps in HIV care continuum outcomes.

Kern County HOC receives **ongoing support from the California Department of Public Health**, including support in Rapid Start protocol development and ongoing clinical consultation, which has been essential to establishing and maintaining Rapid Start services in Kern County.

Client Outcomes (January 2021 – December 2021)



(both re-engaged and newly diagnosed) received care in 2021.

The average number of days for clients to be linked to care and provided with ART medication was



Cost Estimate per Client

Additional \$2,308 per client during sustained implementation