

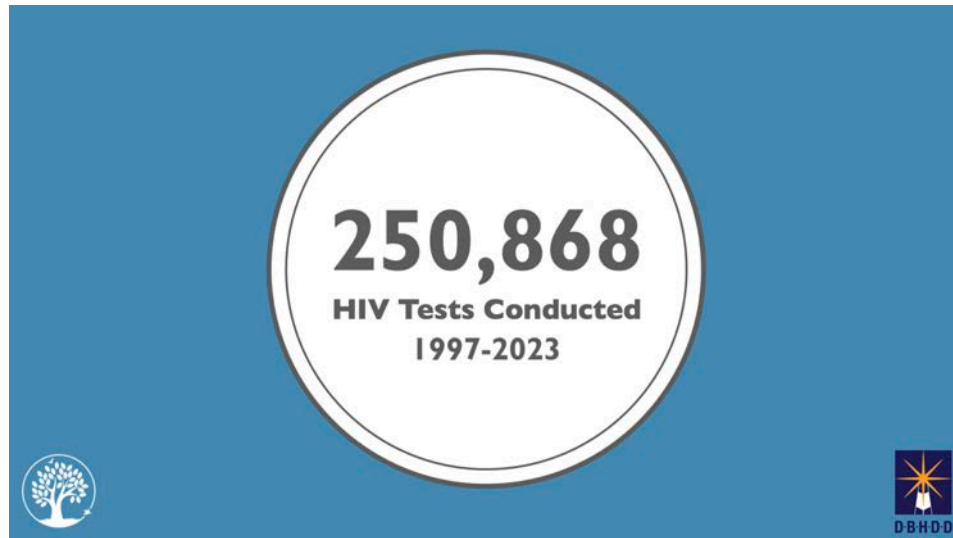


# Imagine Hope

## Quarterly Report | October - December 2023

Early Intervention Services

A program of DBHDD / Office of Addictive Diseases



### A Special Report: Reflections on a Significant Milestone

A Message from Marie Sutton

Over a quarter million HIV screens is a big number. But what does it mean? It means that we are doing something of consequence, something that matters. We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this fulfilling work with you.

In December 2023, the DBHDD Early Intervention Services (EIS) project, managed by Imagine Hope, reached a new milestone. Since 1997 when the program began, EIS nurses and counselors conducted over 250,000 HIV screens. During that time, EIS workers diagnosed 1,269 individuals with HIV and provided access to life-saving treatment. Many also provided social support services to 3,151 previously diagnosed clients; helping 595 return to care.

*“Don’t ever underestimate the significance of your contribution.”*

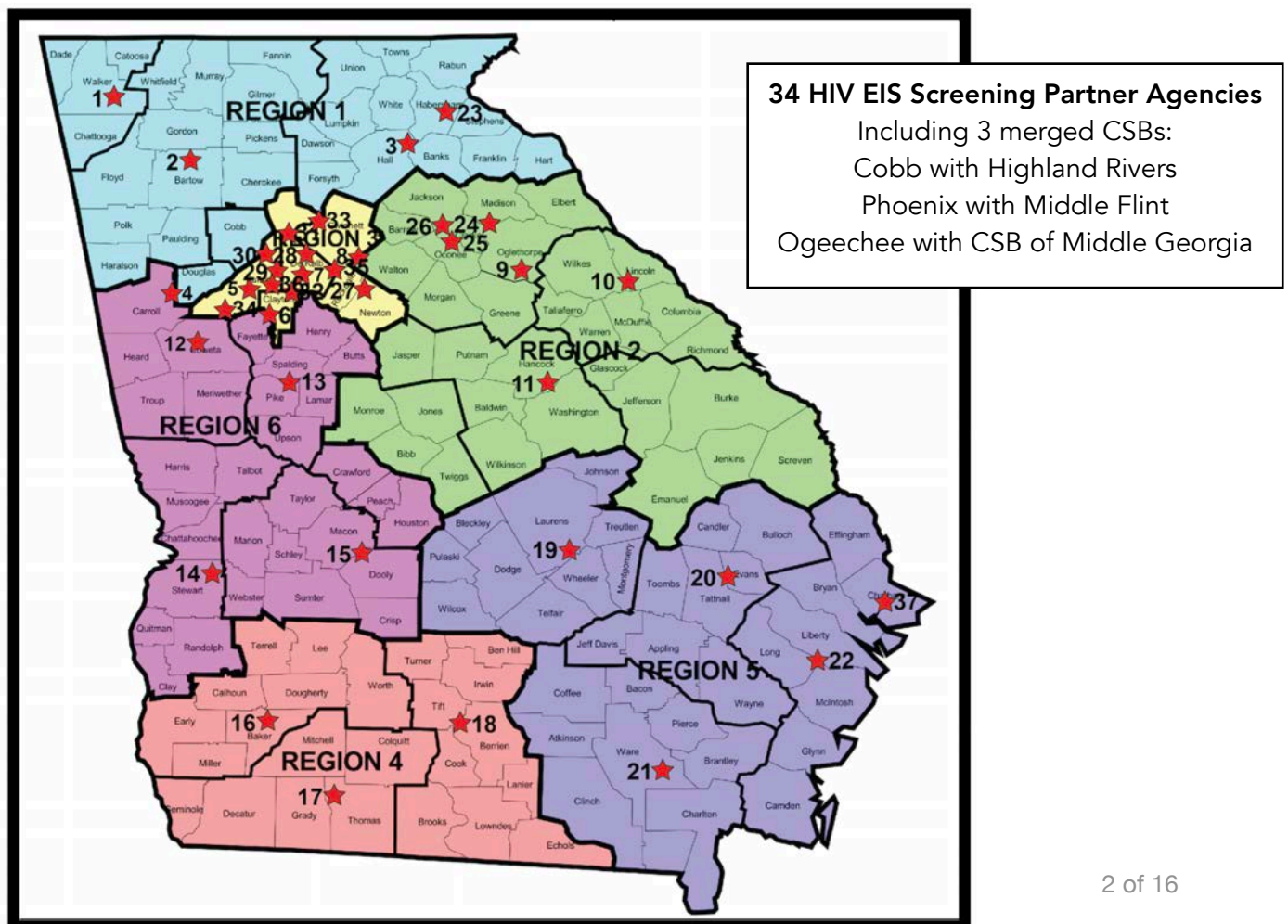
*Marie Sutton, CEO, Imagine Hope, Inc.*



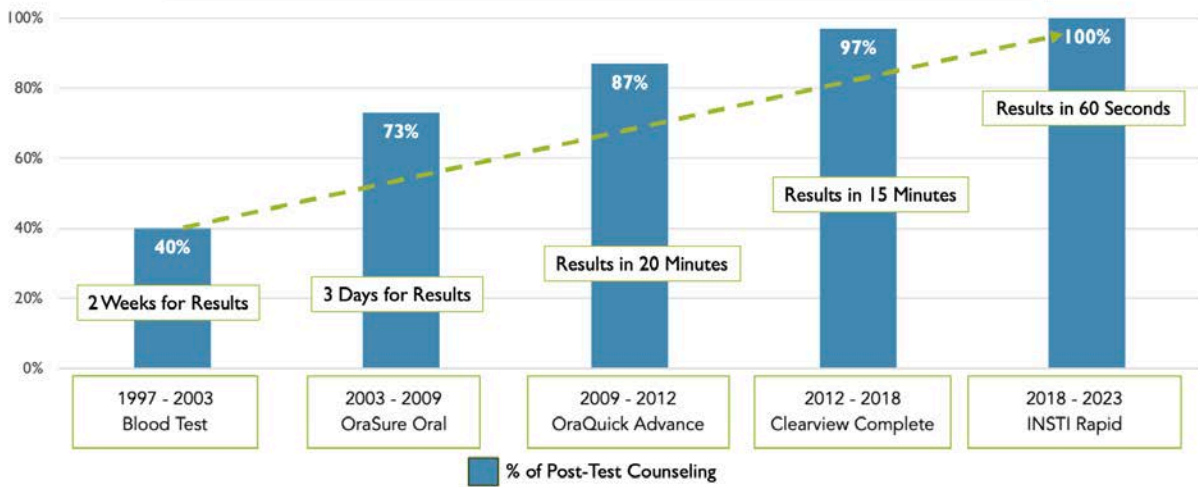
*Marie Sutton, CEO, Imagine Hope*

Each HIV test is an act of hope. It opens the door to new possibilities. But, for individuals with a substance use disorder, who are routinely stigmatized, it requires both courage and trust. This program began with a mandate: meet people where they are, literally: provide early intervention services in substance use treatment facilities. And there, you greet clients with compassion and hope, the hope of recovery, the hope for a long, healthy life.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to this significant work.



**HIV Testing Technology Over the Years:**  
 As Turnaround for Results Dropped from 2 weeks to 60 seconds ...  
 Rate of Individuals Learning their HIV Status Rose 60%



Until 2003, HIV testing called for a blood drawn specimen to be submitted to the state lab, with results available in 2 weeks. By the time the test result was available, an individual may have left substance use treatment. In contrast, 99.9% of individuals given the INSTI Rapid HIV Test, with results in 60 seconds, learned their status.



With each new testing technology, EIS workers mastered the technology. Above left to right: OraSure Oral HIV Test class and Clearview Complete; bottom: INSTI rapid.



*Over the years, 3,712 nurses and counselors attended HIV training, learning the latest technology and how to engage clients in prevention counseling during the testing episode.*



*Each year, EIS workers gather to review the successes and challenges of the previous year, to learn new ways to engage clients, and to practice new techniques for self-care.*

*Above: participants at the 2019 Annual Gathering.*



Gateway CSB, National HIV Testing Day Event  
Brunswick, Georgia, June 2019



Bridge Health & Highland Rivers / Cobb, Recovery Rally Event  
Walker County, Georgia, September 2023  
Pictured: Ava Hogue of Bridge Health, Shannon Tillett and  
Lynn Williamson of Highland Rivers.



**Outreach** - - By carrying the message of HIV prevention beyond the clinic walls, EIS workers help reduce stigma. Using rapid technology, HIV testing can take place in the community.

Since we began tracking outreach education and testing in 2013, 144,888, people have been educated or engaged and 22,027 were tested.

EIS nurses and counselors have been enormously creative in engaging folks locally - in urban, suburban, and rural communities. EIS team members often partner with sister agencies to make these “all hands on deck” events possible.

Recovery Place  
National HIV Testing Day Event  
Savannah, Georgia  
June 2013

Sheila Timmons holds a letter from Savannah Mayor Edna Branch Jackson commending the HIV services and advocacy provided by Recovery Place and Georgia DBHDD



*Clayton Center, Paula Crane Life Enrichment Center  
Let's Chat: National Women's HIV/AIDS Awareness Event  
Morrow, Georgia  
March 2017*



*Pineland / John's Place  
National HIV Testing Day Event  
Statesboro, Georgia  
June 2023*

*Pictured: EIS Coordinator  
Celitha Williams and Melinda  
Walden (wearing Know Your  
Status T-shirts) with Imagine  
Hope team members Barbara  
Taylor-Scott and Diane Scott  
(2nd and 4th from left) and  
Valerie Lanier, formerly with  
Pineland.*







HIV prevention, which began in tragedy, has become a story of hope.

### HIV/AIDS Timeline 1980 - 1989

<p>1980</p> <p>26 gay men in New York City and California diagnosed with a rare cancer linked to AIDS. By year's end: 337 reported cases; 130 already dead.</p>	 <p>Gay Men's Health Crisis Center NYC-based non-profit formed to end the AIDS epidemic and uplift the lives of all affected.</p>	<p>First International AIDS Conference – held in Atlanta, Georgia and hosted by HHS, WHO</p> <p>1st HIV test approved</p>	<p>February - Liberace dies at age 67. His doctor claimed he died of a heart attack, but an autopsy proved the entertainer died of AIDS-related illness.</p> <p>March – AZT was the first drug approved for HIV/AIDS treatment.</p>	 <p>Ryan White, the Indiana teenager who became a national spokesperson for AIDS education, testified before the President's Commission on AIDS about AIDS-related stigma he endured.</p>	<p>Number of reported AIDS cases in US reaches 100,000.</p>
<b>1981</b>	<b>1982</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1989</b>



### HIV/AIDS Timeline 1990 - 1999

 <p><b>Ryan White</b> 1971-1990</p>	<p>Leading Cause of Death Ages 25-44</p> 	 <p>National HIV TESTING Day JUNE 27</p>	 <p>NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY</p>			
<p>In April, Ryan White dies of AIDS-related illness at 18. In August, Congress enacts the Ryan White CARE Act.</p>	<p>Magic Johnson announced that he was HIV+.</p>	<p>AIDS Leading cause of death for Americans ages 25 to 44.</p>	<p>June 27 – NAPWA launches first National HIV Testing Day.</p>	<p>AIDS deaths in US decline 47% over previous year, due to HAART.</p>	<p>African Americans account for 49% of AIDS-related deaths; mortality rate is 10 times that of Whites and 3 times of Hispanics.</p>	<p>February 7 – First National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day launched.</p>
<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>



## HIV/AIDS Timeline 2000 - 2030



2000

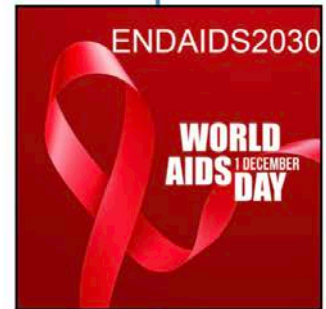
1st rapid HIV test approved – provides results in 20 minutes.

67.5% of new HIV infections each year result from transmission by individuals who do not know they are infected.

HIV/AIDS death rates for black/African Americans declined significantly between 1999-2015: Among those aged 18-34, HIV-related deaths drop 80%, and among those aged 35, deaths drop by 79%.



As a group, black gay and bisexual men in US have a higher HIV prevalence rate than any nation in the world  
New York Times



Study confirms: Undetectable = Untransmittable

Federal initiative to end the HIV epidemic by 2030

2002

2003

2015

2017

2018

2030

HIV/AIDS Deaths Among black/African Americans down 80%



*Imagine Hope looks to a brighter future.*

**Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. (EHE)** is a bold plan, announced in 2019, that aims to end the HIV epidemic in the United States by 2030. Our nation faces an unprecedented opportunity to achieve something once thought impossible. The most powerful HIV prevention and treatment tools in history are now available. By deploying those tools swiftly and to greatest effect, the HIV epidemic in America can end. On behalf of DBHDD, and in partnership with dedicated nurses and counselors across the state, Imagine Hope is fully committed to doing our part here in Georgia to bring that once impossible dream into reality.



**Cassandra Price, Director of the Office of Addictive Diseases, DBHDD,** has always been a champion for routine HIV testing and knows the importance of providing screening and treatment for infectious disease to the population that we are dedicated to serve. The opportunity for physical health and well being is one of the promises of Recovery. Thank you for holding the vision of a brighter future for Georgia with us.



**Von Wrighten, Coordinator of Addictive Diseases Initiatives, Office of Addictive Diseases, DBHDD,** has been steadfast in his support of HIV EIS services. We work closely with Reverend Wrighten in the day-to-day operation of this initiative and have counted on his support for these critical services for over a decade. Thank you, Von, for your unwavering support.

**Bill Hight, Ph.D.** - - We could not call this report complete without acknowledging Dr. Hight, who has taught thousands of EIS workers the fundamentals of HIV prevention counseling. Delivering HIV test results, particularly positive results, is a sensitive encounter and one of the tasks that is most challenging for EIS workers. Learning the technology is critical; but the delivery of the test result is equally so. We have tremendous gratitude for your partnership in building capacity for routine HIV testing in the EIS program.



# Imagine Hope HIV / HCV Screening & Linkage

October - December 2023

REGION 1	HIV	Site	HIV Testing, New HIV+ Results & Linkage				Individuals Self-Identified HIV+
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Re-Linked to Medical Care
		Avita	6	6	0	0	0
		Bridge Health	46	46	0	0	0
		Douglas CSB	1	1	0	0	0
		Highland Rivers	526	526	0	0	1
		Highland Rivers/Cobb CSB	153	153	0	0	0
		Pittard Clinic MAT	6	6	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	
	HCV	Site	HCV Antibody Screening & Confirmatory Testing			Individuals Confirmed HCV RNA+	
Total			Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	Linked to Medical Care	
Avita		117	18	18	12	1	
Bridge Health		62	18	17	13	0	
Highland Rivers		321	29	29	18	1	
Highland Rivers/Cobb CSB		260	13	13	11	1	
Lanier MAT		66	8	7	2	1	
MedMark Chatsworth		1	1	1	1	0	
Pittard Clinic MAT		87	16	15	4	1	
Ringgold MAT		35	9	9	2	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>6</b>		

REGION 2	HIV	Site	HIV Testing, New HIV+ Results & Linkage				Individuals Self-Identified HIV+
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Re-linked to Medical Care
	Access Point	11	11	1	1	1	
	Advantage	81	81	0	0	0	
	Alliance Athens MAT	104	104	0	0	0	
	The Athens Clinic (DM & ADR)	88	88	0	0	0	
	Oconee	No report received; numerous attempts to collect.					
	Serenity BHS	64	64	0	0	0	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	
	HCV	Site	HCV Antibody Screening & Confirmatory Testing			Individuals Confirmed HCV RNA+	
Total			Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	Linked to Medical Care	
Access Point		4	0	0	0	0	
Alliance Athens MAT		112	20	20	9	0	
The Athens Clinic (DM & ADR)		80	3	10	3	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>		

**REGION 3**

**HIV**

Site	HIV Testing, New HIV+ Results & Linkage				Individuals Self-Identified HIV+
	Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Re-Linked to Medical Care
Alliance MAT Conyers	40	40	0	0	0
Alliance MAT Decatur	23	23	0	0	0
Ascensa	24	24	0	0	0
CaringWorks	10	10	0	0	0
Clayton Center	22	22	0	0	0
DeKalb CSB	14	14	0	0	0
Fulton County BHS	41	41	0	0	0
MARR Inc.	25	25	0	0	0
Newport	21	21	0	0	0
North Fulton Tx Ctr MAT	4	4	0	0	0
Odyssey	HIV Testing Disrupted by Turnover				
Recovery Consultants	82	82	0	0	0
ViewPoint Health	59	59	0	0	1
West Care	195	190	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

**HCV**

Site	HCV Antibody Screening & Confirmatory Testing			Individuals Confirmed RNA+	
	Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	Linked to Medical Care
Alliance MAT Conyers	47	4	4	3	0
Alliance MAT Decatur	23	4	4	2	0
Ascensa	6	2	2	1	0
CaringWorks	17	0	0	0	0
Clayton	15	0	0	0	0
Georgia Tx	10	6	6	0	0
Imagine Hope Outreach	15	14	14	13	13
North Fulton Tx Ctr MAT	5	3	3	2	0
ViewPoint Health	125	7	4	4	1
WestCare	130	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>

REGION 4	HIV	Site	HIV Testing, New HIV+ Results & Linkage				Individuals Self-Identified HIV+
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Re-Linked to Medical Care
		Aspire	108	108	0	0	0
		Legacy	89	89	2	2	0
		New Beginnings / Thomasville	72	72	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	
	HCV	Site	HCV Antibody Screening & Confirmatory Testing			Individuals Confirmed HCV RNA+	
			Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	Linked to Medical Care
		Aspire	92	6	6	6	0
		Legacy	57	6	6	2	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>149</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	

REGION 5	HIV	Site	HIV Testing, New HIV+ Results & Linkage				Individuals Self-Identified HIV+
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Re-Linked to Medical Care
		CSB of Middle GA/ Quentin's Place	17	17	0	0	0
		Gateway	478	478	3	2	0
		Pineland	75	75	0	0	1
		Recovery Place	25	25	0	0	0
	Unison	151	151	0	0	0	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	
	HCV	Site	HCV Antibody Screening & Confirmatory Testing			Individuals Confirmed HCV RNA+	
			Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	Linked to Medical Care
Brunswick Drug Court		9	4	4	4	0	
CSB of Middle GA/Quentin's Place		156	24	24	14	0	
Gateway		374	22	22	10	9	
Pineland		92	5	5	3	0	
Recovery Place		18	3	3	3	1	
Reliance MAT		1	1	1	0	0	
The Forge		29	2	0	0	0	
Unison		164	23	23	13	0	
Unison MAT	29	11	11	5	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>11</b>		

REGION 6	HIV	Site	HIV Testing, New HIV+ Results & Linkage				Individuals Self-Identified HIV+
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Re-Linked to Medical Care
		McIntosh Trail	117	117	0	0	0
		Middle Flint	31	31	0	0	0
		New Horizons CSB	36	36	0	0	0
	Pathways	35	35	0	0	0	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	HCV	Site	HCV Antibody Screening & Confirmatory Testing			Individuals Confirmed HCV RNA+	
			Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	Linked to Medical Care
		McIntosh Trail	98	3	3	3	1
New Horizons CSB		15	4	4	4	1	
Pathways		104	8	7	7	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>		

Statewide	HIV	Statewide	HIV Testing, New HIV+ Results & Linkage				Individuals Previously Diagnosed HIV+
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Re-Linked to Medical Care
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2880</b>	<b>2875</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
	HCV	Statewide	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory		
			Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	Linked to Medical Care
<b>Total</b>	<b>2776</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>35</b>		

### **HIV Totals 2,880 HIV Tests, 6 New Confirmed HIV+ Diagnosis**

From October - December 2023, DBHDD's EIS Program screened 2,880 individuals for HIV, including 461 tested during outreach. Of those tested, 99.8% received their results and 5 newly diagnosed HIV-positive clients were linked to care (kept their first medical appointment). We have not yet been able to verify that one individual, who was confirmed HIV-positive, has attended their first medical appointment. We notified the Georgia Department of Public Health and continue to work closely with them in an effort to link the individual to treatment. This quarter, nurses and counselors provided on-going support to 161 HIV+ clients and re-linked 4 previously diagnosed HIV+ clients, who had fallen out of care, to medical treatment.

### **HCV Totals, 2,776 HCV Tests, 174 New HCV/RNA+ Diagnoses**

From October - December, 2023, DBHDD's EIS Program screened 2,776 individuals for HCV. Of those, 174 were confirmed RNA+ or chronically infected with HCV. During the same period, 35 attended their first medical appointment.

Imagine Hope manages the Early Intervention Services Program  
on behalf of DBHDD / Office of Addictive Diseases

