

Call for new members to join the European Testing Week Working Group

European Testing Week's (ETW) working group is happy to announce a call for new members.

The European Testing Week is a biannual campaign which aims to increase access to testing and promote awareness on the benefits of earlier hepatitis and HIV diagnosis. During the past year, testing services have been severely challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, and we have witnessed a sharp decrease in testing for HIV, hepatitis and STIs. While some countries have rebounded to pre-COVID-19 testing levels, in other countries, testing remains low.

The setbacks caused by the pandemic mean that we risk losing the gains of the past decade and they challenge the chances of reaching the global goals set for elimination of HIV and viral hepatitis. With the pandemic not likely to go away within the foreseeable future, testing services need to be revived and adapted to this new reality.

The European Testing Week is an important tool in raising awareness of and ensuring access to effective and innovative HIV and hepatitis testing as a gateway to treatment and prevention. We are looking for new, additional members of the working group who are passionate about these issues and want to contribute their expertise and experience to help put testing back on the priority list.

European Testing Week

The European Testing Week is one of the flagship projects under EuroTEST (<https://www.eurotest.org/>). It is an initiative that aims to unite partner organisations (community organisations, health care and policy institutions) throughout Europe twice a year for one week to increase access to testing and promote awareness on the benefits of earlier hepatitis and HIV diagnosis.

This awareness campaign has progressed since its start in 2013 and has grown to be a widely recognised European event with hundreds of organisations participating every year. What once started as an annual event has now become a biannual event with two ETWs occurring each year in Spring (May) and Autumn (November). Initially focusing only on HIV, the initiative expanded in 2018 to also include a focus on viral hepatitis since 2018. Each organisation volunteers their own time to organise their Testing Week activities and create incredible displays of a united effort to increase testing awareness at all organisational levels.

For more information about European Testing Week, please visit <http://www.testingweek.eu/>

The working group

ETW is led by a working group consisting of WHO European HIV and viral hepatitis experts. Members of the WG are a varied mix of representatives from community-based organisations, clinical and research settings and public health institutions.

The group is currently composed of 18 members. The working group plays a vital role in ETW, providing strategic direction and prioritization.

As a member of the working group, you will be expected to:

- Participate in monthly 1-hour calls and read the agenda and attachments before the call,
- Read emails and share comments, e.g. on draft statements, press releases, evaluation surveys etc (these things are produced twice a year) for an estimated 2-3 hours per month
- In addition, working group members can participate in activities beyond the monthly calls, when possible and relevant, including reviewing ETW materials, contacting potential endorsers, sponsors etc.

Desired expertise and competencies

A small working group member survey was recently carried out to identify capacities within the working group and current gaps to be filled by new members. The recruitment of new members will consider the following gaps and areas of expertise:

People who are experts on (working within the following thematic or geographic areas, or belonging to (or “with lived experiences”) the following groups:

- migrants
- women living with hepatitis or HIV
- transgender persons
- ethnic and racial groups
- sex workers
- prisons
- hepatitis
- STIs
- young people
- human rights
- gender sensitive testing approaches
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- health care providers
- researchers
- diagnostic advocates, especially about viral load and U=U

We are looking to recruit around 5-10 additional members to the working group within the coming period. If you are interested in joining the working group, please write a brief application and send it to eurotest.rigshospitalet@regionh.dk by **Monday 19th of July, 2021**.