



As of July 1, 2026



Dear Readers

We are pleased to present the latest issue of our digest, dedicated to the analysis of **epidemiological surveillance data on Recent HIV Infection (RHI)** in Ukraine as of July 1, 2026, and to programmatic activities supporting the RHI surveillance system.

In this issue, you will be able to:

- track trends in RHI testing volumes and case detection from 2024 through the first half of 2026;
- compare RHI testing coverage for the specified period and by month in the second quarter of 2026;
- review the sociodemographic characteristics of individuals tested for RHI;
- analyze RHI cases identified in the first half of 2026.

We hope this digest will be a useful tool for everyone working in Ukraine's HIV/AIDS response and will contribute to a more effective and coordinated response to the epidemic.

This publication was prepared as part of the project “Strengthening HIV Treatment, Laboratory Services, Medication Assisted Therapy, and Program Monitoring in Ukraine under the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).”

Thank you for your attention and active participation in this important effort!

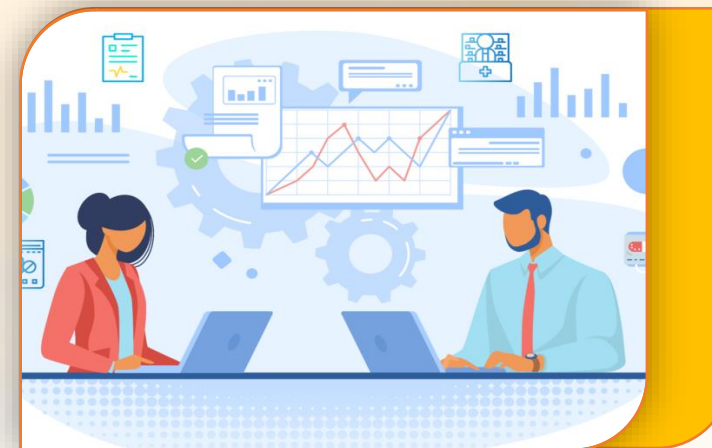




Table of Contents

List of abbreviations.....	4
What is a recent HIV infection (RHI)?	5
Testing Volumes and Geographic Implementation (RTRI).....	6
RHI Testing Results (RITA).....	13
Hotspots in surveillance of recent infections.....	20
Program Events.....	21
Summary.....	25
Recommendation.....	26





List of Abbreviations

ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
EQA	External Quality Assessment of laboratory testing
HCF	Healthcare Facility
HS	"Hotspot" in the system of surveillance of recent HIV infection
HTS	HIV Testing Services
IT	Index testing
MSM	Men Who Have Sex with Men
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PHR for HIV	People at Higher Risk for HIV
PIP	People in Prisons (In the project – mainly people released from penitentiary institutions)
PITC	Provider-Initiated Testing and Counseling
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
PrEP	Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
PWCS	People Who Engage in Commercial Sex
PWID	People Who Inject Drugs
RHI	Recent HIV Infection
RITA	Recent Infection Testing Algorithm
RNA	Ribonucleic Acid
RTRI	Rapid Test for Recent Infection
SN	Social Networks
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing (client-initiated)



What is Recent HIV Infection (RHI)?

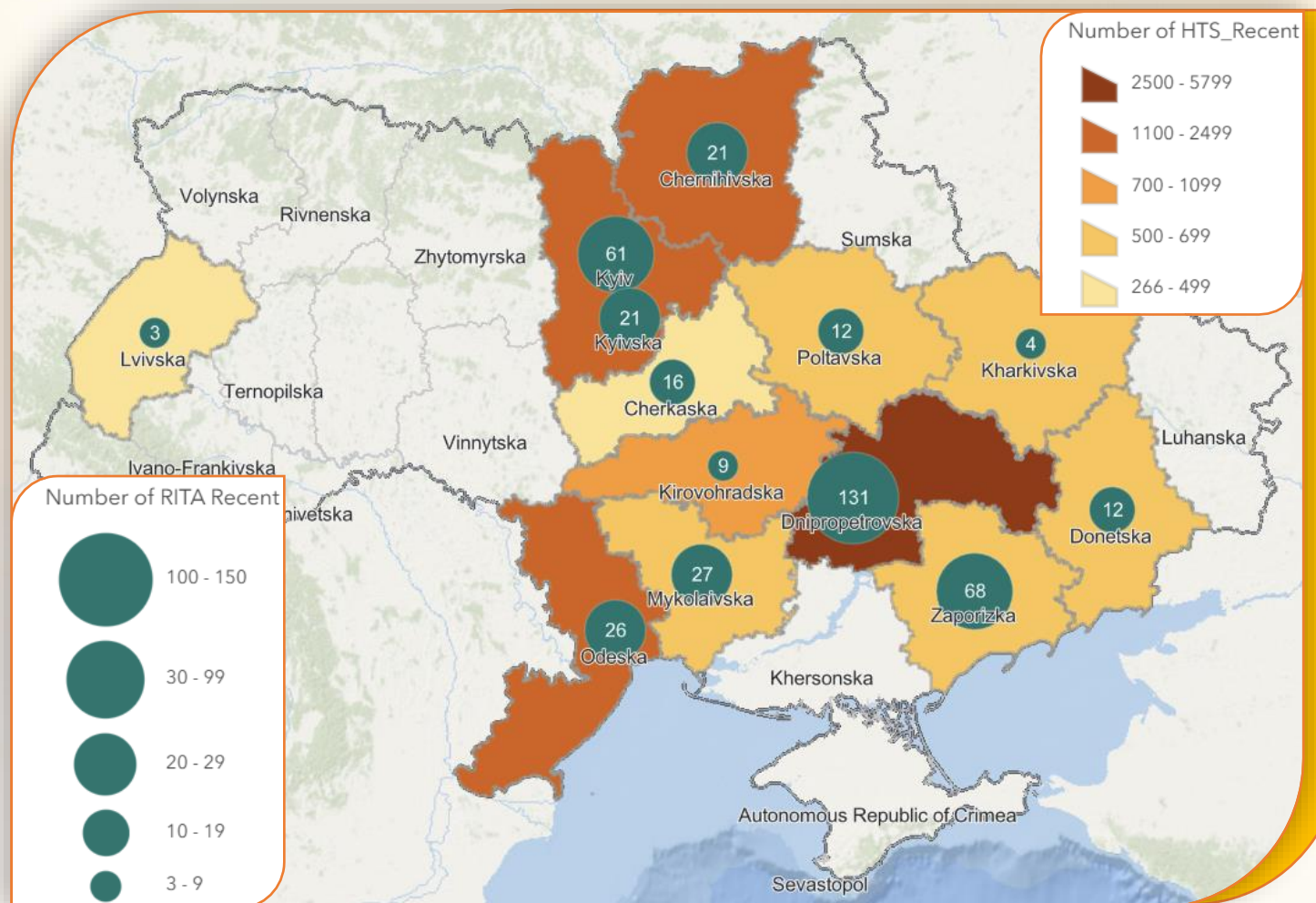
- It is an HIV infection that occurred relatively recently, usually **within the last 12 months**.
- Detection of RHI is important for understanding **the dynamics and speed of epidemic development**, identifying territories and population groups with active HIV transmission, and implementing timely public health measures.
- In Ukraine, RHI surveillance was launched at the end of 2020 among individuals aged 18 and older, newly diagnosed with HIV infection, and with no history of antiretroviral therapy.
- RHI surveillance is implemented as part of routine HIV testing services (HTS) exclusively in healthcare facilities (HCF).
- In Ukraine, RHI is determined using the following algorithm (RITA – Recent Infection Testing Algorithm):
 - ❖ First, testing is conducted using **a rapid test for RHI** (RTRI, Rapid Test for Recent Infection), which allows distinguishing recent HIV infection from long-term infection;
 - ❖ Next, **the HIV viral load** is measured in the blood of individuals who received a preliminary result suggesting probable RHI. If the RNA count exceeds 1,000 copies per milliliter of plasma, the case is confirmed as RHI.





Volumes of Testing (RTRI) and Detection of RHI cases (RITA) by Oblasts (December 2020–June 2026)

- The highest number of RTRI tests were performed in Dnipropetrovska oblast (5,744), the city of Kyiv (2,794), and Odeska oblast (2,350).
- The highest number of RHI cases (based on RITA) was identified in Dnipropetrovska oblast (131), Zaporizka oblast (68), and the city of Kyiv (61).





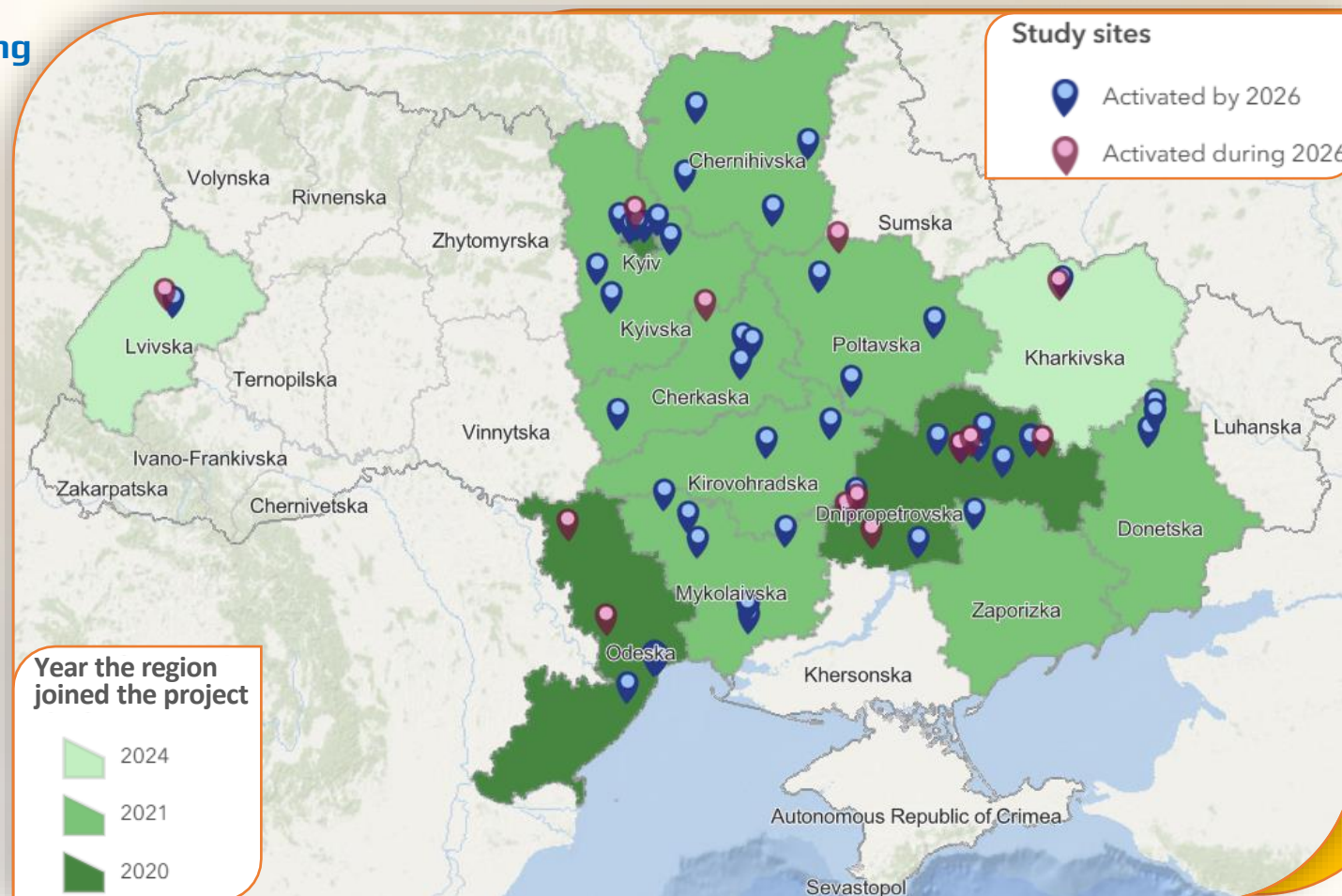
Regional Implementation of Surveillance for Recent Infection in Ukraine

In the first half of 2026, RHI testing was conducted across 13 oblasts at 67* healthcare facility-based HTS sites.

Number of HTS Sites Involved in RHI Testing in the First Half of 2026

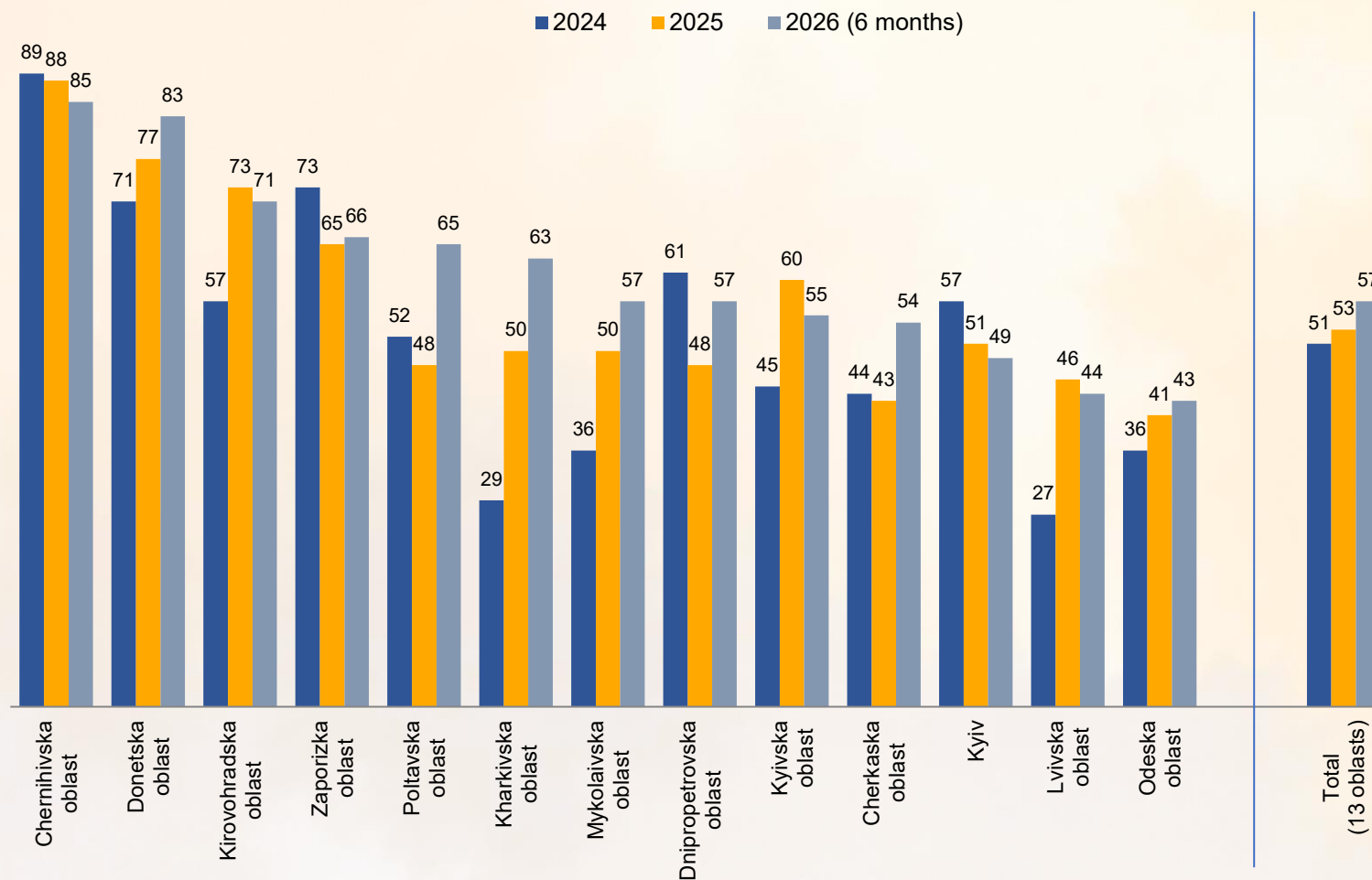
Dnipropetrovska oblast	16
Kyivska oblast	8
Odeska oblast	8
Mykolaivska oblast	7
Cherkaska oblast	5
Donetska oblast	4
Kyiv City	4
Poltavska oblast	4
Chernihivska oblast	4
Kirovohradska oblast	2
Lvivska oblast	2
Kharkivska oblast	2
Zaporizka oblast	1

* According to protocol v2.19 dated October 20, 2025, 68 sites were involved in the project. However, two sites were merged into one in Dnipropetrovska oblast, so 67 sites are currently operational.





RHI testing (RTRI) Coverage by Oblasts (%)



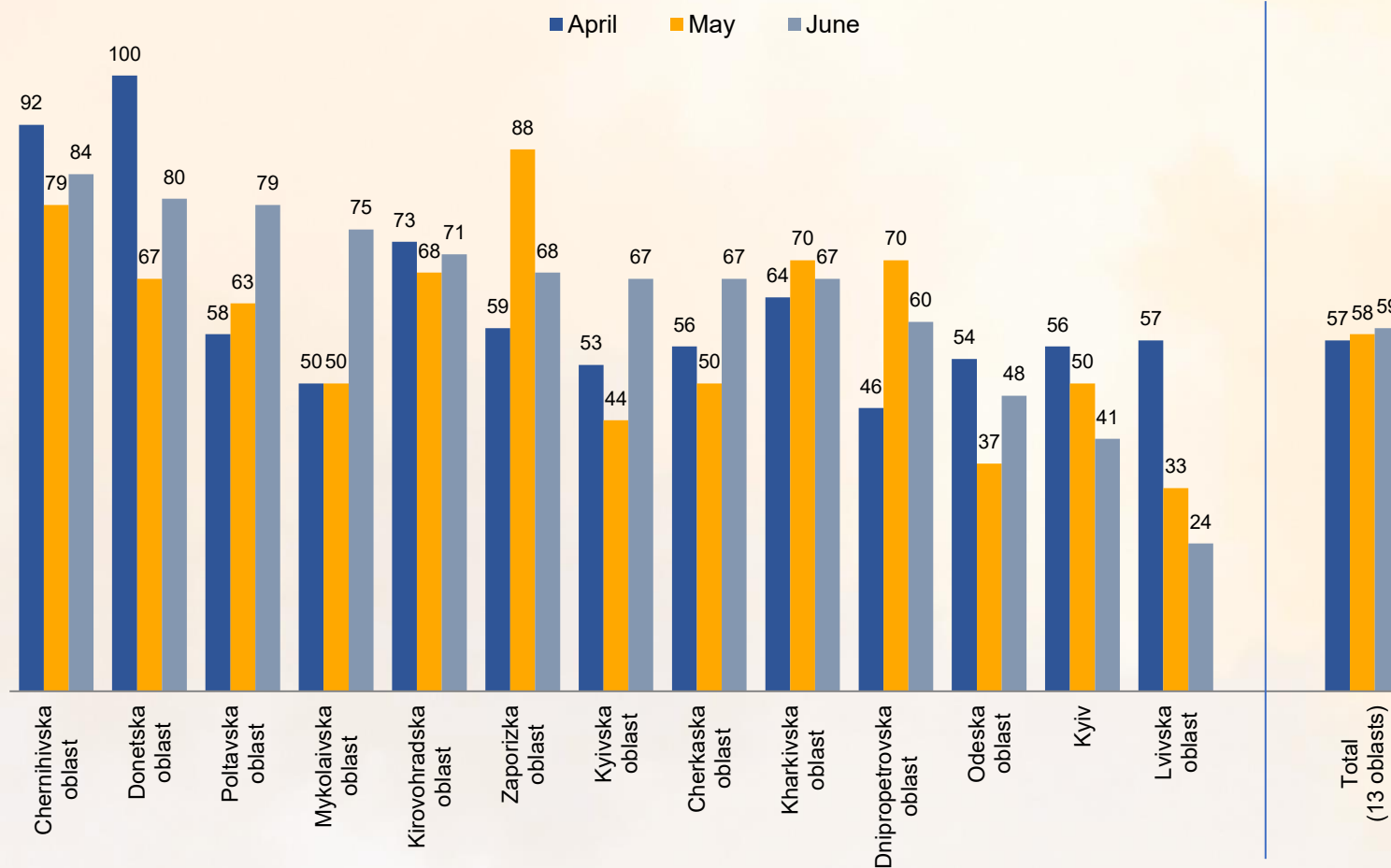
From 2024 through the first half of 2026, RTRI coverage among people newly diagnosed with HIV:

- increased from 51% to 57% overall across the 13 project oblasts;
- showed growth since 2024 in Donetska, Mykolaivska, Odeska, and Kharkivska oblasts;
- was highest in Chernihivska oblast ($\geq 85\%$);
- decreased in the city of Kyiv from 57% to 49%.

In Q1–Q2 2026, RTRI coverage exceeded 50% in 10 of the 13 project oblasts.



RTRI testing coverage in April–June 2026 (%)



In Q2 2026, monthly RTRI coverage across the 13 regions exceeded 50%, rising from 57% in April to 59% in June.

Maximum coverage rates ($\geq 80\%$) were recorded in the following oblasts:

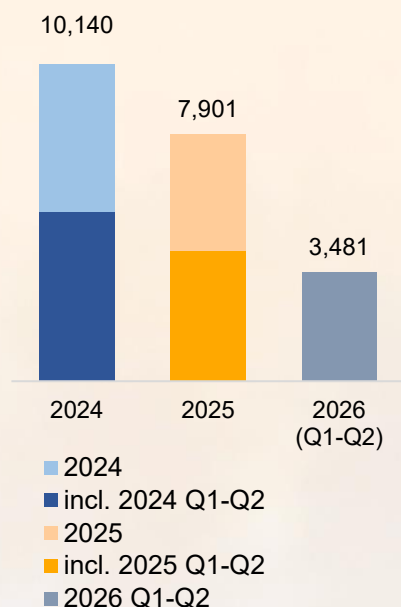
- 92% — Chernihivska oblast, April;
- 84% — Chernihivska oblast, June;
- 100% — Donetska oblast, April;
- 80% — Donetska oblast, June;
- 88% — Zaporizka oblast, May.

A decline in coverage rates during Q2 was observed in the city of Kyiv (from 56% to 41%) and in Lvivska oblast (from 57% to 24%).

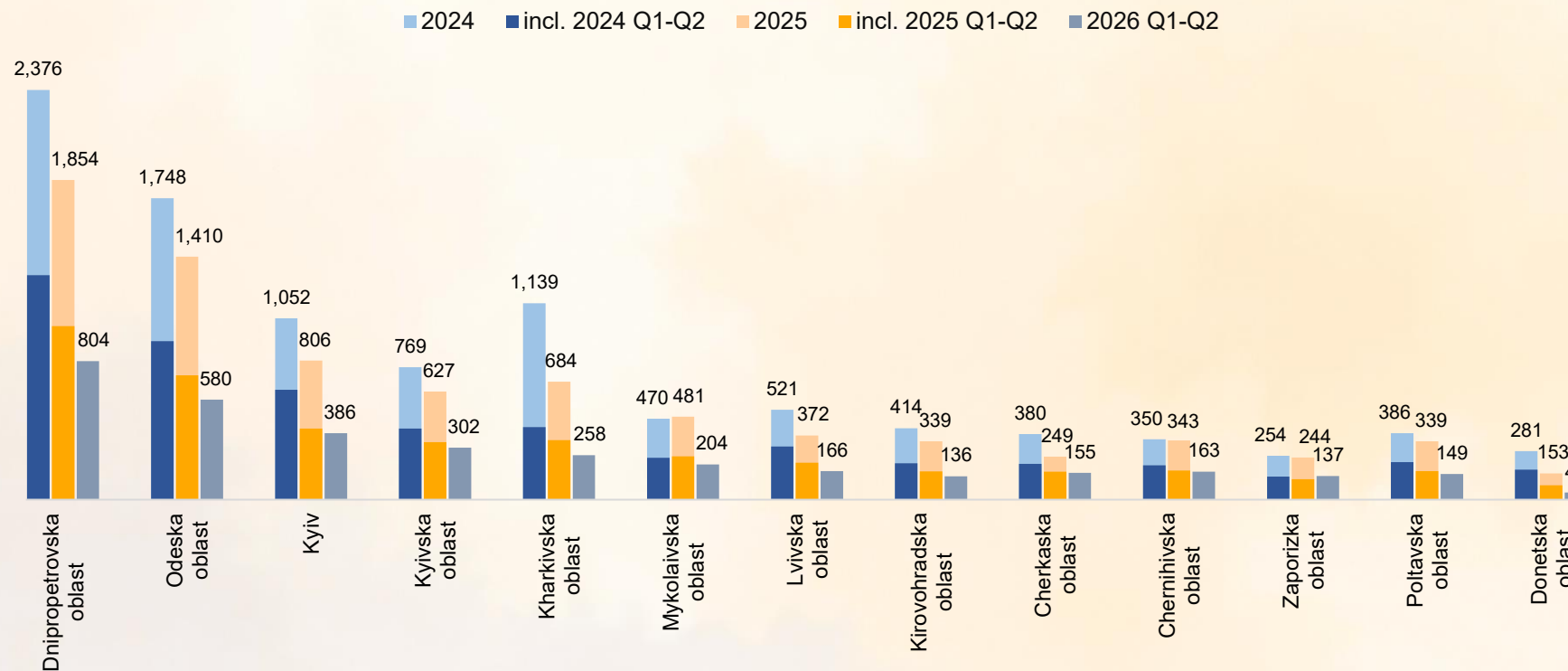


Number of Newly Diagnosed HIV Infections Based on Verification Testing

Total Newly Diagnosed HIV Infections in 13 Study Oblasts



Total Newly Diagnosed HIV Infections by Oblasts

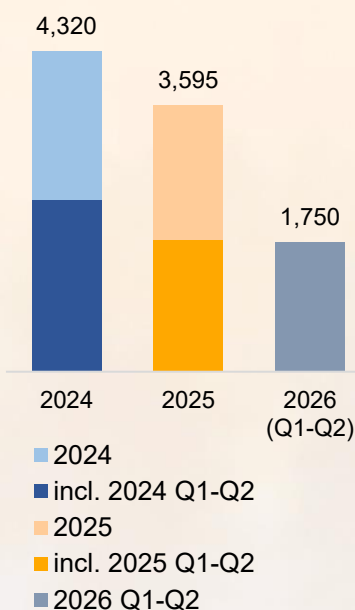


In the first half of 2026, the total number of new HIV cases across the 13 project regions was lower than in the same periods of 2024 and 2025. The number of new HIV diagnoses affects RTRI testing volumes, as individuals newly diagnosed with HIV-positive status are the target group for this testing.

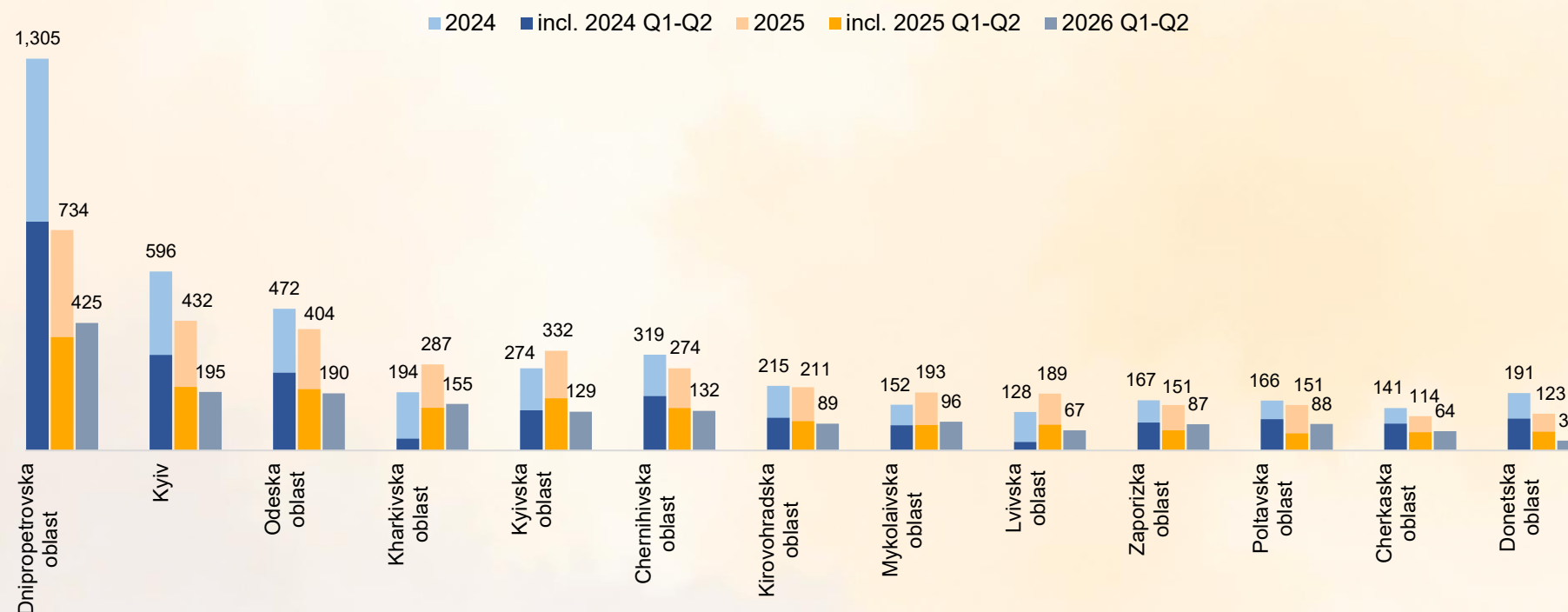


RHI Testing (RTRI) Volumes

RHI Testing (RTRI)
Volumes in 13 Study
Oblasts



RHI Testing (RTRI) Volumes by Oblasts

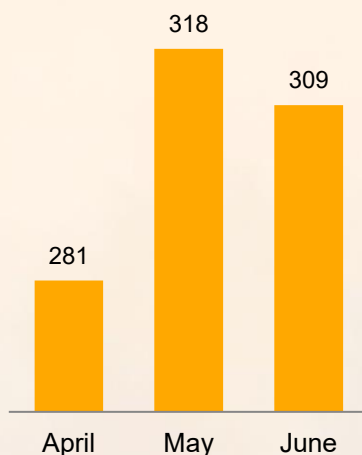


In the first half of 2026, the number of RHI (RTRI) tests remained almost at the level of the first half of 2025 (1,750 vs. 1,766 tests) and was 24% lower compared to the first half of 2024 (2,306 cases). The top regions by RHI testing volume in 2024, 2025, and the first half of 2026 were Dnipropetrovska oblast, the city of Kyiv, and Odesa oblast.

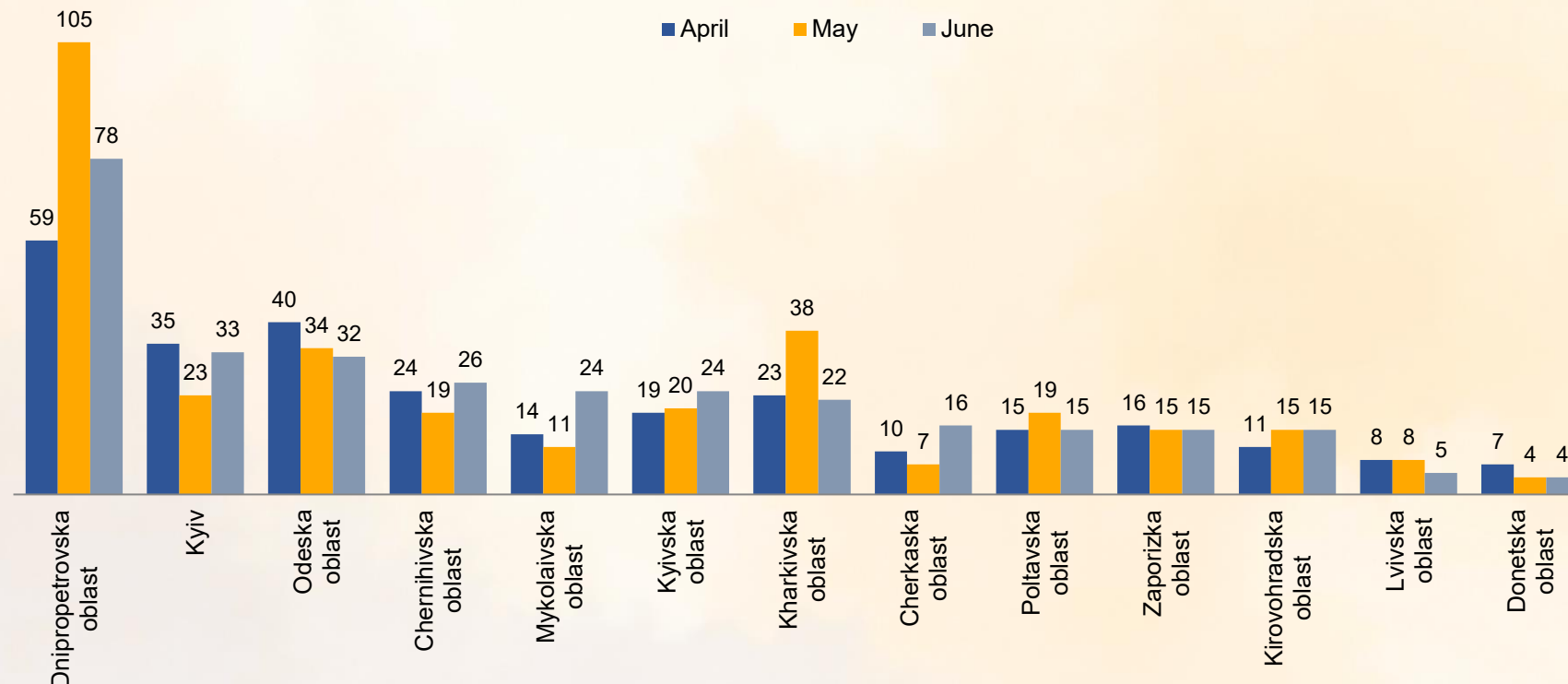


RHI (RTRI) testing volumes in April–June 2026

RHI Testing (RTRI)
Volumes in 13 Study
oblasts



RHI Testing (RTRI) Volumes by Oblasts

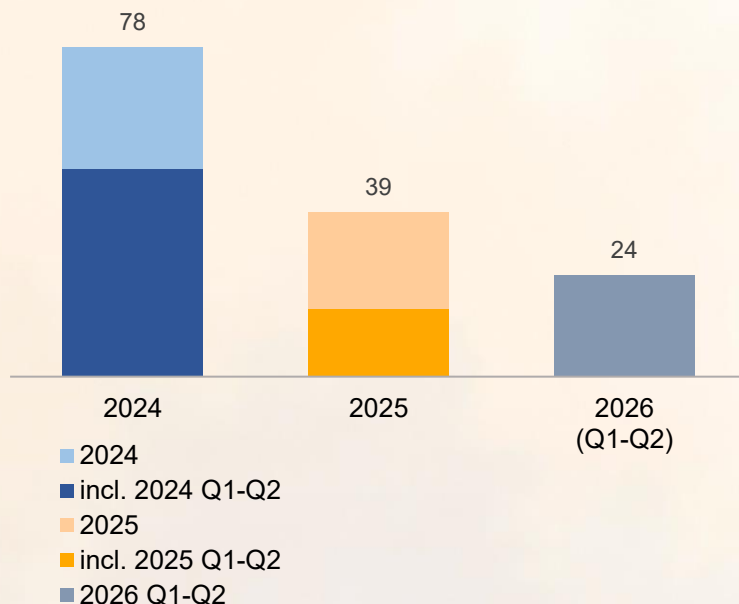


In Q2 2026, 908 RTRI tests were conducted across the 13 project oblasts, up 66 (8%) from Q1 2026, with the highest volume recorded in May (318).

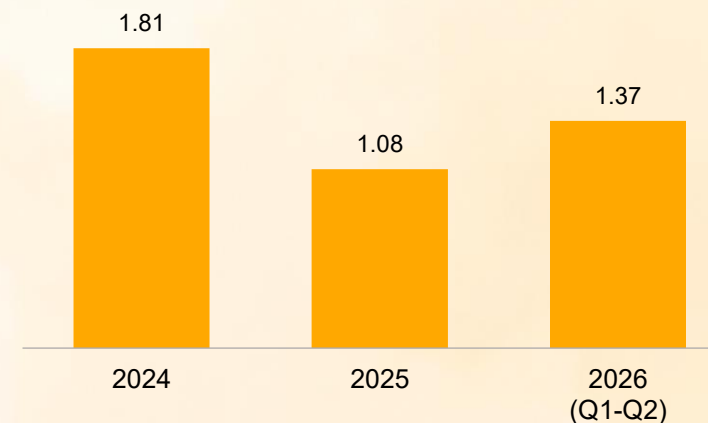


Results of RHI testing (RITA)

Number of RHI (by RITA) in 13 oblasts



Proportion of RHI cases (by RITA) among all tested for RHI (RTRI) in 13 oblasts



In 2025, across the 13 project oblasts, compared to 2024, the number of RHI cases (based on RITA) halved – from 78 to 39, while their proportion among individuals tested for RHI (RTRI) dropped from 1.81% to 1.08%. Based on the results of the first half of 2026, 24 RHI cases were identified, representing 1.37% of the total number of individuals tested for RHI (RTRI).



Results of RHI testing (RITA)

Quarterly Trends in RHI Case Detection by Oblast (2024 – 1st half of 2026)

	2024				2025				2026	
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
Dnipropetrovska obl.	■ ■ ■	■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■	■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■	■	■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■
Zaporizka obl.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■	■ ■	■ ■ ■	■	■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■		■ ■ ■ ■
Kyiv	■ ■	■	■	■		■ ■	■	■ ■ ■	■ ■	■ ■
Kyivska obl.	■ ■ ■		■	■		■ ■ ■	■ ■		■	
Chernihivska obl.	■	■ ■ ■ ■	■				■ ■		■	
Mykolaivska obl.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■							
Cherkaska obl.	■ ■ ■	■				■			■ ■ ■	
Odeska obl.	■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■					■		■
Kirovohradska obl.		■	■		■		■ ■		■	
Kharkivska obl.		■	■ ■ ■							
Poltavska obl.	■ ■	■ ■								■
Lvivska obl.		■		■			■			
Donetska obl.										■ ■
Total	26	23	18	11	6	10	15	8	10	14

■ – one RHI case

In the first half of 2026, 24 RHI cases were registered across 9 project regions, including 14 cases identified in Q2 across six regions: 4 cases each in Dnipropetrovska and Zaporizka oblasts, 2 cases each in the city of Kyiv and Donetska oblast, and 1 case each in Odeska and Poltavaska oblasts.



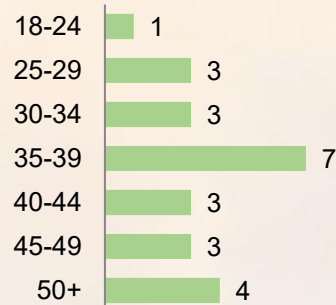
Results of RHI testing (RITA)

Sociodemographic Characteristics of RHI Cases, 1st half of 2026 (24 cases)*

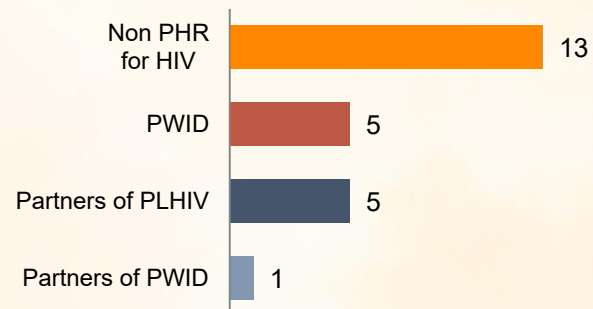
Sex



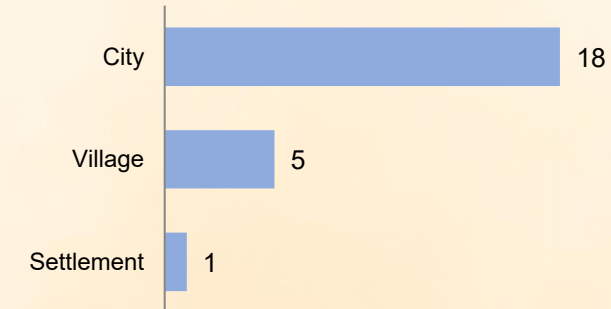
Age



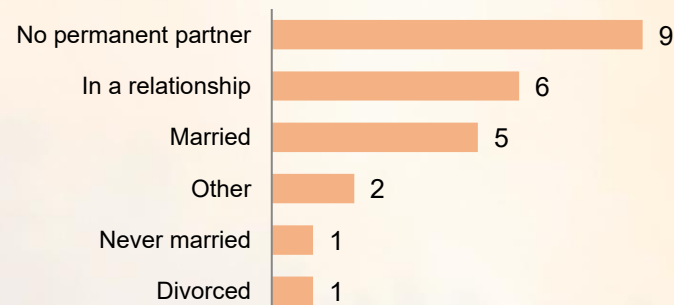
PHR for HIV



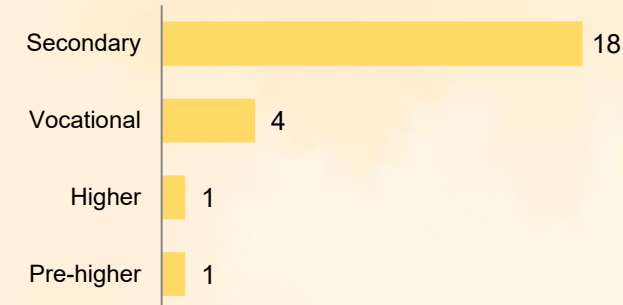
Settlement



Marital status



Education



- Men and women are equally represented among the identified RHI cases (50% each).
- The main age group was 35–39 years (29%).
- Most cases (54%) were recorded among the general population (non-PHR for HIV), while 46% of individuals belonged to PHR for HIV.
- Most individuals with recent HIV infection were neither in a relationship nor married (54%).
- The vast majority of individuals (75%) were urban residents.
- Individuals with secondary education predominated (75%).
- The sociodemographic characteristics of PHR for HIV and those who do not consider themselves to be in such groups do not differ significantly.

* Data source: HS Monitoring Tool and Report on the Analysis of RHI Cases



Results of RHI testing (RITA)

Quarterly Trends in the RITA-Recent Proportion* by Oblast (2024 – 1st half of 2026)

	2024				2025				2026	
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
Dnipropetrovska obl.	0.77%	0.54%	2.01%	2.05%	2.17%	1.04%	2.14%	0.59%	1.09%	1.65%
Zaporizka obl.	9.26%	10.26%	5.00%	8.82%	3.70%	5.00%	7.69%	6.67%		8.70%
Kyiv	1.39%	0.58%	0.59%	0.95%		1.67%	0.92%	2.73%	1.92%	2.20%
Kyivska obl.	4.05%		1.25%	1.67%		3.06%	2.70%		1.52%	
Chernihivska obl.	1.16%	4.21%	1.43%				2.86%		1.59%	
Mykolaivska obl.	11.11%	7.69%	3.13%							
Cherkaska obl.	6.00%	2.56%				2.63%			9.68%	
Odeska obl.	1.61%	2.22%	1.61%					1.09%		0.94%
Kirovohradska obl.		1.79%	1.56%		2.50%		3.13%		2.08%	
Kharkivska obl.		2.56%	3.85%							
Poltavska obl.	3.77%	3.92%								2.04%
Lvivska obl.		3.57%		1.92%			1.92%			
Donetska obl.										13.33%
Total	2.29%	1.97%	1.61%	1.24%	0.79%	1.00%	1.59%	0.91%	1.19%	1.54%

$$* \%RHI = \frac{\text{Number of Recent HIV Cases (by RITA)}}{\text{Total Number of Individuals Tested for Recency (RTRI)}} \times 100\%$$

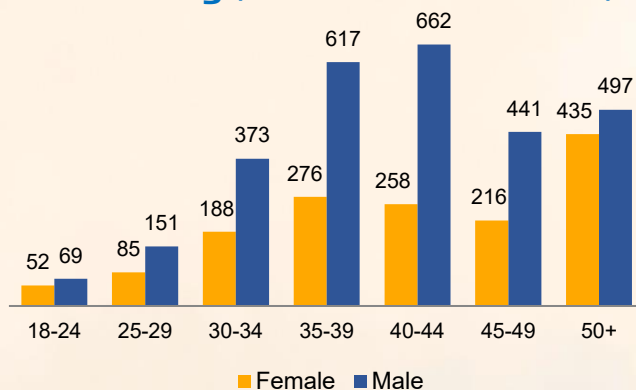
Compared to Q1, the RHI proportion (%RHI) in Q2 2026 overall across the 13 project regions increased from 1.19% to 1.54%. The highest values were recorded in Donetska (13.3%) and Zaporizka (8.7%) oblasts.



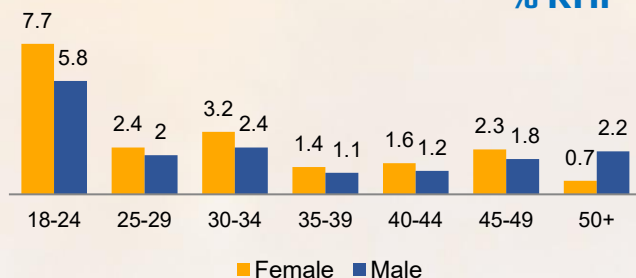
Distribution and Results of Testing for RHI by Age and Sex

2024

RHI Testing (number of individuals)

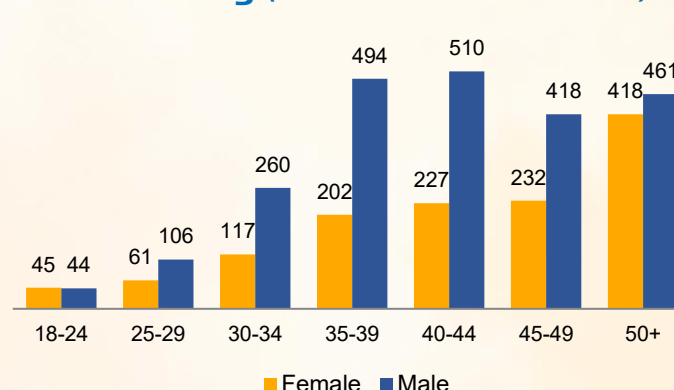


% RHI*

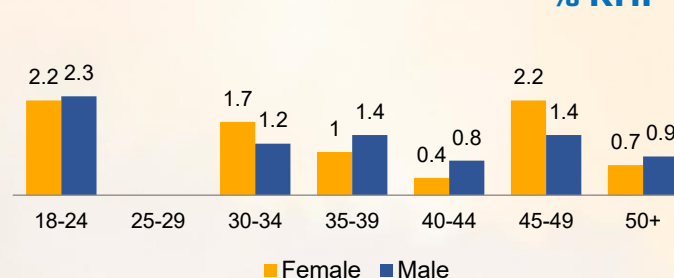


2025

RHI Testing (number of individuals)

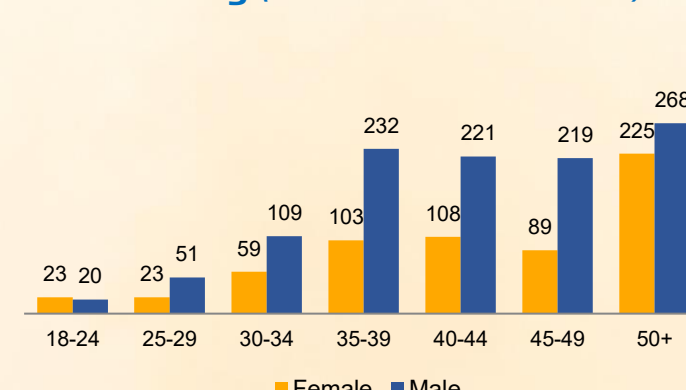


% RHI*

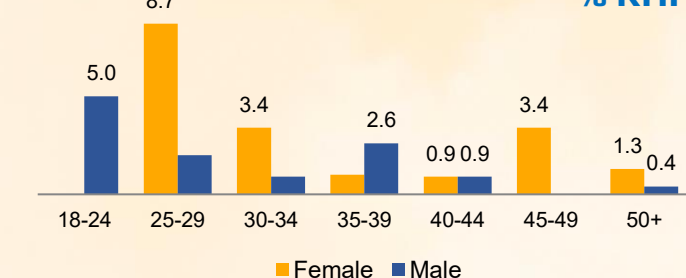


2026 (Q1-Q2)

RHI Testing (number of individuals)



% RHI*



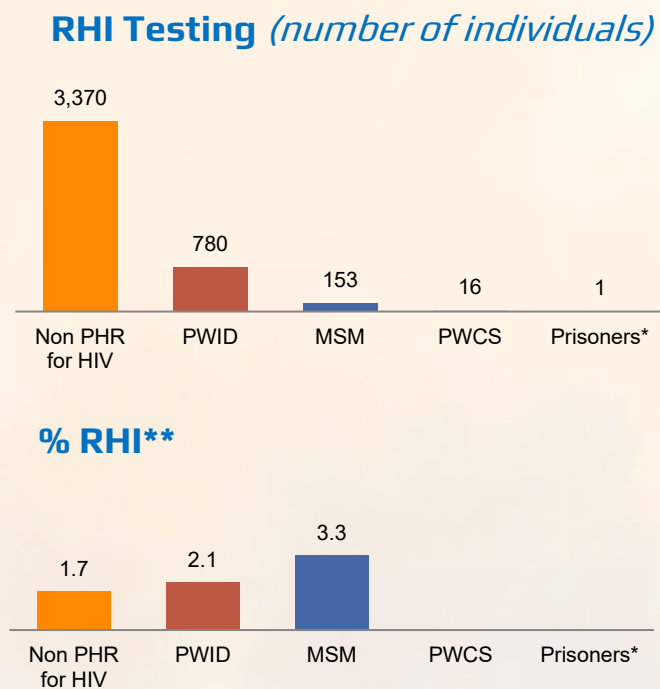
Throughout the observation period, the number of RHI tests (RTRI) was higher among men than women in most age groups. Testing volume was highest among individuals aged 35–39, 40–44, and aged 50 years and older, while lowest among those aged 18–24. Conversely, the highest proportion of RITA-recent cases among those tested (% RHI) was recorded in younger age groups: among women and men aged 18–24 in 2024 (7.7% and 5.8%, respectively), as well as among men aged 18–24 and women aged 25–29 in the first half of 2026 (5.0% and 8.7%, respectively).

* Proportion of RHI cases (RITA) among all those tested for RHI (RTRI)

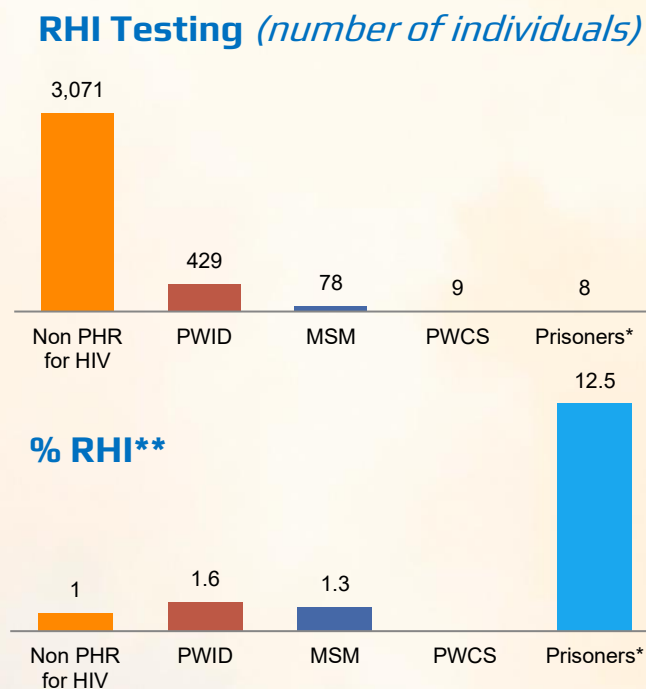


Structure and Results of RHI Testing by Persons at Higher Risk for HIV

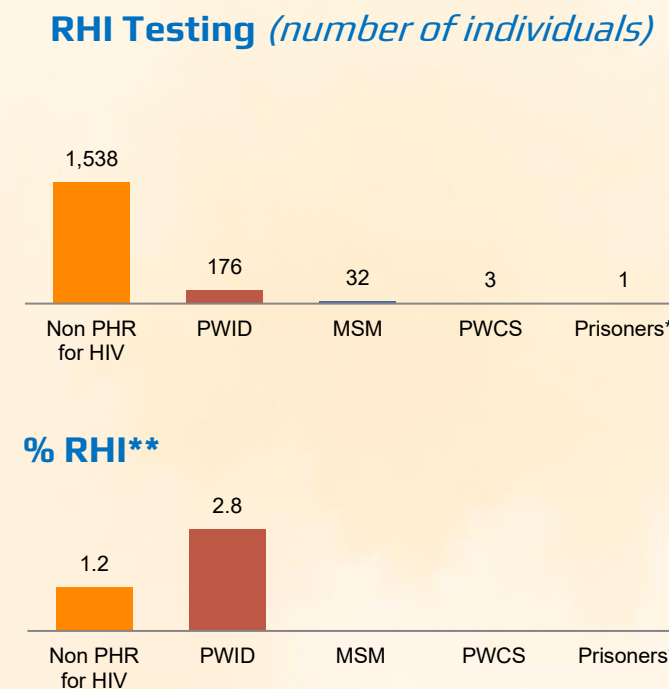
2024



2025



2026 (Q1-Q2)



The vast majority of individuals tested for RHI (RTRI) throughout the entire period were not PHR for HIV. The share of PHR for HIV in the testing structure gradually declined from 22% in 2024 to 12% in the first half of 2026. At the same time, the RHI proportion (based on RITA) among PHR for HIV exceeded that of the general population: among MSM, it was 1.3–1.9 times higher in 2024–2025, and among PWID, it was 1.2–1.6 times higher in 2024–2025 and 2.3 times higher in the first half of 2026. From 2024 through the first half of 2026, no RHI cases were recorded among people who engage in commercial sex, while 1 case was identified in 2025 (12.5%) among individuals with experience of imprisonment.

*People with experience of imprisonment

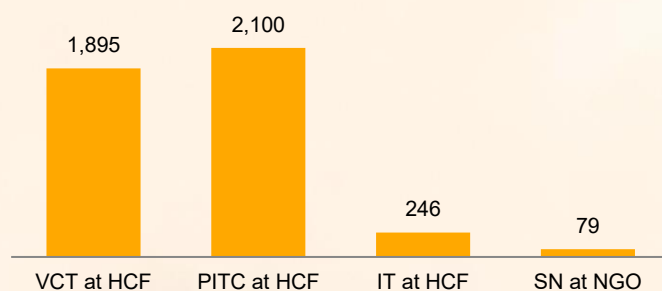
** Proportion of RHI cases (RITA) among all those tested for RHI (RTRI)



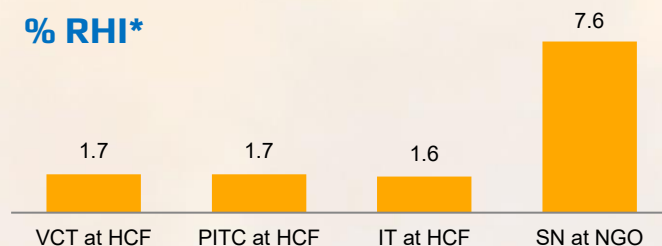
Structure and Results of RHI Testing by HTS Modalities

2024

RHI Testing (number of individuals)

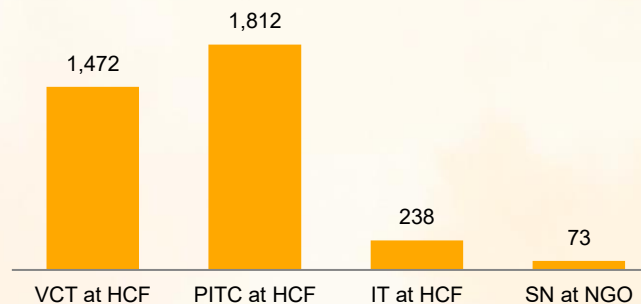


% RHI*

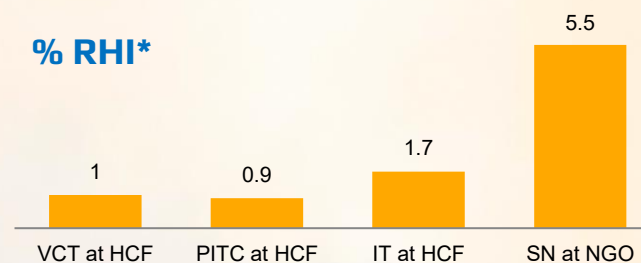


2025

RHI Testing (number of individuals)

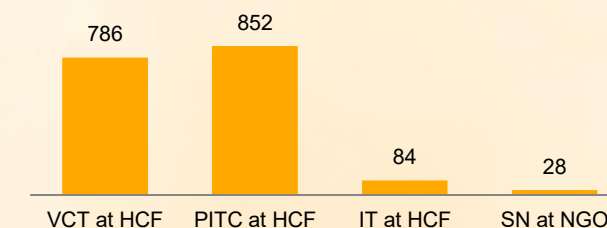


% RHI*

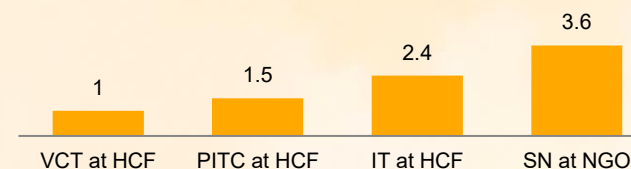


2026 (Q1–Q2)

RHI Testing (number of individuals)



% RHI*



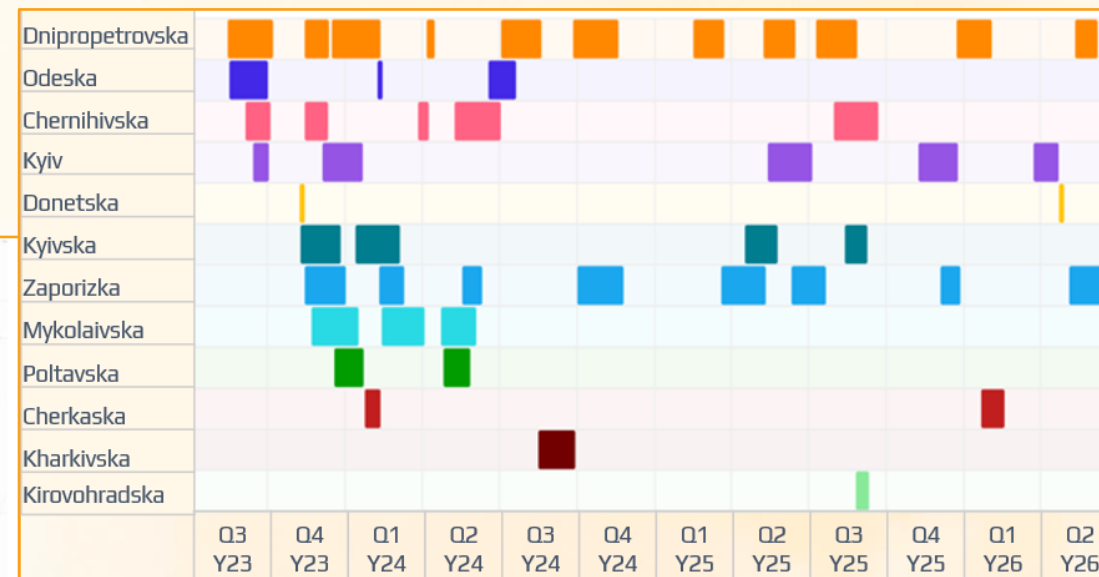
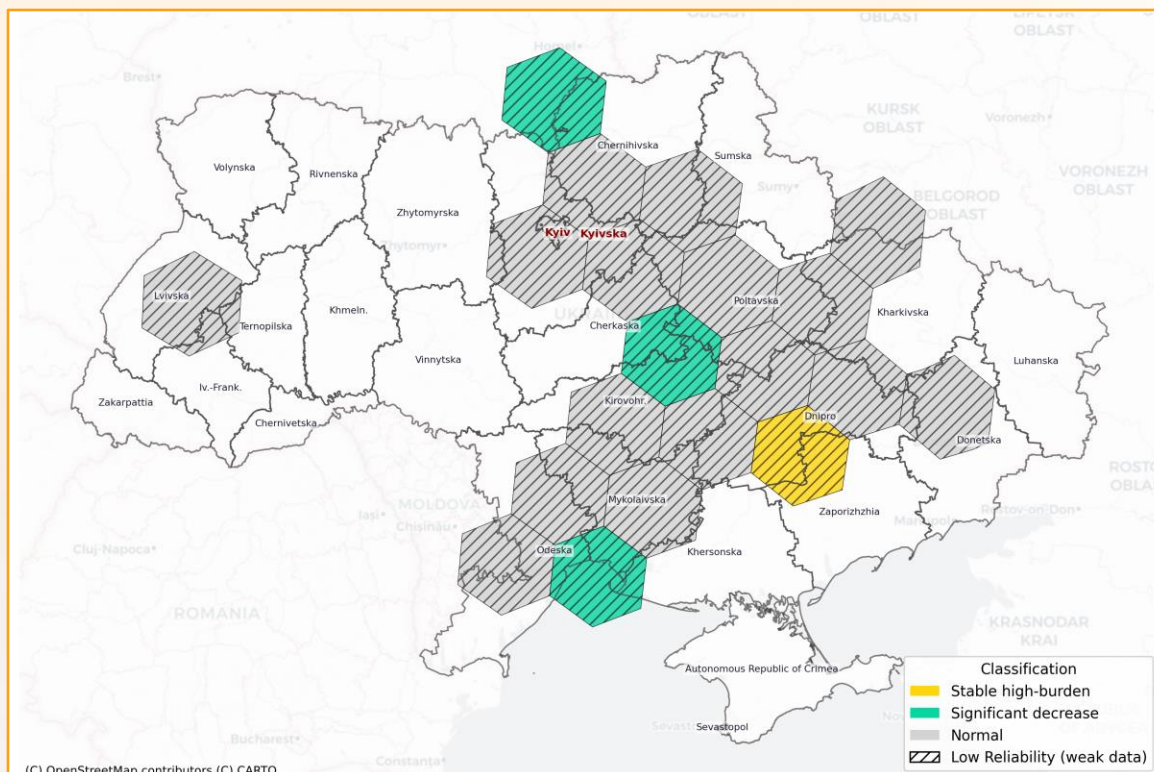
- From 2024 through the first half of 2026, the majority of RTRI tests were conducted among individuals who received provider-initiated testing and counseling (49–50%) or self-referral services (41–45%).
- The proportion of individuals tested via index testing ranged between 4.8–6.6%, while those recruited through social networks accounted for 1.6–2.0%.
- The highest RHI proportion (% RHI) was observed among individuals recruited by NGOs through social-network approaches: 7.6% in 2024, 5.5% in 2025, and 3.6% in the first half of 2026; however, a downward trend is observed.
- Conversely, the RHI proportion (% RHI) among those tested via index testing increased: from 1.6% in 2024 to 2.4% in the first half of 2026.

* Proportion of RHI cases (RITA) among all those tested for RHI (RTRI)



Hotspots in RHI Epidemiological Surveillance

Quantitative Hotspot Criterion: A single hotspot is defined as ≥ 2 RITA cases occurring within a single oblast, with an interval of up to 60 days between cases



The Dnipropetrovska and Zaporizka oblasts lead in the number of HSs. Using Bayesian hierarchical analysis of the % RHI indicator for the second quarter of 2026, a spatial “hotspot” was identified along the border between the Dnipropetrovska and Zaporizka oblasts (a similar cluster was also observed in the previous quarter). It indicates areas where the % RHI is statistically higher than the baseline across the 13 project regions, which may suggest more intense HIV transmission.

At the same time, based on quantitative criteria, “hotspots” were identified in the Dnipropetrovska, Zaporizka, and Donetsk oblasts, as well as in Kyiv City.



Final Training on Recent HIV Infection Surveillance



On July 6–7, 2026, a wrap-up training session was held in Kyiv to summarize national and regional results of testing for recent HIV infection from 2020 to 2026, facilitate the exchange of experiences among regional teams, and identify areas for improving the HIV surveillance system.





Hands-On Training on Quality Assurance for Testing for Recent HIV Infection



On July 8–9, 2026, a training session on quality assurance for testing for recent HIV infection was held for regional specialists. During the session, participants reviewed the results of the 2025 external quality assessment program for laboratory testing titled “Detection of Recent HIV Infection Using the Asanté™ HIV-1 Rapid Recency® Assay,” identified the causes of errors, and developed measures to address them. Participants also worked through practical case studies on the provision of HIV testing services.

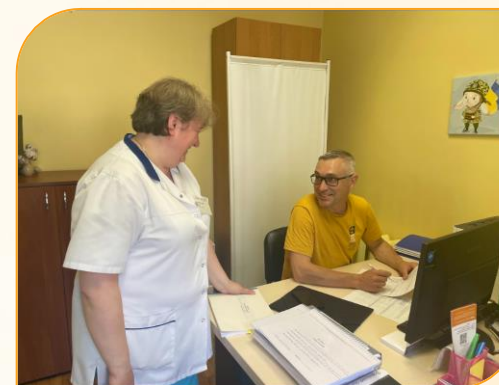




Monitoring visits (2026)



Municipal Enterprise
“Dnipropetrovsk Regional
Medical Center for Socially
Significant Diseases” of
the Dnipropetrovsk
Regional Council; Dnipro,
Dnipropetrovsk
oblast



Phthisiopulmonology
Department, Municipal Non-
Profit Enterprise of the Kyiv
Regional Council “Kyiv Regional
Specialized Medical Center”;
Boyarka, Kyivska oblast

25.06

26.06

16.07

17.07

Municipal Non-Profit
Enterprise “City Clinical
Hospital No. 4” of the
Dnipro City Council; Dnipro,
Dnipropetrovsk
oblast

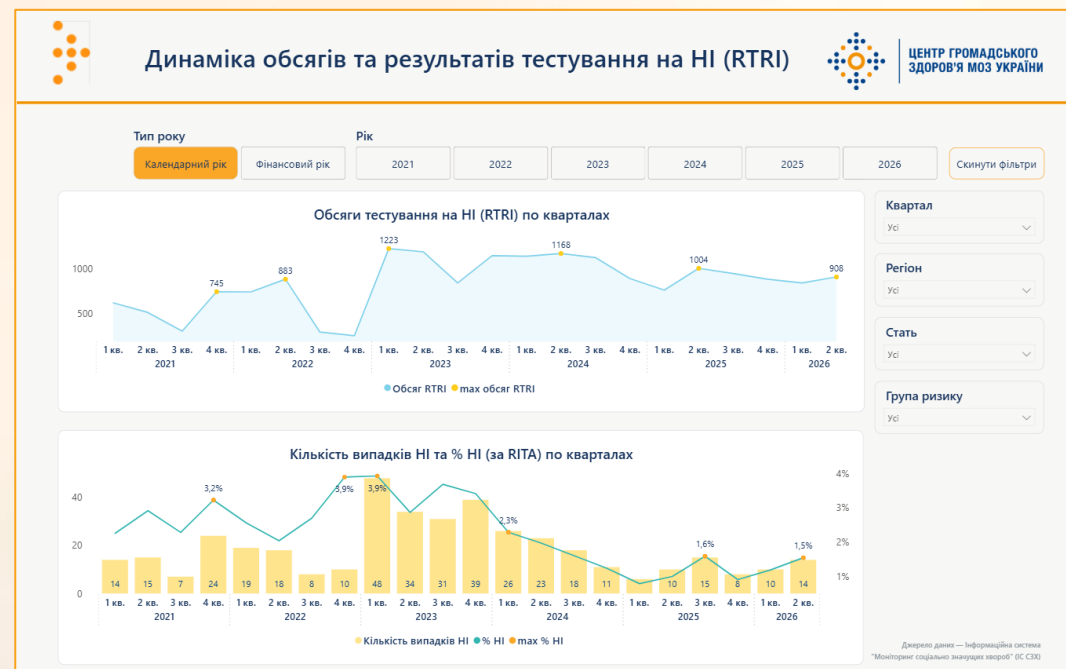


Outpatient and Polyclinic
Department for the
Treatment of HIV-Positive
Patients / AIDS Patients,
Municipal Non-Profit
Enterprise of the Lviv
Regional Council “Lviv
Regional
Phthisiopulmonology Clinical
Treatment and Diagnostic
Center”; Lviv, Lvivska oblast





Update to the Information and Analytical Dashboard on Epidemiological Surveillance of Recent HIV Infection https://npsi.phc.org.ua/HIV_Monitoring



For user convenience, the dashboard includes the following features:

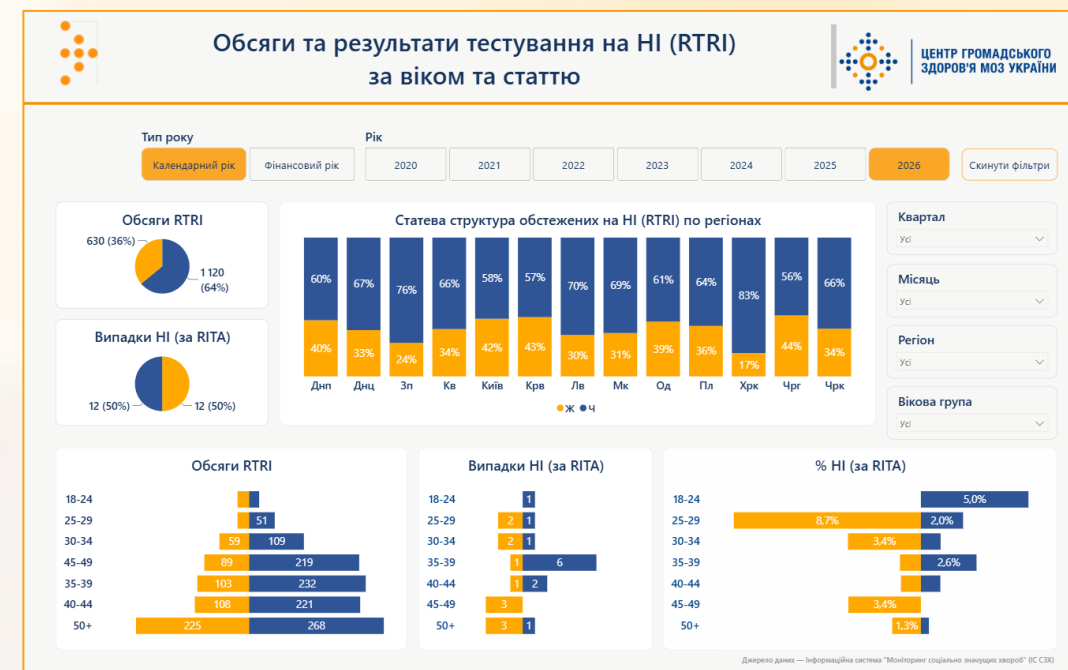
Time periods: Switch between calendar and fiscal years and drill down to the quarterly or monthly level.

Filtering: Flexible filters by region, sex, age group, and risk group.

Data analysis: Combine parameters to quickly assess metrics across specific target groups and regions.

The updated dashboard provides information on:

- the number of RTRI sites by region;
- RTRI/RHI testing coverage by region and at individual sites;
- quarterly trends in RHI testing volumes and % of RHI;
- RHI testing volumes and results by age, sex, population/risk groups, and HTS modalities;
- monthly trends in RHI cases and % of RHI.





Summary

- Expanding geographic coverage of RHI testing among new HIV cases: in the first half of 2026, RHI testing was conducted at 67 healthcare-facility-based HTS sites, including 13 sites activated in April–May of this year.
- Between 2024 and the first half of 2026, RHI testing coverage among people newly diagnosed with HIV rose from 51% to 57%.
- The main HTS modalities through which HIV testing was conducted were healthcare provider-initiated testing (49–50%) and self-referral to healthcare facilities (41–45%).
- The proportion of people at higher risk for HIV among those tested for RHI has been gradually decreasing – from 22% in 2024 to 12% in the first half of 2026.
- From 2024 through the first half of 2026, the highest number of RHI cases was recorded in the Dnipropetrovska, Zaporizka oblasts, as well as in the city of Kyiv. In the second quarter of 2026, “hotspots” were recorded in the Dnipropetrovska, Zaporizka, and Donetsk oblasts, as well as in the city of Kyiv.
- The RITA-recent proportion among those tested (1.54%) increased slightly compared with the first quarter of 2026 (1.19%). The highest RITA-recent proportion among those tested was recorded in the Donetsk (13.3%) and Zaporizka (8.7%) oblasts.
- The highest RHI percentages were recorded among young people aged 18–24 (2.2–6.6% from 2024 through the first half of 2026) and 25–29 (2.1% in 2024 and 4.1% in the first half of 2026), regardless of sex.
- The effectiveness of index testing is improving: the RHI rate rose from 1.6% in 2024 to 2.4% in the first half of 2026.
- The highest RITA-recent proportion among those tested remains among individuals referred to healthcare facilities by NGOs – 3.6% in the first half of 2026 (compared with 7.6% in 2024).
- People who inject drugs (PWID) remain a priority group for implementing preventive measures: the RHI rate among PWID was 1.2 times higher than that of the general population in 2024, 1.6 times higher in 2025, and 2.3 times higher in the first half of 2026.
- Among MSM, the RITA-recent proportion among those tested was 1.3–1.9 times higher than in the general population; however, no RHI cases were reported among MSM in the first half of 2026.





General Recommendations

- Increase RHI testing coverage among individuals newly diagnosed with HIV and ensure systematic monitoring of the completeness of RHI testing across all project sites.
- Strengthen early detection of HIV by combining various testing modalities in healthcare facilities to achieve broad coverage of HIV/RHI testing across different population groups, particularly by expanding index testing.
- Increase HIV/RHI testing coverage among populations at higher risk of HIV through social-network approaches and other active outreach efforts by HIV-service NGOs.
- Prioritize HIV prevention measures in the Dnipropetrovska, Zaporizka, and Donetska oblasts and in the city of Kyiv, focusing on identified “hotspots.”
- Strengthen comprehensive prevention measures for people who inject drugs (PWID), ensuring access to HIV testing, PrEP, harm reduction programs, and other prevention and medical services.
- Support and expand testing and prevention services for MSM, ensuring accessibility through targeted, confidential, and community-friendly services.
- Expand access to HTS services for young people aged 18–29 outside healthcare facilities by leveraging universities, social media, and digital platforms, and by combining testing with informational and motivational activities focused on early detection and prevention of HIV and STIs.





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More detailed information on testing for recent HIV infection can be found on this **interactive dashboard**:



Previous issues of the digest (in Ukrainian and English) can be found here:



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