

## Unbeatable Combination: Rapid Test + Word-of-Mouth



Based in Snellville, Georgia, about 25 miles from downtown Atlanta, Ron DeLay began offering rapid HIV testing to consumers of Gwinnett/Rockdale/Newton Community Service Board in 2004. “The biggest plus is that people don’t have to wait for their results. I’m post-test counseling 100%,” says Ron with pride.

DeLay, who offers HIV prevention counseling and testing to all comers at GRN, has found that like most consumers, injection drug users are more apt to agree to a rapid test. “The people I aim to test are IV drug users – that’s the crowd I want to attract. When I say it’s going to take 20 minutes to get their re-

sults, I get a lot more people coming forward.”

*“The people I aim to test are IV drug users. When I say it’s going to take 20 minutes to get their results, I get a lot more people coming forward.”*

Another high-risk group that Ron serves is Hispanics. After having to give a young Latino positive HIV-test results through an interpreter, Ron learned Spanish. “I decided that I can’t give positive results to another person through an interpreter ever again.” He used Rosetta Stone

software to learn basic Spanish. “Now I can understand what my consumers are saying. It’s a big, big plus because there are a lot of Latin people in this area.” In a recent marketing coup, Ron’s name and number appear in a recurring public service announcement on the Spanish-language network TV

*Unbeatable Combination: Rapid Test + Word of Mouth—Ron DeLay*  
*Continued from page 4*

Telemundo offering free HIV testing. “I’ve already had five people this week,” declares Ron. “I’m just thrilled!”

When one consumer refers another, it’s high praise. And Ron works for his referrals, giving out his business card, asking consumers to pass the word to anyone they know who is using injection drugs. “I can’t stress enough the importance of word of mouth,” says Ron. “One person will hear from someone whose sister got tested here and before you know it they

decide to get tested too.” Ron also works at making it easy to test. “I have drop-in days, usually on Mondays, when people can just drop in and be tested.”

*After having to give a young Latino positive HIV-test results through an interpreter, Ron learned Spanish.*

One of the challenges of the epidemic in this country is that roughly a quarter of the people who are HIV-positive do not know their status. And a sizeable portion of those who agree to the test never return for their results. Ron knows this first hand. “When I was using OraSure in the detox unit, I had to tell people that they needed to come back to get their results. One person in five showed up. Now I don’t have that problem anymore because they get their results while they’re sitting there.”