

# Supporting HIV+ Clients

“We want to be so much more than just a program that provides medication - not only counseling and groups but HIV testing.”

Ali McCorkle, DM & ADR, Athens



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**DM & ADR** was one of the first MAT clinics in Georgia to offer HIV testing. Program director Ali McCorkle says that's because DM & ADR takes a whole health approach to recovery. “Conducting HIV testing shows that we care; it's not just about addiction.”

“We have treated many patients that have had HIV over the years,” says Ali McCorkle. “But I've only given one new HIV diagnosis. I'll never forget it. I still remember the feeling of dread.” But says Ali, the client was very responsible

and today they are healthy. “Because they were so ill at the time, there's no doubt in my mind that they would not be here today if they hadn't immediately entered medical treatment.”

She sees a direct correlation to their recovery, “I think it did wonders. I think it was good for their self-esteem. They took a lot of pride in the way they handled it and in being so healthy now. They were co-infected with HIV and hepatitis C and both viruses are undetectable now.”

When a client tests HIV-negative, says Ali, their recovery also gets a boost. “There's a huge sense of relief for them. They don't have to worry about it any more; they can focus on their recovery.”

Looking back on more than a decade of

participation in the HIV EIS program, Ali offered this to her peers: “In the beginning the training and the paperwork can be a challenge, but once you figure out how to implement it, it's easy.”

HIV testing - and HCV testing - are part of our routine now. And we're grateful that we're

## HIV Early Intervention Services (EIS)

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