

## STRATEGIC FOCUS

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) office opened in Lesotho in 2007. CDC supports an integrated continuum of services for HIV and tuberculosis (TB), including improvements in public health policies, prevention, treatment, health management information systems, and laboratory capacity. In close partnership with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and implementing partners, CDC plays an integral role in providing technical assistance (TA) and administrative leadership in its program areas.

### Comprehensive HIV Treatment and Prevention Services

CDC works closely with the MOH and other in-country partners to scale-up HIV prevention and treatment services including preventing mother-to-child HIV transmission, HIV testing, antiretroviral therapy (ART) initiation services, integrated TB/HIV service delivery, and program activities using a targeted, district-based approach. CDC provides technical leadership in building human capacity for HIV/TB treatment programs through direct TA and mentoring health workers.

### Strengthening Laboratory Systems

CDC provides TA to implement quality laboratory systems, diagnostic and monitoring tests, and new technologies. CDC, in partnership with its implementing partners, provides the necessary technical expertise in developing local capacity for effective coordination of laboratory programs, diagnostic services, and information systems to improve service quality.

### Strengthening Strategic Information

CDC and its implementing partners support Lesotho's efforts to implement surveys and surveillance, monitoring and evaluation, and health information systems needed to advance the national HIV response, guide public health programming, and use data to drive decision-making and policy implementation.

## KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**HIV Treatment Services:** CDC has supported national implementation of the World Health Organization's Consolidated Guidelines on the Use of Antiretroviral Drugs for Treating and Preventing HIV Infection. Lesotho was the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to implement the HIV diagnosis and treatment strategy "Test and Start" nationwide. CDC's treatment support services are focused in four of Lesotho's ten districts (Berea, Leribe, Qacha's Nek, and Quthing).

**TB/HIV:** CDC has worked closely with the MOH to improve ART uptake among those living with HIV and infected with TB. Approximately 62% of TB patients in Lesotho are co-infected with HIV. CDC-funded HIV clinical services integrate TB activities to identify and treat TB/HIV co-infection, increase uptake of TB preventive treatment, and enhance rapid TB case finding and treatment.

**HIV Testing Services:** CDC provides TA to improve the quality, cost-effectiveness, and expansion of HIV testing services. New initiatives include HIV self-testing, index testing and partner notification, recency testing, and use of an evidence-informed risk screening tool in health facilities.

**Laboratory:** CDC has led TA to Lesotho's laboratory systems and capacity development. CDC has supported expanding the number of facilities and assisted in improving the quality of viral load (VL) testing. CDC has also procured VL tests, early infant diagnosis laboratory test reagents, and TB test supplies for the national program. Lesotho has developed the capacity to provide routine VL testing to monitor all patients receiving HIV treatment.

**Strategic Information:** CDC supported the second Lesotho Population-based HIV Impact Assessment (LePHIA), a national survey conducted in 2020 that included HIV risk factors, incidence and biomarkers. Results demonstrated that 90% of persons  $\geq 15$  years of age living with HIV had been diagnosed, 97% of those diagnosed were on ART, and 92% on treatment were virally suppressed. These results indicate that Lesotho reached the UNAIDS goal of 90-90-90 by 2020 and is well positioned to meet the goal of 95-95-95 by 2025. The UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets are, by 2030: 95 percent of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status; 95 percent of all people with diagnosed HIV will receive sustained ART; and 95 percent of all people receiving ART will have viral suppression.

### Key Country Leadership

Prime Minister:  
Moeketsi Majoro

Minister of Health:  
Semano Sekatle

U.S. Ambassador:  
Rebecca Gonzales

CDC/DGHT Director:  
Andrew Pelletier

### Country Quick Facts ([worldbank.org/en/where-we-work](http://worldbank.org/en/where-we-work))

Per Capita GNI:  
\$1,100 (2020)

Population (millions):  
2.14 (2020)

Under 5 Mortality:  
86/1,000 live births (2019)

Life Expectancy:  
54 years (2019)

### Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic ([aidsinfo.unaids.org](http://aidsinfo.unaids.org))

Estimated HIV Prevalence  
(Ages 15-49): 21.1% (2020)

Estimated AIDS Deaths  
(Age  $\geq 15$ ): 4,300 (2020)

Estimated Orphans Due to  
AIDS: 100,000 (2020)

Reported Number  
Receiving Antiretroviral  
Therapy (ART) (Age  $\geq 15$ ):  
225,730 (2020)

### Global Tuberculosis (TB) Epidemic ([who.int/tb/country/data/profiles/en](http://who.int/tb/country/data/profiles/en))

Estimated TB Incidence:  
654/100,000 population  
(2019)

TB Patients with Known HIV  
Status who are HIV-Positive:  
62% (2019)

TB Treatment Success Rate:  
77% (2018)

Estimated TB Mortality:  
224/100,000 population  
(2019)

### DGHT Country Staff: 12

Locally Employed Staff: 7  
Direct Hires: 4  
Fellows & Contactors: 1

Our success is built on the backbone of science and strong partnerships.

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