

Vital Signs

Vital Signs™

Eliminating HIV as a Global Public Health Threat
Building on Tremendous Progress Will Save Lives and Make the World Safer

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300x

95%

62%

The number of people on lifesaving HIV treatment through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) increased 300 times from just 66,500 individuals in 2004 to over 20 million people in 2022.

The percent of people with HIV on PEPFAR-supported treatment worldwide with a viral load test that were virally suppressed* increased from 80% in 2015 to 95% in 2022.

*Virally suppressed refers to people who, thanks to treatment, have their virus under control. This can prevent transmission of HIV to sexual partners and helps reduce the risk of transmission from mothers to children.

CDC supports the majority (62%) of people receiving lifesaving antiretroviral therapy† through PEPFAR.

†Antiretroviral therapy (ART) is treatment for HIV.

Overview

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, was announced in 2003. One year later, PEPFAR began efforts to expand treatment for people with HIV. Effective HIV treatment helps those with HIV live longer, healthier lives. It can prevent transmission of the virus to sexual partners and helps reduce the risk of transmission from mothers to children. This, in turn, reduces new infections overall. As a result, increasing access to effective HIV treatment is critical to efforts to eliminate HIV as a global public health threat.

Since 2004, PEPFAR's efforts to scale up HIV treatment have transformed the global HIV epidemic and saved millions of lives. The number of people with HIV receiving lifesaving treatment through PEPFAR increased an astonishing 300 times from just 66,500 people in 2004 to more than 20 million people in 2022.

Between 2015 and 2022, the percentage of people receiving HIV treatment through PEPFAR who had a viral load test and were virally suppressed also increased from 80% to 95%. Virally suppressed refers to people who, thanks to treatment, have their virus under control.

When it was launched, PEPFAR became the largest commitment by any nation to address a single disease in history. At the time, HIV was a global crisis, devastating families, communities, and economies worldwide—particularly in sub-Saharan African countries.

In many countries around the world, lack of access to lifesaving HIV treatment and weak health systems meant that an HIV diagnosis almost certainly led to death.

As the lead public health agency of PEPFAR, CDC plays a critical role in fighting the global HIV epidemic in more than 50 countries. CDC brings more than 30 years' experience and a combination of scientific and technical expertise to bear in the fight against one of the world's deadliest infectious diseases. In fact, today, CDC and its government and non-governmental partners support the majority (62%) of all people on PEPFAR-supported HIV treatment.

PEPFAR's work to strengthen health systems around the globe is also helping countries respond not only to HIV but to other public health crises, such as COVID-19, improving our overall global health security. CDC has been at the forefront of these efforts, maximizing our long-standing relationships with ministries of health and local partners, strengthening laboratory systems, training and supporting health care workers, and enhancing disease monitoring systems as part of PEPFAR. As a result, these efforts are helping countries respond to their HIV epidemics while also preparing them for future health threats.

Moving forward, as part of PEPFAR's five-year strategy, the United States aims to eliminate HIV as a global public health threat by 2030. This work is far from done.

To achieve this 2030 goal, the global health community must:

- Sustain efforts to drive down new HIV infections and deaths among all affected populations,
- Reduce inequities that prevent access to lifesaving HIV services, and
- Strengthen the public health systems that help make the world a safer place for us all.

[Read the full MMWR](#)

Challenges

Gaps remain: Despite tremendous achievements over the past 20 years, significant gaps remain.

Continued inequities: Today, people from certain groups, including youth, men, and several key populations, have been and continue to be left behind because of health inequities.

- The report shows that while viral load suppression rates have reached 95% overall, certain groups—including individuals who are pregnant and breastfeeding, children, adolescents, and people living in prisons—have yet to achieve comparable rates.
- The data also show population viral load suppression rates were lower in men when compared to women and lower in younger people when compared to older people.

Challenges

Specific populations continue to be left behind.



Advance Health Equity

End inequities that prevent access to lifesaving HIV treatment and prevention services.



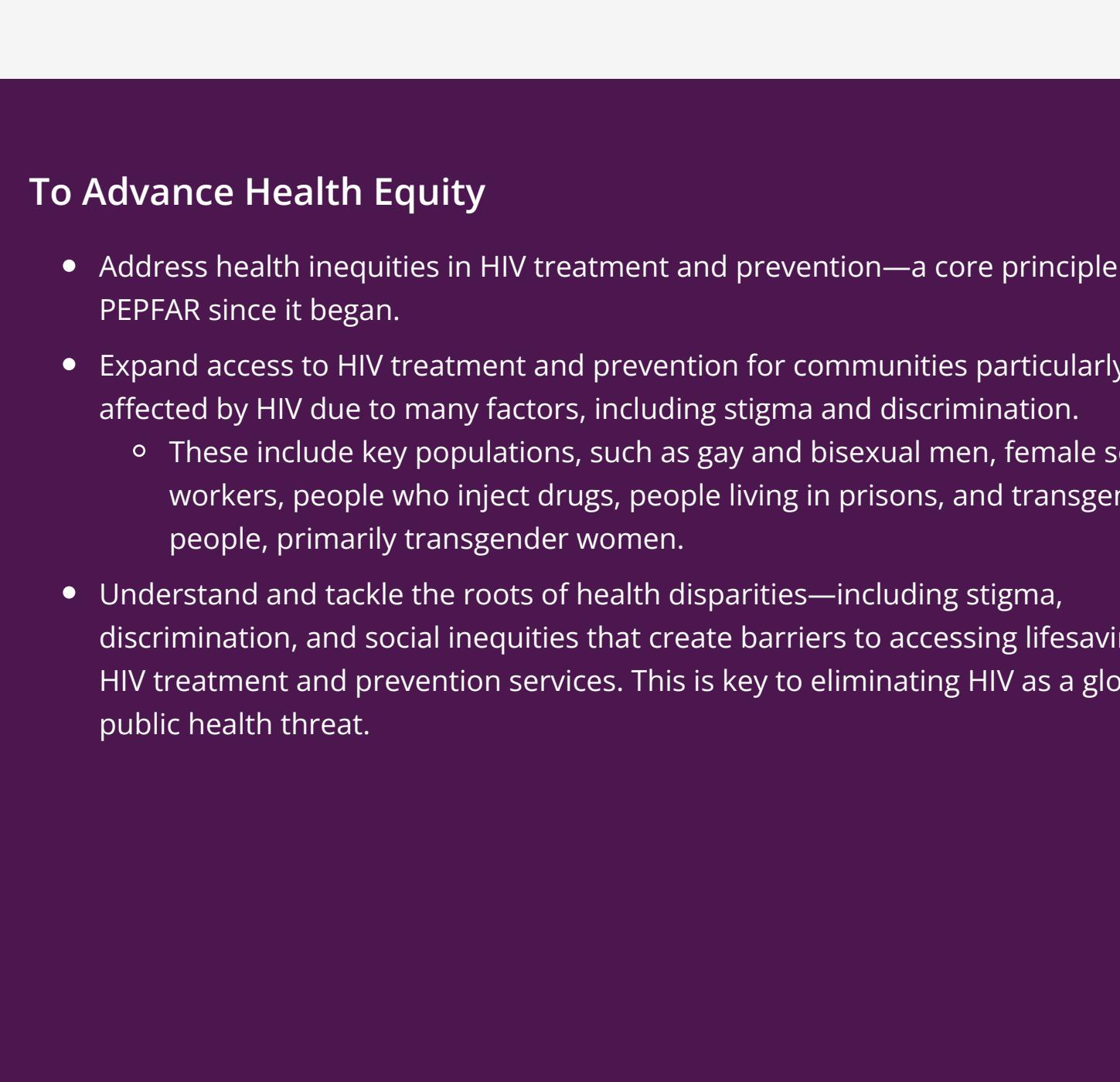
End the Global HIV Epidemic

Building on PEPFAR's achievements will allow us to eliminate HIV and strengthen global health security.



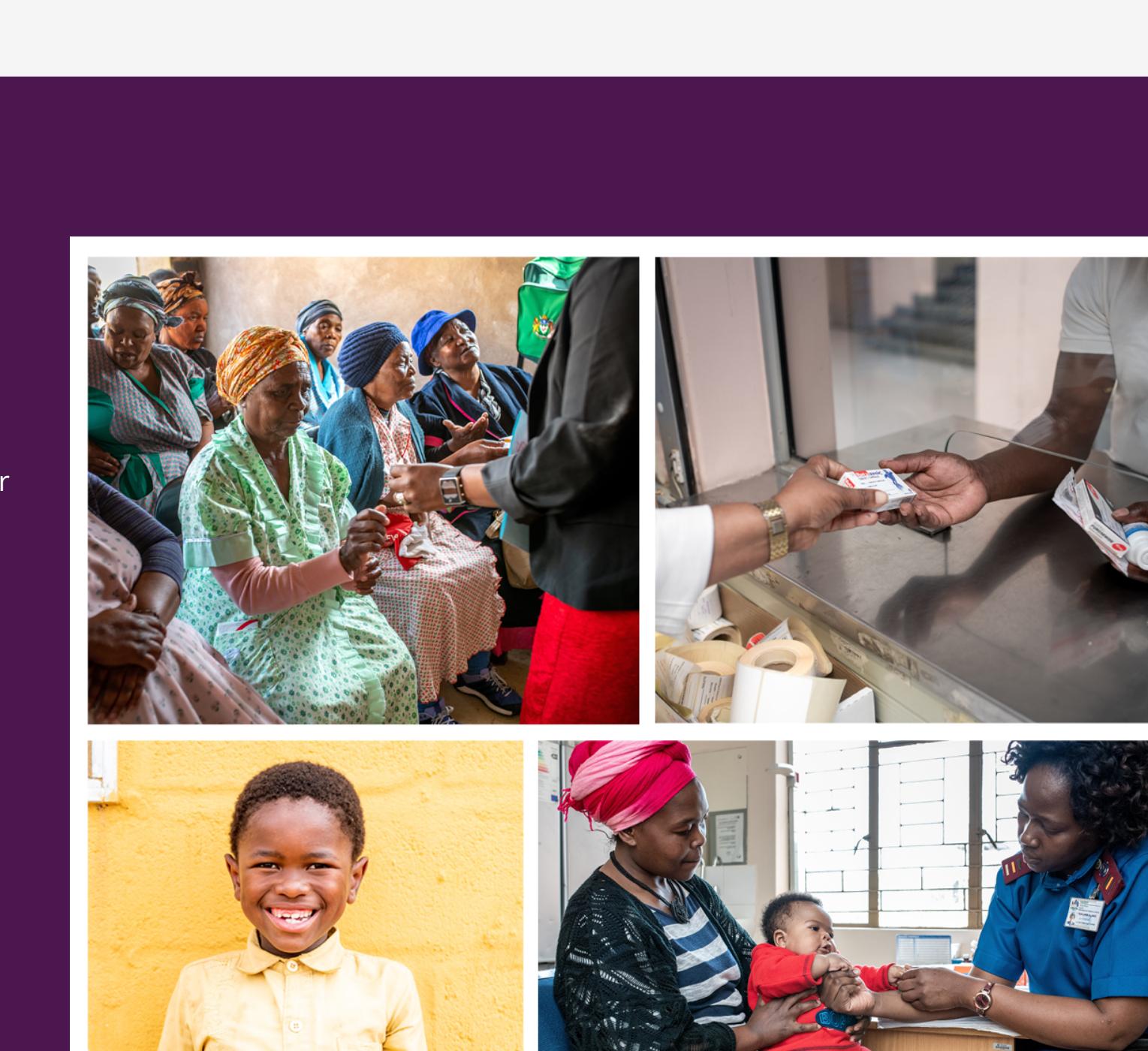
More than 20 Million People Have Received HIV Treatment through PEPFAR

The number of people on lifesaving HIV treatment through PEPFAR increased 300 times from 2004.



Sustaining PEPFAR's Global Gains in HIV Treatment Requires Tremendous Effort

The percent of people with HIV on PEPFAR-supported treatment who were virally suppressed rose from 80% in 2015 to 95% in 2022.

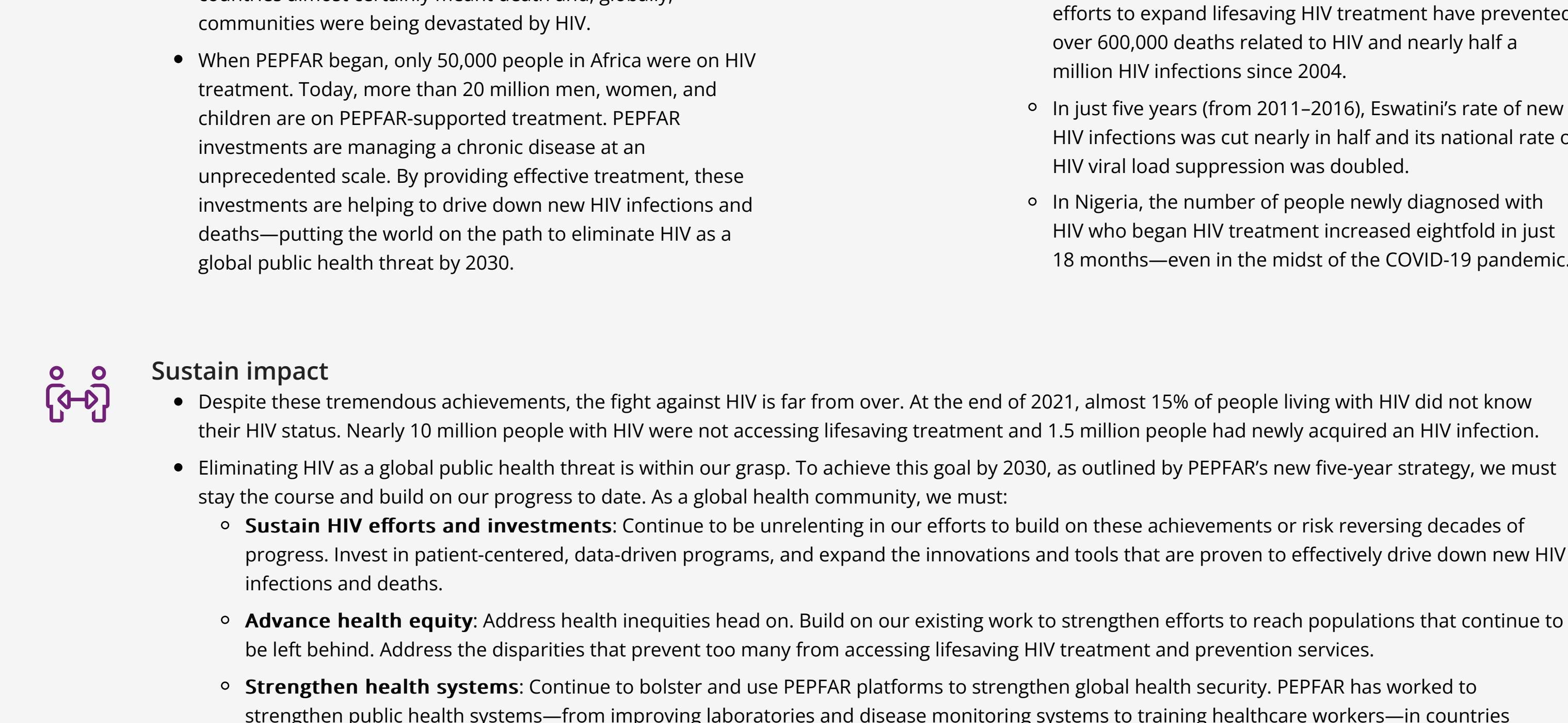


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CDC Is at the Forefront of Strengthening Health Systems Globally

PEPFAR's HIV efforts are strengthening health systems around the world, which helps countries confront other health threats and protects Americans at home and abroad. CDC plays a critical role.



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What Can Be Done

To Advance Health Equity

- Address health inequities in HIV treatment and prevention—a core principle of PEPFAR since it began.
- Expand access to HIV treatment and prevention for communities particularly affected by HIV due to many factors, including stigma and discrimination.
 - These include key populations, such as gay and bisexual men, female sex workers, people who inject drugs, people living in prisons, and transgender people, primarily transgender women.
- Understand and tackle the roots of health disparities—including stigma, discrimination, and social inequities that create barriers to accessing lifesaving HIV treatment and prevention services. This is key to eliminating HIV as a global public health threat.

Leverage lessons learned from PEPFAR's successes

- In Uganda, one of the first countries supported by PEPFAR, efforts to expand lifesaving HIV treatment and prevention have prevented over 600,000 deaths related to HIV and nearly half a million new HIV infections.
- In just five years (from 2011–2016), Eswatini's rate of new HIV infections was cut nearly in half and its national rate of HIV viral load suppression was doubled.
- In Nigeria, the number of people newly diagnosed with HIV month-by-month in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Viral suppression refers to having the virus under control thanks to treatment

Source: March 2023 Vital Signs

Photos: Thom Pierce, 2018

CDC

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

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