

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 (PMTCT), HIV testing, and antiretroviral treatment (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 technical assistance 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 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, and use data to drive decision-making.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HIV Treatment Services: CDC has supported national implementation of the World Health Organization Consolidated Guidelines on the Use of Antiviral 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 antiretroviral treatment (ART) uptake among TB/HIV co-infected people. Approximately 70% of TB patients in Lesotho are co-infected with HIV. CDC-funded HIV clinical services integrate TB activities to identify and treat HIV/TB co-infection, TB preventive treatment, rapid TB case finding, and treatment. CDC supports a research project involving TB services for miners with the objective of identifying and successfully treating highest risk populations and determining how best to effectively prevent and control HIV and TB transmission.

Community-based HIV Testing Services: CDC provides technical assistance to improve the quality, cost-effectiveness, and expansion of community-based HIV testing services to reach groups who traditionally do not access healthcare facilities such as men, adolescents, and young adults, as well as key populations (e.g., men who have sex with men and commercial sex workers). New initiatives include HIV self-testing, community-based HIV treatment initiation, partner notification and testing, and ART services.

Laboratory: CDC has led technical assistance 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. In 2018, Lesotho developed the capacity to provide routine viral load testing to monitor all patients receiving HIV treatment.

Strategic Information: CDC supported the Lesotho Population based HIV Impact Assessment (LePHIA), a national survey conducted in 2016-2017 that included HIV risk factors, incidence, and biomarkers. Results demonstrated that 81% of persons 15-59 years of age living with HIV had been diagnosed, 92% of those diagnosed were on ART, and 88% on treatment were virally suppressed. These results indicate that Lesotho is making good progress towards the UNAIDS goal of 90-90-90 by 2020. The LePHIA is scheduled to be repeated in 2019-2020.

Key Country Leadership

Prime Minister:
Motsoahae Thomas Thabane

Minister of Health:
Nkaku Kabi

U.S. Ambassador:
Rebecca Gonzales

CDC/DGHT Director:
Andrew Pelletier

Country Quick Facts
(worldbank.org/en/where-we-work)

Per Capita GNI:
\$1,380 (2018)

Population (million):
2.11 (2018)

Under 5 Mortality:
86/1,000 live births (2017)

Life Expectancy:
55 years (2017)

Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic
(aidsinfo.unaids.org)

Estimated HIV Prevalence
(Ages 15-49): 23.6% (2018)

Estimated AIDS Deaths
(Age ≥15): 5,400 (2018)

Estimated Orphans Due to
AIDS: 110,000 (2018)

Reported Number
Receiving Antiretroviral
Therapy (ART) (Age ≥15):
197,799 (2018)

**Global Tuberculosis
(TB) Epidemic**
(who.int/tb/country/data/profiles/en)

Estimated TB Incidence:
665/100,000 population
(2017)

TB patients with known HIV
status who are HIV positive:
70% (2017)

TB Treatment Success Rate:
77% (2016)

TB Mortality:
46/100,000 population
(2017)

DGHT Country Staff: 12
Locally Employed Staff: 6
Direct Hires: 5
Fellows & Contactors: 1

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

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