

IS JAMAICA ON TRACK TO END THE AIDS EPIDEMIC?

Country leads the region in knowledge of HIV status.....on track for the first 90?

90-90-90

. 90% of persons living with HIV know their status

. 90% of persons diagnosed with HIV accessing treatment

. 90% of persons on treatment are virally suppressed

The high achievement in knowledge of HIV status is attributable to the wide range of prevention and testing options available in the country including community outreach approaches, provider-initiated testing and focused services for key populations.

Four out of every five people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Jamaica (81%) know their status. This is the highest percentage in the English-speaking Caribbean. These were among the findings of the UNAIDS Global AIDS Monitoring (GAM) Report launched on July 20th 2017— *“Ending AIDS—progress on the 90-90-90 targets.”* In Jamaica, contributions for the report were coordinated by the National Family Planning Board—Sexual and Reproductive Health Agency (NFPB-SRHA) and included: the Ministry of Health and other Ministries Departments and Agencies; Civil Society Organizations and International Development Partners.

For Jamaica, a priority country for UNAIDS’ Fast Track strategy, the report offers a baseline for measuring progress towards the *2016 Political Declaration on ending AIDS* which Jamaica endorsed. Jamaica is among the countries in the region that have adopted the World Health Organization’s recommendation that antiretroviral therapy should be initiated in every person living with HIV regardless of CD4 count. Just one in three people estimated to be living with HIV was accessing treatment (35%) and two of every

five persons diagnosed with HIV were on treatment (43%). “More HIV services including treatment should be provided in community settings outside of health facilities,” Manoela Manova, UNAIDS Jamaica Country Director noted. As with most of the Caribbean, Jamaica has a national policy on routine viral load testing for adults and adolescents. Three out of every five persons (61%) on antiretroviral therapy achieved the gold standard of viral suppression in 2016. While approximately 21% of the estimated people living with HIV were virally suppressed. There were an estimated 30,000 people living with HIV in 2016. “It is particularly important that we scale up the promotion of early testing especially among men who are more likely to report late”, Manova said.

- NOTE!!! Actual national data are subject to change due to deduplication / data cleaning



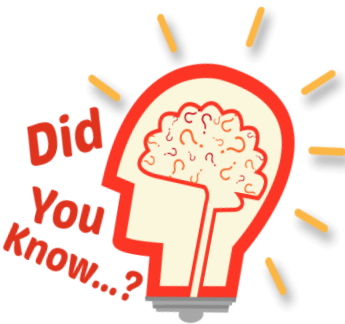
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More than 900 tested in Jamaica on Regional Testing Day 2017. The NFPB—SRHA along with the Regional Health Authorities partnered with Scotia Bank to establish testing sites in all four health regions with the Southeast region surpassing its target by 46%. The testing venues doubled as edutainment sites with people receiving voluntary counseling and testing, condom demonstrations, and contraceptives.

According to Dr. Denise Chevannes-Vogel, Executive Director of the NFPB-SRHA, testing is a critical step in ending the AIDS epidemic in Jamaica. “The country has done well at helping people learn their status but still almost one in every five people living with HIV is not aware. We need the extra push to ensure everyone who is living with HIV knows it and can then be connected to life-saving treatment,” she further explained.



Minister of Health, Dr. Christopher Tufton, got his test from one in a row of white tents at Mandela Park in Half Way Tree, Kingston. “We must continue to chip away at the stigma and fear that block people from learning their status,” Dr. Tufton said.



“Jamaica Network of Seropositive (JN+) provides peer to peer support through community facilitators located at treatment sites across Jamaica. Ask for the JN+ community facilitator at these sites. That Jamaica Network of Seropositive (JN+) can assist you to seek redress if you have experienced HIV related discrimination or gender based violence? Call or What’s App 839-8000 for more information.”



what's NEW

Test and Treat

In January 2017, Jamaica officially adopted the World Health Organization (WHO) 2015 HIV Treatment Guidelines, and currently all patients are to be offered anti-retroviral therapy once they have been assessed to be treatment ready.

Of the individuals diagnosed at the end of 2015 approximately 10,680 or just under 50% were recorded as receiving regular antiretroviral treatment. The national protocol for medical treatment of HIV has been in keeping with the WHO guidelines for the use of antiretroviral drugs. In September 2015, WHO recommended that all PLHIV should be offered ART

regardless of their clinical stage. This new recommendation is based on current scientific evidence from clinical trials and observational studies demonstrating that initiating ART earlier results in better clinical outcomes for PLHIV versus delayed treatment. Earlier initiation of treatment will also decrease the risk of transmission of the virus, as patients will achieve undetectable viral loads in the blood at an earlier stage which decreases their infectivity.

The national guidelines require that all patients be assessed and prepared to start the lifelong treatment. Poor adherence to therapy results in drug resistance which leads to poor outcomes and hence understanding treatment (treatment literacy) and being prepared for treatment forms an important part of the care offered to all PLHIV. Treatment literacy and preparedness are offered at all treatment sites by a team of psychosocial support staff who assess and work with PLHIV to address any barriers they may have to treatment adherence.



Dr. Nicola Skyers, Senior Medical Officer of the HIV/STI/TB Unit, MoH



Jamaica welcomes the new UNAIDS Country Director, Mrs. Manoela Manova.

Mrs Manova is a development and public health specialist with more than 20 years of experience in the area of development assistance, public health and HIV. She has worked closely with governments, donors, international partners and civil society, both at the policy and implementation levels in a number of countries in Europe and Central Asia.

She joined the UNAIDS Regional Support Team, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA), Moscow, Russia in 2012, as Regional Investment and Efficiency Advisor. There she led the development and monitored the implementation of work on investment and efficiency towards achieving Fast Track goals. Mrs Manova is Bulgarian and holds a Master's degree in Economics and Management from the University of Economy in Bulgaria and diplomas in International Business and Financial Management from London School of Economics.



Reaching 90-90-90 through Community led HIV testing, treatment and care:

The Jamaica AIDS Support for Life (JASL) provides HIV services utilizing innovative approaches that ensure quicker and easier reach and retention for men who have sex with men, sex workers and young people. Established in 1991, JASL is the oldest and largest AIDS-focused, human rights, non-governmental organization. Among other sites, the organization provides services to Kingston and Montego Bay two cities in which HIV prevalence is high.

JASL is dedicated to preserving the dignity and rights of persons living with HIV and AIDS and to help in the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS by providing education and other interventions - to promote changes in attitudes and behavior.

The organization has built a reputation for successfully working with people living with HIV (PLHIV) and high-risk groups.

The organization adopts a strong community led approach utilizing a range of innovative strategies including outreach in private residences, nightclubs, parties and parks; peer-led life skills sessions and support groups. Their Peer Navigation approach guides a person along the continuum of care - from the initial diagnoses to achieving viral suppression. The JASL method, in recognition of the structural factors, ensures effective social support as navigators provide moral support and motivation to clients. "JASL's initiatives recorded over 161 HIV positive persons in 2016 with over 75% linked to care."

Contributors:

- MoH
- NFPB-SRHA

- JASL
- JN+
- UNAIDS

Writers:

J-MERG : Data Sharing and Data Use TWG

Contact JMERG: 1(876) 968-1627, 1(876) 968-1629, 1(876) 968-1631, 1(876) 968-1633, 1(876) 968-1636