



# Public Health and HIV/AIDS

United States Embassy in South Africa

## AMERICA INVESTS IN SOUTH AFRICA



*Palliative care services are being expanded and strengthened*

### BACKGROUND

As the South Africa health system increases access to quality health care, especially for historically disadvantaged populations, the U.S. government and private sector play a key role in helping the people of South Africa improve their health. In partnership with the South African government, U.S. government agencies, universities and foundations support the improvement of health services, the expansion of health research and disease surveillance, and the prevention, control, and treatment of chronic and infectious diseases.

Over 5.3 million South Africans are infected with HIV, more individuals than in any other country. One out of five South Africans 15-49 years of age already are HIV positive. Prevention efforts have not yet had a major impact. Almost half of HIV-infected individuals die of tuberculosis. Thus, South Africa faces TB and AIDS epidemics, both of which require complex interventions. As parents have died, 1.1 million children have been orphaned. In many areas of society, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is increasing social and economic disruption.

In response, the South African government has developed a comprehensive strategy and guidelines focused on HIV treatment, prevention and care. The U.S. supports these plans and is rapidly expanding its efforts to help address HIV/AIDS and other health conditions.

### WHAT IS THE U.S. MISSION DOING?

Through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the United States provided over \$75 million in 2004 to support HIV/AIDS activities:

- **Treatment:** The U.S. supports the provision of anti-retroviral therapy for thousands of South Africans by working closely with: the National Department of Health and other government agencies, local and international NGOs, faith-based organizations, research institutions, the private sector, and others. U.S. programs also provide training and laboratory and diagnostic support to assist HIV/AIDS treatment.
- **Prevention:** The U.S. supports a broad array of prevention programs, from mass media efforts to targeted programs for high-risk populations such as cross-border and transient groups. With a special emphasis on young people, the U.S. and its partners support programs of proven effectiveness in Africa that promote abstinence, the delay of sexual activity, and faithfulness.
- **Care:** U.S. support is rapidly growing for partners who provide palliative care to HIV-infected people, including the management of tuberculosis and other opportunistic diseases. Large programs provide home, community and facility based care for AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children.

The U.S. also works with national and provincial departments of health, universities, and NGOs to strengthen primary health care, disease monitoring, and research through:

- Strengthening diagnosis and treatment capacity of tuberculosis (TB) and sexually transmitted infections (STI).
- Providing immunization support.
- Developing sustainable health support systems including laboratory and epidemiological observation capacity.
- Helping control diarrheal disease.
- Enhancing child survival and maternal health programs.

## WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- Treatment centers are providing anti-retroviral therapy to a rapidly increasing number of patients.
- A system for tracking inventory and distribution of drugs is being expanded nationwide.
- South African scientists have completed essential research on HIV, child nutrition, and basic biomedical and behavioral questions.
- Centers for HIV research excellence have been established in Durban, Johannesburg and within the South African Military Health Service.
- Peace Corps Volunteers have trained educators and communities to reduce risk behavior related to STI and HIV/AIDS, especially among youth.
- The management of sexually transmitted infections has improved through research on new diagnostic tests.

The private sector, labor groups, and the military have provided HIV prevention, treatment and care with our support.

- Takalani Sesame Street introduced a character living with HIV/AIDS.
- An electronic TB register is operating in four provinces. A 24-hour AIDS help line is functioning.

## U.S. FOUNDATIONS FUND HEALTH PROGRAMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Kaiser Foundation
- Elisabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Secure the Future Foundation
- Doris Duke Foundation



*Providing AIDS treatment and care on a platform of clinical research excellence*

## WHAT'S NEXT?

- Support the South African effort to provide ARV therapy to 53,000 by mid-2005.
- Provide for support and care for thousands of orphans and vulnerable children.
- Support the nationwide development of palliative care programs.
- Improve programs that address nutritional aspects of HIV and AIDS management.
- Help South African health officials implement their strategic TB plans, and provide technical support to strengthen health sector support systems.
- Expand efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. Assist development of effective pediatric AIDS care.
- Increase collaborative research and training to address chronic and infectious diseases.
- Encourage union/business involvement in workplace HIV/AIDS policies and effective prevention, treatment and care programs.
- Train national and provincial HIV/AIDS managers in program management, planning, budgeting and supervision.
- Assess existing voluntary HIV counseling and testing services, and foster their improvement and expansion.
- Develop, with South African researchers, a computer-based system to manage AIDS treatment.
- Work to improve childhood immunization and lower instances of diarrhea.

### USEFUL WEBSITES

**U.S. Agency for International Development**  
<http://www.usaid.gov/>

**Department of Health and Human Services**  
<http://www.os.dhhs.gov/>

**National Institutes of Health**  
<http://www.nih.gov/>

**Centers for Disease Control**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/>

**Department of State**  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/hiv/>