CDC in South Africa

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began working in South Africa in 1989, assisting nongovernmental and community-based organizations working to combat HIV. In 1994, at the onset of democracy in South Africa, CDC began to collaborate with the South African National Department of Health (NDOH) to conduct public health epidemiology training; develop national health goals and objectives; develop national HIV clinical, ethical, and research guidelines; and support HIV and tuberculosis (TB) programs. CDC plays an essential role in implementing the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

CDC STAFF
18 U.S. Assignees
57 Locally Employed

AT A GLANCE
Population: 55,700,000
Per capita income: $12,830
Life expectancy at birth: W 64/M 60 yrs
Infant mortality rate: 34/1000 live births

TOP 10 CAUSES OF DEATH
1. TB
2. Diabetes
3. Cerebrovascular Diseases
4. Other forms of Heart Disease
5. HIV
6. Influenza & Pneumonia
7. Hypertensive Diseases
8. Other viral diseases
9. Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases
10. Ischaemic Health Disease

HIV/AIDS
Through PEPFAR, the CDC South Africa office supports the NDOH through HIV treatment services and a comprehensive combination prevention strategy. Using a data-driven approach, this strategy is tailored to the unique characteristics of the local epidemic to boost health impact. Activities include the expansion of prevention services, including the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV, antiretroviral therapy (ART), and voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC).

The South Africa ART program surpassed their goal of 3.5 million persons currently on ART, with a total of 3.614 million people living with HIV (PLHIV) on treatment as of September 2016. CDC-supported healthcare facilities provide treatment for more than 1.3 million of these PLHIV.

Adolescent girls (15-19 years) are up to eight times more likely to be HIV-infected, while young women (20-24 years) are more than three times more likely to be infected than their male peers; as a result, adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) are a key focus area for CDC South Africa. Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS) is a partnership to reduce HIV/AIDS in AGYW. CDC South Africa is an implementing agency of this partnership, which is a comprehensive package of services for vulnerable AGYW in five geographical districts, directed at ensuring they become DREAMS AGYW.
Other key activities include improving and expanding HIV counseling and testing services, TB/HIV integrated service delivery, early infant diagnosis, laboratory infrastructure development, and strengthening healthcare systems. Healthcare system strengthening includes building country capacity in the areas of workforce development, high-quality laboratory networks, epidemiology, surveillance, healthcare information systems, and program monitoring and evaluation to assess impact and to make rapid course corrections to keep pace with changes in the local epidemic.

Global Disease Detection

The Global Disease Detection (GDD) program is CDC’s principal program for developing and strengthening global health security to prevent, detect, and respond to emerging infectious disease and bioterrorist threats globally. In 2010, GDD South Africa became the eighth regional GDD center. The regional center provides leadership, training, and technical assistance to confront new emerging health disease challenges. A large focus of the program is on enhancing capacity to detect and respond to emerging and zoonotic disease threats through strengthening surveillance and public health research, and the collaboration between the human and veterinary healthcare providers in South Africa.

The Influenza Program

CDC has supported South Africa since 2007, working nationally and regionally to improve the quality of influenza surveillance in South Africa. The program provides technical expertise and financial resources to support national pneumonia and influenza-like illness surveillance, pandemic preparedness, applied research, and influenza vaccine policy development in South Africa. CDC works closely with the National Institute for Communicable Diseases to implement policy-relevant applied research, including a study of maternal influenza vaccine effectiveness, mortality modeling studies, and influenza virus transmission studies.

The Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP)

Launched in 2006, FETP is a collaboration between the NDOH, South Africa’s National Institute for Communicable Diseases, the University of Pretoria, and CDC. FETP is a 2-year training program in applied epidemiology focused on supervised work experience and training to develop practical public health skills and knowledge. Residents participate in several core modules and then work with a field supervisor at a national, provincial, district, or academic field placement site, developing competency in outbreak investigations, public health surveillance, scientific communication, and hypothesis-driven epidemiology research.

IMPACT IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa was one of the first countries in Africa to adopt the Test and Treat policy in September 2017 making treatment available to all people living with HIV regardless of CD4 count.

CDC South Africa’s laboratory program has implemented a quality improvement system within 1,159 facilities providing HIV-rapid testing within the 27 focus districts in the country. The first cycle of proficiency testing has seen a passing rate of 97% for all facilities enrolled.

More than 95% of TB patients at CDC-supported facilities were tested for HIV, and of those co-infected with HIV, 85% were initiated on ART.

For more country information
www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/countries/southafrica