

Country progress report - Dominica

Global AIDS Monitoring 2018



Contents

Overall - Fast-track targets

HIV testing and treatment cascade - Ensure that 30 million people living with HIV have access to treatment through meeting the 90-90-90 targets by 2020

Prevention of mother-to-child transmission - Eliminate new HIV infections among children by 2020 while ensuring that 1.6 million children have access to HIV treatment by 2018

HIV prevention; Key populations - Ensure access to combination prevention options, including pre-exposure prophylaxis, voluntary medical male circumcision, harm reduction and condoms, to at least 90%% of people by 2020, especially young women and adolescent girls in high-prevalence countries and key populations—gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers and their clients, people who inject drugs and prisoners

Gender; Stigma and discrimination - Eliminate gender inequalities and end all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, people living with HIV and key populations by 2020

Knowledge of HIV and access to sexual reproductive health services - Ensure that 90%% of young people have the skills, knowledge and capacity to protect themselves from HIV and have access to sexual and reproductive health services by 2020, in order to reduce the number of new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women to below 100 000 per year

Social protection - Ensure that 75%% of people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV benefit from HIV-sensitive social protection by 2020

Community-led service delivery - Ensure that at least 30%% of all service delivery is community-led by 2020

HIV expenditure - Ensure that HIV investments increase to US\$ 26 billion by 2020, including a quarter for HIV prevention and 6%% for social enablers

Empowerment and access to justice - Empower people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV to know their rights and to access justice and legal services to prevent and challenge violations of human rights

AIDS out of isolation - Commit to taking AIDS out of isolation through people-centred systems to improve universal health coverage, including treatment for tuberculosis, cervical cancer and hepatitis B and C

Overall

Fast-track targets

Progress summary

The National HIV and AIDS Response Programme of Dominica is governed under the Ministry of Health and follows the mission and vision of the General Health System “Partnership for optimum health”. The main goal of the Ministry of Health is that the general population achieved the maximum level of health within the continuum of care provided. At the National HIV and AIDS Response Programme these components fall within the spectrum of meeting the UNAIDS stipulated Targets of 90/90/90 by 2010 and the 2030 goal of ending AIDS and provide 1. Prevention, behavioral change communications and information, 2. Management, in treatment and care for PLHIV 3. Prevention of Mother to child Transmission support and care. Overall all these components are geared at reducing incidence of HIV transmission thus maintaining a low prevalence nationally. Within the goals of the programme focus on the most at risk population is also maintain, thus the programme presents overall and all-inclusive care for treatment and support of the HIV and AIDS population.

HIV testing and treatment cascade

Ensure that 30 million people living with HIV have access to treatment through meeting the 90-90-90 targets by 2020

Progress summary

The commitment to meet the 90/90/90 goal is still very much at the forefront of the National HIV and AIDS Response Programme. Over the past year all effort has been made to scale up and maintain the sexual prevention information and education component of the programme. The attempt at making testing and counselling service readily available across the island in the entire seven health district has always been the goal. Our testing algorithm has remained the same for persons who may have a reactive rapid test result. They are sent to the national public lab for confirmation. We have also strengthened our collaboration with the Private laboratories and are receiving continuous data from these site inclusive of the one Non-Governmental Organization who also provides testing and counselling services and Sexual health information. It must be mentioned that our services have been hampered by the passage of a major category IV hurricane which has affected a number of our testing sites, thus limited the extent of our outreach. In spite of such challenges we are still focus on providing testing, enrolling persons tested positive and providing HAART for all clients enrolled in care.

Policy questions (2017)

Is there a law, regulation or policy specifying that HIV testing:

a) Is solely performed based on voluntary and informed consent

Yes

b) Is mandatory before marriage

No

c) Is mandatory to obtain a work or residence permit

No

d) Is mandatory for certain groups

No

What is the recommended CD4 threshold for initiating antiretroviral therapy in adults and adolescents who are asymptomatic, as per MoH guidelines or directive, and what is the implementation status?

≤500 cells/mm³; Implemented countrywide

Does your country have a current national policy on routine viral load testing for monitoring antiretroviral therapy and to what extent is it implemented?

a) For adults and adolescents

No, targeted viral load testing only

b) For children

No, targeted viral load testing only

Prevention of mother-to-child transmission

Eliminate new HIV infections among children by 2020 while ensuring that 1.6 million children have access to HIV treatment by 2018

Progress summary

Dominica has not reported any Mother to Child diagnosed of HIV for the past decade as the prevention of Mother to Child Transmission component is active at the national programme. We are in the process of the final steps for EMTCT validation which is presently ongoing. The stipulated algorithm for testing of new infants from HIV mothers is still practice.

Policy questions (2016)

Does your country have a national plan for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV?

Yes

Target(s) for the mother-to-child transmission rate and year: 0; 2017

Elimination target(s) (such as the number of cases/population) and year: 0; 2017

Do the national guidelines recommend treating all infants and children living with HIV irrespective of symptoms and if so, what is the implementation status of the cut-off?

Treat All; Other - no age cut-off policy exist at present

HIV prevention; Key populations

Ensure access to combination prevention options, including pre-exposure prophylaxis, voluntary medical male circumcision, harm reduction and condoms, to at least 90%% of people by 2020, especially young women and adolescent girls in high-prevalence countries and key populations—gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers and their clients, people who inject drugs and prisoners

Progress summary

The prevention component of the program coupled with the Behavioral change communication component of the program has distribution of commodities (male and female condoms, lubes) as an integral part of prevention. The drive to reach our most at risk population is continually maintained and the attempt to upscale involvement of persons in the CSO and NGO sector as individuals within these organizations were given training in testing and counselling. We continue to employ a Sex Worker animator and engage with gate keepers in our MSM population. A Mapping survey study was conducted with sex workers in 2017 and also a qualitative Barrier to testing services study was conducted with SW, youth and MSM. With the findings of these surveys we are hoping that adjustment to planning and implementing programs to meet the needs of these populations will be more strategic.

Policy questions: Key populations (2016)

Criminalization and/or prosecution of key populations

Transgender people

Neither criminalized nor prosecuted

Sex workers

Selling sexual services is criminalized

Men who have sex with men

Yes, imprisonment (up to 14 years)

Is drug use or possession for personal use an offence in your country?

Drug use or consumption is a specific offence in law

Legal protections for key populations

Transgender people

-

Sex workers

-

Men who have sex with men

Constitutional prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation

People who inject drugs

No

Policy questions: PrEP (2017)

Has the WHO recommendation on oral PrEP been adopted in your country's national guidelines?

No, guidelines have not been developed

Gender; Stigma and discrimination

Eliminate gender inequalities and end all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, people living with HIV and key populations by 2020

Progress summary

The collaboration with the relevant department like the bureau of gender affairs and our collaborating CSOs. Training was also carried out in legal advocacy and literacy with these vulnerable populations, thus strengthening the approach to advocacy.

Policy questions (2016)

Does your country have a national plan or strategy to address gender-based violence and violence against women that includes HIV

Yes

Does your country have legislation on domestic violence*?

Yes

What protections, if any, does your country have for key populations and people living with HIV from violence?

General criminal laws prohibiting violence

Programmes to address intimate partner violence*

Programmes to address workplace violence

Interventions to address police abuse

Does your country have policies in place requiring healthcare settings to provide timely and quality health care regardless of gender, nationality, age, disability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, language, socio-economic status, HIV or other

health status, or because of selling sex, using drugs, living in prison or any other grounds?

Yes, policies exist but are not consistently implemented

Knowledge of HIV and access to sexual reproductive health services

Ensure that 90%% of young people have the skills, knowledge and capacity to protect themselves from HIV and have access to sexual and reproductive health services by 2020, in order to reduce the number of new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women to below 100 000 per year

Progress summary

The National Youth Council and the youth Advocacy Movement still continue to be strong collaborating partners with the HIV programme. We have also formed link with the Dominica State College with a high youth person presence. They presented representatives at the Youth Advocacy and Sexual reproductive health workshop and training in the last year also geared at young people.

Policy questions (2016)

Does your country have education policies that guide the delivery of life skills-based HIV and sexuality education, according to international standards, in:

a) Primary school

Yes

b) Secondary school

Yes

c) Teacher training

Yes

Social protection

Ensure that 75%% of people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV benefit from HIV-sensitive social protection by 2020

Progress summary

The program's focus on the PLHIV population under our treatment and care, psychosocial support and nutritional support components in the effort to meet the needs of this population is ongoing, although post Hurricane needs for these clients; especially housing needs have been a challenge as a lot of persons homes were destroyed.

Policy questions (2016/2017)

Yes and it is being implemented

a) Does it refer to HIV?

Yes

b) Does it recognize people living with HIV as key beneficiaries?

Yes

c) Does it recognize key populations (sex workers, gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, transgender people, prisoners) as key beneficiaries?

No

d) Does it recognize adolescent girls and young women as key beneficiaries?

Yes

e) Does it recognize people affected by HIV (children and families) as key beneficiaries?

Yes

f) Does it address the issue of unpaid care work in the context of HIV?

No

What barriers, if any, limit access to social protection programmes in your country?

Lack of information available on the programmes
Complicated procedures
Fear of stigma and discrimination
High out-of-pocket expenses

Community-led service delivery

Ensure that at least 30%% of all service delivery is community-led by 2020

Progress summary

N/A

Policy questions (2017)

Does your country have a national policy promoting community delivery of antiretroviral therapy?

No

What safeguards in laws, regulations and policies, if any, provide for the operation of CSOs/CBOs in your country?

Registration of CSOs/CBOs working with key populations is possible

HIV services can be provided by CSOs/CBOs

Services to key populations can be provided by CSOs/CBOs

Number of condoms and lubricants distributed by NGOs in the previous year

a) Male condoms:

-

b) Female condoms:

-

c) Lubricants:

-

HIV expenditure

Ensure that HIV investments increase to US\$ 26 billion by 2020, including a quarter for HIV prevention and 6%% for social enablers

Progress summary

N/A

Empowerment and access to justice

Empower people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV to know their rights and to access justice and legal services to prevent and challenge violations of human rights

Progress summary

Under the Global Fund Grant, workshop of advocacy, stigma and discrimination and legal literacy have been carried out . It is noted that more trainings for empowerment and knowledge is needed. Training on being able to identify the resources available and where guidance can be sorted out. We are still aiming at equipping individuals to be able to advocate for their civic rights as it relates to health and security.

Policy questions (2016)

In the past two years have there been training and/or capacity building programmes for people living with HIV and key populations to educate them and raise their awareness concerning their rights (in the context of HIV) in your country?

Yes, at scale, at the sub-national level

Are there mechanisms in place to record and address cases of HIV-related discrimination (based on perceived HIV status and/or belonging to any key population)?

No

What accountability mechanisms in relation to discrimination and violations of human rights in healthcare settings does your country have, if any?

Complaints procedure

Mechanisms of redress

Procedures or systems to protect and respect patient privacy or confidentiality

What barriers in accessing accountability mechanisms does your country have, if any?

Awareness or knowledge of how to use such mechanisms is limited

AIDS out of isolation

Commit to taking AIDS out of isolation through people-centred systems to improve universal health coverage, including treatment for tuberculosis, cervical cancer and hepatitis B and C

Progress summary

The HIV and AIDS Response Programme under the Ministry of Health, where Mentioned has been made of decentralizing care. Services provided to and for clients are still free to them, and screening for cervical cancer and any other STI is done as needs be, at no cost to the patients, once it is available in the public sector.

Policy questions (2016)

Is cervical cancer screening and treatment for women living with HIV recommended in:

a) The national strategy, policy, plan or guidelines for cancer, cervical cancer or the broader response to non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

Yes

b) The national strategic plan governing the AIDS response

Yes

c) National HIV-treatment guidelines

Yes

What coinfection policies are in place in the country for adults, adolescents and children?

Isoniazid preventive therapy (IPT) or latent TB infection (LTBI) prophylaxis for people living with HIV

Intensified TB case finding among people living with HIV

TB infection control in HIV health-care settings

Co-trimoxazole prophylaxis