

UNAIDS COSPONSOR | 2015

WHO

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

WHO

“WHO’s new consolidated treatment guidelines represent another leap ahead in a trend of ever-higher goals and ever-greater achievements and an opportunity to fuel the momentum to push the HIV epidemic into irreversible decline.”

Margaret Chan
WHO Director-General

WHAT IS WHO?

The World Health Organization (WHO) plays a critical role within the United Nations system as the directing and coordinating authority for international health. Its wide-ranging remit involves providing leadership on increasingly complex global health matters, producing health guidelines, norms and standards, monitoring and assessing health trends and shaping the health research agenda. It is also committed to providing technical support to countries and helping them to address pressing public health issues.

WHO strives to develop innovative and creative partnerships, fostering new ways of working in order to achieve common health goals, and, along with over 190 Member States, works with myriad bodies, including other United Nations agencies, nongovernmental organizations, donors and civil society.

The organization leads the global health sector response to the HIV epidemic. As a Cosponsor of UNAIDS, WHO takes the lead on HIV treatment and care and HIV/tuberculosis coinfection, and jointly coordinates work on the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

In 2015, WHO will focus on collaborating with countries to achieve global goals and targets, including those outlined in the Global Health Sector Strategy on HIV/AIDS for 2011–2015. That strategy aims to guide a sustainable health sector response to HIV by strengthening health and community systems, tackling the social determinants of health that act as barriers to the response and promoting human rights and gender equality.

WHAT WHO DOES FOR THE AIDS RESPONSE

WHO’s Department of HIV/AIDS is the main unit responsible for HIV. It develops key normative policies on the virus and supports countries with strategic information and guidance in their programme and policy implementation. The department also coordinates with other WHO units working in HIV-related areas, such as tuberculosis and maternal, new-born, child, adolescent and reproductive health. Key strategic priority fields for 2015 include the following:

- Strategic use of antiretroviral therapy for HIV treatment and prevention: WHO guidelines on using antiretroviral therapy for treating and preventing HIV infection promote a public health

approach for increasing access and stress the need for harmonized, simplified and effective drug regimens. In 2013, for the first time, WHO issued a single set of consolidated guidelines that addressed the use of antiretroviral therapy for treatment and prevention across all age groups and populations.

- Eliminating HIV among children and expanding access to paediatric treatment: WHO and UNICEF provide technical support and guidance to broaden and strengthen integrated and comprehensive services to help eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV. This includes setting country targets to eliminate HIV among children using national prevention and treatment protocols.
- An improved health sector response to HIV among key populations: it is important to expand access to HIV services for key populations, tailoring these services to meet their specific needs. This will necessitate integrating HIV programmes with other relevant health and social services and addressing structural obstacles, such as stigma and discrimination.
- Further innovation in HIV prevention, treatment and care: WHO strives to work with partners to improve the scale, quality, effectiveness and efficacy of HIV services and approaches and to modify and update such approaches as new evidence becomes available.
- Effective strategic information for scale-up: WHO works with UNAIDS to develop standards, guidelines and tools to ensure that countries “know their epidemic”, and both organizations collaborate with national AIDS programmes to compile regular national and global strategic information updates. WHO also takes the lead in monitoring and evaluation of the health sector HIV response and helps countries to set national targets and indicators.
- Stronger links between HIV and related health outcomes: WHO recognizes the importance of strengthening links between HIV and other relevant health programmes, not only for sexual, reproductive, maternal and child health, but also in such areas as drug dependence and harm reduction, emergency care and nutrition.

Additional information is available [here](http://who.int/hiv/en/) (who.int/hiv/en/).

