



The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is the largest commitment ever by any nation for an international health initiative dedicated to a single disease.

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Peace Corps

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Prevention of Sexual Transmission in the General Population

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) supports the rapid scale-up of prevention education and services. More than four million people were infected with HIV in 2005. PEPFAR recognizes that effective prevention efforts are essential both to prevent the continued spread of HIV, and to mitigate an expanding and increasingly unsustainable need for treatment and care.

Despite the continuing large number of new infections globally, several countries have had some success in reducing HIV infection rates, associated with the adoption of "ABC" prevention behaviors. The "ABC" approach tailors behavioral messages to the local epidemic context: "A" behaviors include abstinence, including delay of sexual debut for youth; "B" includes faithfulness to one partner or reducing the number of sexual partners; "C" emphasizes correct and consistent condom use, where appropriate. PEPFAR, in partnership with host countries, seeks to build on these successes by establishing local programs and partnerships that support the uptake of these key prevention behaviors.

Among the greatest challenges to mounting effective prevention programs is the diversity of epidemic contexts and prevention needs across countries. In most concentrated low-prevalence epidemics, HIV is concentrated among sub-groups within the population that engage in high-risk behavior, such as people in prostitution or injecting drug users. In contrast, in most generalized high-prevalence epidemics, new infections frequently result from multiple, often concurrent, sexual partnerships within the general population, among individuals who often do not see themselves as engaging in risky behavior.

PEPFAR HIV prevention programs in countries that are experiencing generalized epidemics take a comprehensive approach that includes:

Increasing individual risk-perception and equipping individuals with the information and skills they need to adopt safer behaviors, through structured, interactive behavior change approaches such as curriculum-based and peer education. These programs also provide information about and access to condoms and other HIV services.

Addressing the multiple overlapping sexual partnerships that drive generalized epidemics. Such initiatives help to create an enabling environment in which communities support individuals in adopting and sustaining key prevention behaviors.

Supporting community and mass media that are linked to efforts to change individual behaviors and social norms in order to reinforce healthy values and behaviors.

