

Supporting an AIDS-Free Generation at Mtetezi Camp Clinic



Jessie Banda and her husband pose for a family photo at the Mtetezi Camp Clinic

Jessie Banda and her husband are the proud parents of two healthy, beautiful children, both of whom are HIV-negative thanks to the diligence of their parents and the care of the Zambia National Service Mtetezi Camp Clinic, supported by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

When Jessie first sought services at the clinic three years ago, she was pregnant with her first child. Mtetezi Camp Clinic, which serves nearly 6,000 military personnel, their families and local residents, offered Jessie HIV counseling and testing as a standard procedure for all pregnant clients. Upon identifying her status as HIV-positive, clinic staff discussed treatment approaches to protect Jessie's unborn child from mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Jessie carefully followed a regimen of treatment throughout her pregnancy and childbirth. Her baby also received medicine intended to prevent transmission of HIV and at six weeks, tested HIV-negative. An HIV test was repeated again at 12 and 18 months. To the delight of Jessie, her husband and the health staff at Mtetezi, the toddler's test remained negative.

Jessie returned to Mtetezi camp in August 2010 for prenatal care. Pregnant with her second child, she went through the same prevention and treatment regimen and when her daughter was born, the baby was also HIV negative. "Now I believe that an HIV positive mother can have HIV-free babies. I thank the clinic staff for their encouragement and support" says Jessie.

Mtetezi clinic has provided HIV prevention, care, and treatment programs with PEPFAR support through the U.S. Department of Defense and one of its implementing partners, Jhpiego, since 2009. Since that time, 64 out of 67 babies born to HIV positive mothers at the facility have tested negative for HIV – representing a greater than 95 percent success rate of PMTCT services.

"We are very happy that we have so many HIV negative babies born to HIV positive mothers in our catchment population," Lt. Brian Lukwesa, nurse-in-charge, says proudly. "We are encouraged to continue providing the services to the community knowing that our efforts are supporting an [AIDS]-free generation."