



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIC CONTROL

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Based on UNAIDS estimations, the Dominican Republic had an adult HIV/AIDS prevalence of 0.9 percent in 2021, with approximately 78,000 adults and children living with HIV/AIDS. Eighty-five percent are aware of their HIV status. Of all individuals diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, only 43,000 (55 percent) are receiving treatment and of these, 37,000 (47 percent) are virally suppressed. The HIV epidemic disproportionately affects specific populations in the Dominican Republic, including Haitian migrants and their descendents (HIV prevalence between 3 and 5 percent). There are approximately 752,000 Haitian migrants and direct descendants living in the Dominican Republic and they face limited access to health services, including HIV. Among Haitian migrants and their descendents living with HIV in the Dominican Republic, approximately 40 percent are aware of their status and, of those, only 27 percent are currently on treatment (2022 UNAIDS spectrum estimates). The HIV epidemic in the Dominican Republic also disproportionately affects key populations, including men who have sex with men (with an HIV prevalence of 4 percent); female sex workers (with an HIV prevalence of 4.2 percent); and transgender women (with an HIV prevalence of 27.7 percent). The Government of the Dominican Republic has assumed increasing financial and programmatic responsibility for the national HIV response, including independently financing the procurement of all HIV medications and supplies and enacting new laws and policies to reduce HIV stigma and discrimination.¹

OUR WORK

Through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program, USAID partners with the Government of the Dominican Republic, as well as non-governmental and community-based organizations, to achieve control of the HIV epidemic. Through this strong collaboration, PEPFAR effectively mobilizes, coordinates, and efficiently utilizes resources to expand high-impact strategies. Geographically focused in Santo Domingo, Distrito Nacional, La Romana, Valverde, Puerto Plata, San Pedro de Macorís, Santiago, and Monte Plata, USAID seeks to increase the availability of testing, improve linkage and retention of persons living with HIV into care and treatment services, achieve viral suppression, and prevent new HIV infections. USAID activities focus on providing tailored services to

¹ <https://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/dominicanrepublic>

Haitian migrants and Dominicans of Haitian descent given their elevated risk of HIV and low treatment coverage. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS, to which the United States Government contributes, provides significant support to the Dominican Republic to reach other key populations, including female sex workers, men who have sex with men, and transgender women.

USAID implements community and facility-level interventions that strengthen local systems to help close the national HIV treatment gap for this population. Through this work, USAID addresses health systems challenges, including viral load capacity, supply chain management, capacitated workforce, governance, financing, and programmatic efficiencies in the national HIV response. USAID has also spearheaded a structured quality improvement process, supported the development of a comprehensive and multi-faceted response platform for victims of gender-based violence, supported the Government of the Dominican Republic to integrate HIV and Tuberculosis into the country's unified supply chain system, and conducted a pooled procurement of HIV medicines and supplies based on the country's needs. In addition, USAID launched an Orphans and Vulnerable Children program in 2019 to provide broad, family-based socioeconomic support to households of Haitian migrants and Dominicans of Haitian descent impacted by HIV.

RESULTS ACHIEVED TO DATE:

- Supported the development and updating of key standard operating procedures and clinical guidelines to improve service provision (e.g., multi-month dispensing, community level services, self-testing, and use of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis for HIV prevention).
- Supported the Dominican Ministry of Health to initiate differentiated services models for HIV service delivery as a way to ensure enrollment and follow-up in treatment, including the use of innovative HIV testing modalities, services in Creole, flexible clinic hours, facility and community navigators, case-management, multi-month dispensing, community based treatment distribution, and follow up and retention counseling.
- Supported the Dominican Government to successfully transfer HIV commodities from a private warehouse to PROMESE/CAL, saving the Dominican Ministry of Health an estimated US \$254,429 per year.
- Provided technical assistance to the Dominican Government and local non-governmental organizations to strengthen the health supply chain to ensure the availability of HIV-related commodities at national and sub-national, including the development of a dynamic dashboard that shows the availability of all HIV related commodities at all levels for decision making to ensure lifesaving treatment is available at health facilities.
- From October 1, 2021 to Sept 30, 2022, USAID/Dominican Republic:
 - Supported the testing of 66,773 Haitian migrants and Dominicans of Haitian descent, identified 4,033 persons who were HIV positive, and linked 68 percent (2,762) of those newly diagnosed to HIV care and treatment services.
 - Supported a total of 22,664 patients active in antiretroviral treatment in eleven supported sites across six provinces in the country.

CONTACT

USAID/Dominican Republic

Email: drinfo@usaid.gov

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