

Country progress report - Philippines

Global AIDS Monitoring 2018



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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 HIV epidemic in the Philippines has been rapidly changing and expanding in the past five years. From a low and slow to fast and furious epidemic, the number of diagnosed HIV infections has increased dramatically to 31 cases a day. Currently, there are a total of 50,725 diagnosed HIV cases from January 1984 to December 2017 reported in the HIV/AIDS and ART Registry of the Philippines (HARP). Of these, 93% were males. More than half (51%) were from the 25-34 age-group. From 1984 to 2009, the predominant mode of transmission is male-to-female sex. However beginning 2010, the trend shifted to male-to-male sex and has continually increased since then.

Results of the 2015 Integrated HIV Behavioral and Serologic Surveillance (IHBS) generally showed increasing HIV prevalence and low improvement in protective behavior among key populations.

Among MSM and TGW who have anal sex, HIV prevalence in 10 sentinel sites was at 7.9%. Further, there are 11 cities with more than 5% HIV prevalence: Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Puerto Princesa, Mandaue, Davao, Quezon City, Paranaque, Makati, Antipolo, Batangas, and Iloilo. On average, initiation to protective behaviors such as condom use starts two years after sexual debut among MSM and TGW. Condom use rate among them is below the national target of 80% at 42% in 2015, while only 14% got themselves tested for HIV in the past 12 months and know their status.

HIV prevalence among PWID in Cebu City saw a dramatic increase from 1% in 2009 to 54% in 2010. Though there was a slight decrease in 2015, HIV and hepatitis C prevalence still remain high.

Prevalence among FSW remains low at less than 1% for both registered and freelance FSW in sentinel sites. Condom use rate among FSW is relatively high at 73%.

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 Philippines adapted the 90-90-90 UN targets in the PNAC AMTP 6 and the DOH-National HIV, AIDS and STI Prevention and Control Program (DOH-NASPCP) Health Sector Plan (2018-2020). This commitment specifically ensures 90% of PLHIV are given antiretroviral therapy and provision of uninterrupted supply of free antiretroviral (ARV) drugs. ARVs are accessed by PLHIV at 51 health facilities identified as DOH-designated treatment hubs and satellite treatment hubs strategically located across the country. Strategic use of ARV is one of the key strategic areas outlined in the Philippine Anti-Retroviral Therapy Implementation Plan (2017-2020). The thrust of the DOH is to decentralize HIV services including provision of ART and bring these services closer to the communities to ensure linkage to care and improve access to HIV services. The costed operational plan outlines various activities for the continuous expansion of ARV service delivery points which hope to contribute towards achieving the target of 90% of PLHIV will be started on ART.

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?

No threshold; TREAT ALL regardless of CD4 count; Implemented in many (>50%) treatment sites

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

Yes, fully implemented

b) For children

Yes, partially implemented

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

The Philippines reinforces this commitment in the Sixth AIDS Medium Term Plan (6th AMTP) 2017-2022 with the elimination of mother to children transmission of HIV as one of its key targets. Also, the HSP Operational Plan (2018-2020) shares the vision of zero new HIV infections. For 2017, one of the priority program interventions is universal voluntary testing among pregnant women. Providing early interventions for pregnant women with HIV ensues reduction of HIV transmission to infants. Likewise, program for early infant diagnosis is being implemented in the entire country. Diagnosis of infants born to suspected or diagnosed HIV positive mothers is provided by the national government for free.

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: -

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

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; Implemented in many (>50%) treatment sites

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 Philippines has embarked on a demonstration study on pre-exposure prophylaxis for high risk MSM, in partnership with the WHO. Condoms and lubricants will be made more accessible and available through the establishment of condom access points at cruising sites and MSM and TG and other key populations' convergence points. To reach out to people who inject drugs, the country will now provide HIV services including antiretroviral therapy in prisons and community-based drug rehabilitation centers.

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

No specific legislation

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

No

Sex workers

No

Men who have sex with men

-

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

To eliminate gender inequalities and all forms of discrimination, initial activities pertaining to increasing the awareness and knowledge on “Sexual orientation, Gender Identity and Expression” among the People Living with HIV (PLHIV), Key affected population (KAP), vulnerable and affected population. These activities will be expanded in the 6th AIDS Medium Term Plan for 2017 - 2022.

Capacity building among the legal service providers in the country on how to handle HIV related discrimination cases was also started by Philippine National AIDS Council (PNAC) CSO Members. This initiative will also be expanded on the 6th AMTP

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?

-

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 exists and are 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

Activities and strategies through YKAP interventions, Proxy consent initiative, HIV education and condom access in schools, Operations research on condom and lubricants distribution in pilot schools, Integration of HIV in adolescent health program

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

Establishment of multi-sectoral referral system and continuous education among the beneficiaries and stakeholders on how to access social protection services are the key intervention of the national response to ensure that PLHIV, KAP and the people affected by HIV will benefit from HIV sensitive social protection.

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?

Yes

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?

Complicated procedures
Fear of stigma and discrimination
Lack of documentation that confers eligibility, such as national identity cards
Laws or policies that present obstacles to access
High out-of-pocket expenses
insufficient information available on the programs,

Community-led service delivery

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

Progress summary

To ensure that the service delivery is community-led by 2020, the PNAC, thru the leadership of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP) and League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) strongly advocates to the Local Chief Executives the establishment of a functional Local AIDS Council (which includes representation from the CSOs and the KAP) coupled with specific Local HIV and AIDS Plan and budget for the response.

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 HIV CSOs is possible

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

Reporting requirements for CSOs/CBOs delivering HIV services are streamlined

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

a) Male condoms:

-

b) Female condoms:

-

c) Lubricants:

-

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

Activities to empower PLHIV, KAP and other key stakeholders through a continuous information , education and communication campaign on their rights and how to utilize the existing referral system and other support mechanisms if they have experienced violation of their rights.

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 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?

Procedures or systems to protect and respect patient privacy or confidentiality

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

Mechanisms are not sensitive to HIV

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

HIV strategies underscore the value of clients and patients through provision of accessible integrated patient-centered HIV services as indicated in the HSP Operational Plan

2017-2020. Integration of HIV with other programs such as TB, maternal and child health, and adolescent health are currently strengthened at all levels of care.

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)

No

b) The national strategic plan governing the AIDS response

No

c) National HIV-treatment guidelines

No

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

Hepatitis B screening and management in antiretroviral therapy clinics