

Yes, We Can End AIDS by 2030. A New UNAIDS Report Shows How.

Ending AIDS is a political and financial choice, UNAIDS states. While some countries see “extraordinary results,” the U.S. faces challenges. [VIDEO]

July 14, 2023 By [Trent Straube](#)

Highlighting global progress against the HIV epidemic, a new report from UNAIDS makes the case that it’s possible to end AIDS by 2023. It lays out the steps to reach that goal and clarifies the challenges global regions face in tackling the [HIV](#) epidemic.

The report states that in the United States, for example, “efforts to end AIDS...are undermined by social and other inequalities that undermine the health and well-being of marginalized communities.”

Titled The Path That Ends AIDS, the 196-page report by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS ([UNAIDS](#)) was released July 13 and coincides with the upcoming 12th IAS Conference on HIV Science. Organized by the International AIDS Society, [IAS 2023](#) takes place July 23 to 26 in Australia. You can read and download the [full report here](#), the [executive summary here](#) and the related [UNAIDS press release here](#).

“This report makes clear that there is a path to end AIDS,” writes UNAIDS executive director Winnie Byanyima in the [report’s executive summary](#). “The data and real-world examples in the report make it very clear what that path is. It is not a mystery. It is a choice. Some leaders are already following the path—and succeeding. It is inspiring to note that Botswana, Eswatini, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe have already achieved the 95–95–95 targets, and at least 16 other countries (including eight in sub-Saharan Africa) are close to doing so.”

Reaching these targets entails 95% of people living with HIV knowing their status, 95% of folks who know they’re HIV positive being on lifesaving antiretroviral treatment, and 95% of folks on meds being virally suppressed, which means they are undetectable.

People with HIV who achieve and maintain viral suppression experience slower disease progression, enjoy better overall health are less likely to develop opportunistic illnesses. What’s more, people with an undetectable viral load don’t transmit HIV to others through sex (dubbed treatment as prevention, or [Undetectable Equals Untransmittable](#) or U=U).

Byanyima continues in the UNAIDS report: “HIV responses succeed when they are anchored in strong political leadership to follow the evidence; to tackle the inequalities holding back progress; to enable communities and civil society organizations in their vital roles in the response; and to ensure sufficient and sustainable funding.”

Below is a sampling of top-level data included in the report:

- The estimated 1.3 million [1.0 million–1.7 million] new HIV infections in 2022 were the fewest in decades.
- 29.8 million of the estimated 39 million people living with HIV globally are receiving lifesaving treatment.
- HIV treatment averted almost 21 million AIDS-related deaths between 1996 and 2022.
- Globally, almost three quarters (71%) of people living with HIV in 2022 (76% of women and 67% of men living with HIV) had suppressed viral loads.
- Fewer new HIV infections in women and higher coverage of treatment among people living with

HIV have led to a 58% drop in the annual number of new infections in children globally between 2010 and 2022, to about 130,000, the lowest since the 1980s.

The report details successes in the fight against HIV and details remaining obstacles that hold back the HIV response. The later section notes that adolescent girls and young women remain at high risk for HIV, mothers and children are being left behind, prevention and treatment services are missing millions of people and HIV responses still neglect people from key populations (including gay men and transgender people, sex workers and people who inject drugs).

In a section that outlines opportunities for quicker ways to end AIDS, the report notes that the HIV funding gap is widening and that funding must match the need, that programs putting people first have the biggest impact, that greater equity will unlock new opportunities and build a sustainable response and that integrated services can have an even bigger impact.

The UNAIDS report also examines the HIV response in global regions, such as Latin America, the Middle East, North Africa and the Caribbean. The United States is included in the region titled “Western and Central Europe and North America.” The regional profile reads in part:

“Numbers of new HIV infections in Western and Central Europe and North America decreased by 23% between 2010 and 2022, and numbers of AIDS-related deaths decreased by 34%....

“Efforts to end AIDS in Western and Central Europe and North America are undermined by social and other inequalities that undermine the health and well-being of marginalized communities. In the United States, for example, rates of new HIV diagnoses among Black adults are four times higher than among people from other racial or ethnic groups and highest in the communities classified as “socially vulnerable.” Numbers of new HIV diagnoses in the United States increased by 18% in 2021, which likely reflects the identification and reporting of HIV diagnoses missed in 2020.”

Below is a video from UN Web TV about the launch of this UNAIDS report: