

Progress, challenges, and new opportunities for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV under the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

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Abstract:

In June 2011, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and other collaborators outlined a transformative plan to virtually eliminate pediatric AIDS worldwide. The ambitious targets of this initiative included a 90% reduction in new pediatric HIV infections and a 50% reduction in HIV-related maternal mortality—all by 2015. PEPFAR has made an unprecedented commitment to the expansion and improvement of prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission (PMTCT) services globally and is expected to play a critical role in reaching the virtual elimination target. To date, PEPFAR has been instrumental in the success of many national programs, including expanded coverage of PMTCT services, an enhanced continuum of care between PMTCT and HIV care and treatment, provision of more efficacious regimens for antiretroviral prophylaxis, design of innovative but simplified PMTCT approaches, and development of new strategies to evaluate program effectiveness. These accomplishments have been made through collaborative efforts with host governments, United Nations agencies, other donors (eg, the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria), nongovernmental organizations, and private sector partners. To successfully meet the ambitious global targets to prevent new infant HIV infections, PEPFAR must continue to leverage the existing PMTCT platform, while developing innovative approaches to rapidly expand quality HIV services. PEPFAR must also carefully integrate PMTCT into the broader combination prevention agenda for HIV, so that real progress can be made toward an "AIDS-free generation" worldwide.