

SA makes great strides in eliminating mother-to-child transmission

The health department's recent test-and-treat decision - to allow all citizens testing HIV+ to be eligible for antiretroviral treatment, regardless of their CD4 cell count - will impact very positively on the country's fight against Aids, and also contribute to reducing mother-to-child transmission.



© HONGQI ZHANG [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

KwaZulu-Natal has made enormous strides in the elimination of mother-to-child transmission, bringing down the infection rate from 30% ten years ago to less than one percent in 2015.

Larissa Klazinga, regional policy & advocacy manager: [Aids Healthcare Foundation Southern Africa](#) (AHF) says: “AHF is committed to strengthening its partnership with government to achieve this goal (of eliminating mother-to-child transmission) in the foreseeable future.”

Partnerships make elimination possible

Recently the World Health Organisation (WHO) congratulated Thailand and Belarus for eliminating mother-to-child transmission of both HIV and syphilis. Armenia and the Republic of Moldova have also eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis respectively. Last year, Cuba became the first country to be validated for having successfully eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis.

“This achievement was made possible through partnerships between dedicated healthcare workers and government, supported by access to the Global Fund to ensure lifesaving ARVs are available to pregnant mothers and newborn babies, says Klazinga.

International funding essential for success

She did warn though that the situation could change if international funding dwindles – not only in South Africa, but around the world. “This achievement could be short-lived if the Global Fund does not receive contributions from countries like China. It is up to all activists and concerned citizens to keep up the pressure on wealthy countries to pay their share towards global health and the fight against Aids.”

WHO attributes the successful countries' accomplishments to “working hard to ensure early access to prenatal care, HIV and syphilis-testing for pregnant women and their partners, and treatment for women who test positive, as well as for their

babies”.

“The provision of reproductive health information, the engagement of communities and outreach to marginalised population in a manner consistent with basic human rights and gender equality, has helped to facilitate such access,” a WHO spokesman says.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>