



Message from

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on the occasion of World AIDS Day 2015

HIV treatment with antiretroviral medicines is life-saving, and early start of treatment and achieving viral suppression has tremendous benefits. It improves the quality of life and longevity of people living with HIV and provides the public health benefit of reducing the transmission of the virus. Compelled by a wealth of evidence, WHO recently issued an update of its HIV treatment guidelines to recommend treatment for all people living with HIV, independent of the level of immunodeficiency.

While the number of people who are receiving treatment has been steadily increasing, treatment coverage in our region is still the lowest in the world. To this day, fewer than one in five people living with HIV are receiving treatment.

Improving access to antiretroviral therapy is more complex than just making the anti-retroviral medicines available. It requires concerted efforts of governments, in partnership with civil society organizations, people affected by the disease, the private sector and others to engage people living with HIV in a continuum of HIV care services.

This means that people at risk of HIV must have easy access to HIV testing, and people who are diagnosed with HIV are linked to treatment services and supported to remain in life-long care and treatment. Above all, foremost it means that we must get rid of stigmatization and discrimination against people living with HIV. In this region stigma still prevents people at risk from taking a test and seeking care, and thus perpetuates the HIV epidemic.

It is the responsibility of leaders in the health sector to do their utmost to eliminate stigma and discrimination in health care settings and to protect people affected by HIV from the consequences of these behaviours. In this regard I am pleased to announce the release of a new regional package on basic HIV knowledge and stigma reduction for health care workers.

This year the world has committed, through the new Sustainable Development Goals, to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. WHO is building its global and regional strategy towards achievement of this goal. This can only be achieved through scaling up prevention and by closing the treatment coverage gap.

Our call on this World AIDS Day is to “put commitment into action” and bring treatment to all people living with HIV.

Thank you

HIV Treatment for All

