Botswana is a middle-income country in Southern Africa that has invested heavily to increase access to high-quality health services, emphasizing prevention, care and treatment especially for women and youth. This includes scaling up innovative methods to prevent HIV (thereby addressing the challenge of one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world) and developing systems to meet emerging health needs in non-communicable disease prevention and care. Among the critical areas of focus is cervical cancer prevention and treatment. Cervical cancer is the most common cancer among women of all ages in Botswana and the leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women. To respond to the National Cervical Cancer Prevention Programme (NCCPP) estimate of a 20% increase by 2025 in incidence and mortality due to cervical cancer in women under 65, there is a pressing need to build responsive, high-quality services that detect and treat cervical cancer early. This includes increasing knowledge and awareness and expanding access to vaccinations for the human papillomavirus (HPV), which can lead to cervical cancer.

Jhpiego began working in Botswana in 2006, originally with funding from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct a voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) facility readiness assessment. In 2009, Jhpiego embarked on a five-year VMMC initiative with the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and CDC funding to support and provide VMMC in Botswana as part of the Government of Botswana’s (GOB) efforts to prevent the spread of HIV. From 2008 to 2014, Jhpiego also implemented a program to support the GOB, through its eight health training institutes, to develop the country’s capacity to consistently and sustainably produce health care professionals who graduate with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to provide high-quality HIV services upon deployment. Between 2013 and 2014, Jhpiego worked with the University of Botswana to develop a preceptorship program for clinical nurse educators for the school of nursing at the University of Botswana.

Currently, Jhpiego is implementing five projects in Botswana, with support from CDC, Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and Emory University through the Taskforce on Global Health. Through these projects, Jhpiego is: reaching women and girls with cervical cancer education, prevention, screening and treatment services; expanding VMMC services to prevent HIV transmission; strengthening combination HIV prevention services in the Botswana Defence Forces (BDF); and institutionalizing accreditation systems for pre-service education of health care workers. These programs are described in more detail below.
Current Program Highlights
Capacity Building through Training and Mentoring for Cervical Cancer Prevention

Jhpiego is implementing this five-year project with funding support from CDC, PEPFAR and Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon to support the GOB, the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the NCCPP to significantly scale up capacity in cervical cancer prevention, screening and treatment. With support from U.S. Government agencies and partners, Jhpiego focuses on strengthening the NCCPP through provision of training and mentoring of service providers while supporting the capacity of the MOH to plan, provide and support expanded services in the 11 PEPFAR priority districts. Jhpiego’s activities are designed to assist the NCCPP to achieve a goal of ensuring that the majority of woman aged 30–49 and at least 80% of HIV-positive women are able to access cervical cancer prevention services that use visual inspection with acetic acid and same-day treatment (“See and Treat”) for cryotherapy-eligible lesions (or referral for a loop electrosurgical excision procedure). Jhpiego is also providing technical assistance to the MOH with targeting school-age girls with access to HPV vaccination through the national vaccination program.

Continuous Quality Improvement Support to the Botswana Accelerated Safe Male Circumcision Campaign

This six-month project is funded through CDC’s Jhpiego-led global award mechanism, Technical Assistance to Provide High-Quality VMMC Services to Programs Supported by PEPFAR. In Botswana, Jhpiego is supporting the MOH to help ensure the quality of services during the high-volume national VMMC campaign period by providing continuous quality improvement support to providers. PEPFAR, through CDC, continues to support the MOH in scaling up services for safe male circumcision and has provided funding for the MOH to roll out a national campaign targeting the 11 PEPFAR priority districts.

Botswana Combined Prevention Project

The Botswana Combined Prevention Project is a five-year grant from CDC for Jhpiego to continue supporting the provision of high-quality VMMC services in selected intervention communities as part of the larger Botswana Combined Prevention Project (BCPP) study. The project contributes to the efforts of CDC and other U.S. Government partners to quantify and demonstrate the benefits of combined HIV prevention strategies. Jhpiego’s VMMC teams, composed of clinicians and locally based interpersonal communications staff, provide valuable inputs to the collaborative study. In addition, Jhpiego actively participates in the Community Engagement Working Group, a committee with representation from national stakeholders, district health management teams, community leadership, local stakeholders and community members in the study. Collectively, Jhpiego and BCPP study partners also work with the MOH facilities within the communities to ensure linkage to care and treatment for newly diagnosed HIV-positive men.
Strengthening HIV/AIDS Clinical Prevention within the Botswana Defence Force

Through this four-year, DOD-supported project, Jhpiego is strengthening the BDF’s capacity to implement a high-quality, comprehensive HIV prevention program, aiming at independent implementation by the BDF over time. Jhpiego works with the BDF HIV/AIDS program, High Command and other structures to implement a multi-faceted intervention aimed at developing internal capacity to implement a comprehensive HIV prevention strategy. This strategy includes information and awareness campaigns, behavior change communication activities, and strengthened HIV counseling and testing services—all of which target BDF personnel, spouses, dependents and communities surrounding military camps. Jhpiego’s work includes a special focus to support the BDF with scale-up of VMMC services to increase access to VMMC among male military personnel as well as adolescents and men in the surrounding communities. The project targets 13 BDF garrisons and camps throughout Botswana.

Completion of National Nurses’ Licensure Examination Project for Botswana

Jhpiego has supported the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Botswana (NMCB) in its continuing effort to improve nursing and midwifery care to the people of Botswana through the development and introduction of a new licensure examination to new graduates of nursing programs. Through this project, funded by the Taskforce for Global Health/Emory University, Jhpiego is providing direct support to the NMCB to ensure that nurses meet a required standard of nursing knowledge prior to licensure in Botswana by supporting the completion of the examination preparation, including the third round of issuing the examination.

Key Accomplishments

Under the CDC-funded program to expand VMMC services (2009 to 2015), key targets were met or exceeded, and the project achieved 106% of the target male circumcisions performed. This amounted to more than 29,000 males circumcised, more than 2,000 infants circumcised and more than 500 health care providers trained to provide either adult, adolescent or early infant male circumcision, leading to more than 3,700 estimated HIV infections averted.

Partners/Donors

Jhpiego’s donors in Botswana are CDC, DOD, Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon and Taskforce for Global Health/Emory University. Key national partners include the MOH and National AIDS Coordination Agency.

References


