Jhpiego in Lesotho

**Quick Facts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated total population</td>
<td>2.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal mortality ratio</td>
<td>620/100,000 live births</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infant mortality rate</td>
<td>74/1,000 live births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-five mortality rate</td>
<td>100/1,000 live births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total fertility rate</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraceptive prevalence</td>
<td>60% (modern methods)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60% (all methods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV prevalence</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births with skilled provider</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
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</tbody>
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Sources:
1. Population Reference Bureau 2016 World Population Data Sheet
2. UNICEF Information by Country Program

**Background**

A mountainous, landlocked country surrounded by South Africa, Lesotho faces the second highest HIV prevalence in the world. Lesotho’s HIV/AIDS prevalence rate underscores the urgent need to effectively reinforce the health sector in HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support. However, like many other sub-Saharan countries, Lesotho suffers from a shortage of human resources in the health sector as a result of “brain drain” to other countries and low numbers graduating from health education institutions, as well as the impact of HIV/AIDS on the health sector. Nursing education institutions in Lesotho require an infusion of assistance to strengthen their capacity to train current students effectively while also expanding the overall number of nursing graduates.

Jhpiego has been working in Lesotho since 2008, helping the Ministry of Health (MOH) address the national HIV/AIDS epidemic. From 2010 to 2014, under the Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Jhpiego worked closely with the MOH to train providers to expand voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) services to 17 hospitals and facilities. Specifically, Jhpiego worked to: 1) support and strengthen MOH capacity to scale up VMMC services; 2) scale up facility-based services for VMMC and early infant male circumcision (EIMC) throughout Lesotho; and 3) increase demand for VMMC and EIMC services. Also under MCHIP, Jhpiego worked with the Christian Health Association of Lesotho and the Lesotho Nursing Council (LNC) to strengthen pre-service nursing education to ensure development of the health workforce to meet the needs of the population.

From 2011 to 2013, under the leadership of the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community, Jhpiego (as a member of the Human Resources Alliance for Africa [HRAA] consortium) worked to strengthen human resources for health in Lesotho, in partnership with HRAA, the MOH, Ministry of Social Development and their partners through strategic technical assistance. Jhpiego focused on strengthening pre-service education systems for health- and social welfare-related professionals as well as health professional regulatory bodies and associations (e.g., nursing councils). Jhpiego also received funds from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to: 1) strengthen young adult and adolescent health service delivery and begin to build momentum around EIMC in Lesotho; 2) conduct an assessment of VMMC client satisfaction; and 3) strengthen pre-service education for nurse-midwives in Lesotho to reduce preventable neonatal deaths.
Currently, Jhpiego is working in Lesotho under various initiatives described in more detail below.

**Current Program Highlights**

**TSEPO Project**
The Technical Support to Enhance HIV/AIDS Prevention and Opportunities in Nursing Education (TSEPO or “hope” in Sesotho) project is a five-year initiative funded by USAID. Under TSEPO, Jhpiego is strengthening the Government of Lesotho’s capacity to respond to national priorities in health and HIV/AIDS and to contribute to the national target of reducing the number of new HIV infections. Specifically, Jhpiego is: 1) supporting the MOH to implement a VMMC program for HIV prevention, focusing on providing services at 17 established fixed sites and numerous outreach campaigns; and 2) strengthening nursing education in collaboration with schools of nursing. Other partners for this project include the Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association and Lesotho Network of AIDS Services Organizations. Anticipated project results include: 1) 250,000 VMMCs conducted by the end of the project; 2) EIMC integrated with maternal, newborn and child health services, resulting in 50% of facility-born male infants receiving EIMC by the final project year; and 3) improved capacity of the Basotho nursing system.

**Research and scale-up of oral pre-exposure prophylaxis**
Girls and young women account for 74% of new HIV infections among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. The DREAMS initiative is a partnership with the U.S. President’s Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and their implementing partners to drastically reduce HIV infections in adolescents, girls and young women (AGYW) and address the key issues behind the high rate of infection, including poverty, gender inequality, sexual violence and a lack of education. In Lesotho, Jhpiego is using DREAMS funding for a research project and the scale-up of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) services.

The research study hopes to characterize male sexual partners of AGYW, with the goal of designing HIV prevention and treatment interventions to better target AGYW. The study is being conducted in two phases: 1) a descriptive study with qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data from AGYW and profile their potential male sexual partners; and 2) focus groups and key informant interviews with the males identified in the first phase. After the study is finalized in September 2017, the results will be disseminated.

Beginning in FY18, DREAMS will provide additional funds to Jhpiego’s TSEPO project to implement PrEP scale-up in the five PEPFAR priority districts. This scale-up will target key populations most at-risk of HIV infection, including AGYW, female sex workers and men who have sex with men. Through peer educators and intensive community mobilization to “demedicalize” PrEP, Jhpiego will seek to reach those most at-risk and initiate them on PrEP to reduce Lesotho’s HIV burden.
Scott Male Clinic
Basotho men generally do not seek health services because they believe it makes them look weak; they also do not want to receive services from female providers, even though women dominate the industry in Lesotho. In an effort to reach more men, Jhpiego piloted a stand-alone male clinic in July 2016. The clinic offers HIV testing services, VMMC, TB screening/diagnosis, and management of non-communicable diseases, among other services, from primarily male providers to make men feel more comfortable and change their health-seeking behaviors. In its first year, the clinic reached over 8,500 men, treated 4,000 men with HIV and diagnosed over 400 men with TB. With support from Jhpiego, the clinic will continue for a second year, expanding their current services for sexually transmitted infections and TB to include contact tracing and provide services for sexual partners and other household members of male clients. The clinic staff will visit clients in their homes to screen more people for TB and will use geographic information mapping systems to identify TB hot spots for further outreach.

Stepping Up Universal Access: A Multi-Sectoral Partnership Response to TB
With funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Jhpiego is collaborating with the Government of Lesotho and the MOH to use an evidence-based mentorship approach to accelerate cascade care for HIV. Under this initiative (which targets the five districts of Qacha’s Nek, Quthing, Thaba-Tseka, Butha-Buthe and Mokhotlong), Jhpiego is working with 62 health facilities to provide training on clinical mentoring, with a focus on linkages to care and treatment, provider-initiated testing and counseling and TB integration for routine screening. Jhpiego will also orient the facilities on the Community Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) Groups model, so that anyone initiated on ART is linked to a support group of other people living with HIV. In addition to capacitating health facilities to implement cascade care, Jhpiego will also actively seek individuals to screen for TB. In partnerships with nursing schools, the Ministry of Education and Training and the MOH, Jhpiego seeks to screen 480,000 Basotho, focusing on the elderly, school children and factory workers.

“CHATSI” Project
In collaboration with the MOH and Lesotho Correctional Services, Jhpiego will conduct HIV and TB screening to inmates in Butha-Buthe, Thaba-Tseka, Quthing, Qacha’s Nek and Mokhotlong districts. This two-year project, funded by the Elton John AIDS Foundation, focuses not only on testing inmates, but also connecting them to peer support groups and linking them to treatment both in prison and after release at facilities near their villages.
Accomplishments

Under TSEPO:

- VMMC services at 17 fixed sites and 119 outreaches are being offered routinely twice per week and daily during a period of intensified service delivery.
- In fiscal year 2017, Jhpiego supported the provision of 19,890 male circumcisions in Lesotho, including 409 for early infants.
- The total number of male circumcisions provided to date by Jhpiego with USAID support reached a milestone of 100,000 in June 2015. By August 2017, the total cumulative achievement reached 149,139, representing almost 50% of the country target (as per the national implementation plan) to attain 80% coverage with these much needed services.
- Jhpiego has also completed over 1,000 male circumcision procedures using the PrePex circumcision device as part of the active surveillance phase.
- Jhpiego has strengthened pre-service education by: placing 294 nursing and midwifery students in primary health care clinical practicum training; training 59 nurse-midwives as preceptors and 18 nurse-educators on student performance assessment; and developing several clinical placement documents and tools to aid with appropriate implementation and tracking of activities for both students and preceptors during clinical placements.

Partners/Donors

Jhpiego’s donor in Lesotho are: USAID; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; The Elton John Foundation; and PEPFAR. In the past, Jhpiego has received funds from UNICEF and Aquity Innovations (World Bank). Jhpiego also partners closely with the MOH, LNC, Christian Health Association of Lesotho, Mineworkers Development Agency, Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association, Lesotho Network of AIDS Services Organizations, nursing pre-service and HIV prevention partners, the Clinton Health Access Initiative and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

References

