

THE EPIC PROJECT COVID-19 FACTSHEET

Meeting Targets and Maintaining Epidemic Control (EpiC), a five-year global project funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is dedicated to achieving and maintaining HIV epidemic control. EpiC is led by FHI 360 with core partners Right to Care (RTC), Palladium, Population Services International (PSI), and Gobe Group. The project also draws upon regional resource partners to provide technical assistance, as well as global resource partners who bring unique capacities. Although originally designed as an HIV program, EpiC has been modified to accept Pillar 2 COVID-19 funding to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and bolster health systems to address COVID-19 and reemergence.

EpiC has received funding to implement COVID-19 activities in 21 countries across Africa (Egypt, Eswatini, Liberia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe), Asia and the Pacific (Bhutan, Fiji, Kiribati, Maldives, Mongolia, Nauru, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand), and Latin America and the Caribbean (El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Panama, and Paraguay).

CORE APPROACHES

Strengthening Laboratory Diagnostics

EpiC supports countries to detect COVID-19 infection through building capacities at the national and subnational levels to improve diagnostic networks; ensure functional equipment; develop strong specimen collection, referral, and supply chain systems; procure diagnostic commodities; ensure adherence to biosafety and biosecurity standards; strengthen laboratory quality management systems; and enhance linkages to surveillance systems to achieve integration and interoperability.

EpiC is supporting the procurement of equipment and other laboratory commodities to bolster COVID-19 diagnostic capacity. For example, EpiC is expediting COVID-19 diagnostic (polymerase chain reaction [PCR]) testing by enhancing laboratory resources and strengthening capacity in Thailand, El Salvador, Panama, and Nigeria.

Risk Communication and Engagement with Communities

Building on its social and behavior change communication (SBCC) expertise, EpiC deploys risk communication and mitigation messages and strategies to fit the changing prevention and response needs of the pandemic. These strategies are developed and implemented in participatory ways with community members, health providers, and stakeholders, and in close coordination with and support of interagency partners and host country governments.

EpiC is a global cooperative agreement dedicated to achieving and maintaining HIV epidemic control. It is led by FHI 360 with core partners Right to Care, Palladium International, Population Services International (PSI), and Gobe Group. For more information about EpiC, including the areas in which we offer technical assistance, click [here](#).

EpiC is expanding access to these messages for high-risk individuals by strengthening the capacity of community-based organizations and health volunteers to deliver them.

In El Salvador, EpiC is leading a COVID-19 risk communication campaign through print, television, radio, and social media and is providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Health (MOH) to roll out a national COVID-19 risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) response plan. In Liberia, EpiC established an emergency call-in center and worked closely with nine local community service organizations. This campaign sought to allay fears and rumors about COVID-19 and educate community members on infection prevention, an important lesson learned from the recent Ebola outbreak.

Infection Prevention and Control

EpiC is working with partners to develop and deploy infection prevention and control (IPC) training packages targeting laboratories, facilities, and communities. EpiC is training public and private health care workers on COVID-19 preparedness and response, including implementation of screening; infection control measures for patients, staff, and visitors; clinical evaluation of suspected COVID-19 patients; and development of facility contingency plans. For instance, EpiC is assisting the rollout of IPC training packages to 18 countries as part of its support for ventilator use to treat COVID-19 patients.

Supporting Surveillance, Rapid Response, and Emergency Operations

EpiC is improving the capacity of host governments to assess, prepare, and deploy guidelines and protocols for emergency response to COVID-19. EpiC's support in this area prioritizes two key approaches: (1) improving digital surveillance, data visualization, and analysis of trends to allow for identification of community transmission patterns and epidemic hot spots where screening and testing should be scaled up; and (2) providing technical assistance to improve COVID-19 index case identification, tracing contacts of index cases, identifying suspected cases, and documenting tested and confirmed cases as well as treated and recovered cases.

In El Salvador, EpiC is improving COVID-19 recording and reporting systems through procurement of computers, tablets, and software to enable improved surveillance and tracking of COVID-19 by the MOH. In Nigeria, EpiC strengthened an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Bayelsa State, which is responsible for planning, coordinating, allocating resources, and providing direction for COVID-19 emergency response activities.

Improving Management of COVID-19 Cases

EpiC is providing technical support to 18 countries on the use of mechanical ventilators to improve case management of severe COVID-19 cases requiring respiratory support. This support spans assessments measuring readiness of facilities to accept ventilators, setup and maintenance, training on use and monitoring, training on the clinical management of COVID-19 patients, and establishment of communities of practice on COVID-19 clinical management.

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