# Voluntary HIV Testing Encouraged in Mozambique

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Mozambique will encourage voluntary HIV testing in 2009 to reduce the spread of the pandemic, which threatens the government's economic recovery efforts, the African Press Agency reports.

According to the article, Mozambique Health Minister Ivo Garrido said that one of the main problems in dealing with the epidemic was that most Mozambicans were unaware of their HIV status. He blames ignorance and fear of being tested.

Ninety percent of people with AIDS admitted to hospitals in Mozambique were only aware that they were HIV positive when they fell ill, meaning the virus had been disrupting their immune systems for many years without their knowledge because they failed to get tested.

"The challenge for 2009 is to ensure mass testing for HIV. This will allow those who test positive to save themselves, and those who test negative will be aware of the fact, and will take measures to keep themselves protected," Garrido said.

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