Nations Advance Toward UNAIDS HIV Treatment Targets

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Speaking at the 21st International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa (AIDS 2016), UNAIDS executive director Michel Sidibé said that the ambitious “90-90-90” targets for rates of HIV testing, treatment and viral suppression can be reached by 2020 in many hard-hit countries, aidsmap reports. However, he questioned whether the retreat of donations for global HIV treatment may jeopardize continued progress.

In 2014, UNAIDS issued its 90-90-90 targets for 2020, calling upon nations to get 90 percent of their HIV populations diagnosed, 90 percent of diagnosed people on antiretroviral (ARV) treatment and 90 percent of that population virally suppressed so that 73 percent of each nation’s HIV population would have a fully suppressed viral load. These figures are part of what is known as the care continuum, or treatment cascade.

A new UNAIDS progress report presented at AIDS 2016 states that 17 million people were taking HIV treatment in 2015, a figure nearly twice that seen in 2011. An estimated 57 percent of the global HIV population is currently diagnosed, 46 percent are taking antiretrovirals (ARVs) and 38 percent have a fully suppressed viral load. The regions with the highest rates of these three figures are in eastern and southern Africa, with respective rates of 56 percent, 54 percent and 45 percent, and in western and central Europe and North America, which have respective rates of 86 percent, 59 percent and 47 percent.

According to UNAIDS, the funding required to achieve the 90-90-90 targets and effectively end the epidemic by 2030 will reach a high of $19.3 billion in 2017 and will pull back to $18 billion by 2020. Sidibé stated that, in fact, a reduction in global donations is a major threat to achieving the targets, as contributions fell by nearly $600 million in 2015, from $8.7 billion to $8.2 billion.

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