# UNAIDS Calls for Scale-Up in Global HIV Fight

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The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Lancet Commission have called for expanded access to antiretrovirals (ARVs) and greater HIV prevention efforts worldwide, lest infection rates rebound. The two groups have issued a report warning that the next five years are a crucial window in the fight against the virus.

“We must face hard truths: If the current rate of new HIV infections continues, merely sustaining the major efforts we already have in place will not be enough to stop deaths from AIDS increasing within five years in many countries,” Peter Piot, MD, PhD, director of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and lead author of the report, said in a press release. “Expanding sustainable access to treatment is essential, but we will not treat ourselves out of the AIDS epidemic. We must also reinvigorate HIV prevention efforts, particularly among populations at highest risk, while removing legal and societal discrimination.”

The overall rate of new HIV infections has been dropping worldwide, but the report argues it has not been falling fast enough. Considerable population growth among the most affected nations may ultimately push HIV incidence back up.

The report states that sustaining the current HIV treatment and prevention efforts in Africa through 2030 would cost the equivalent of 2 percent of the gross domestic product and more than a third of the total governmental budget for health in the most affected nations in the continent. This fact, the report stresses, puts into stark terms the dire need for significant international financial support.

Recent research has pointed to resurgent HIV rates among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Western Europe, North America and Asia. Uganda has also seen resurgent HIV rates after a decade of success, partly as a result of reduced HIV prevention efforts.

To read the press release, click here.

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