South Africa to Expand HIV Treatment for Pregnant Women, Babies

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South African President Jacob Zuma announced a policy to broaden antiretroviral treatment to more pregnant women and babies, *The New York Times* reports. In an effort to combat mother-to-child transmission of HIV, the policy will cover more women; it will also make meds available earlier to babies.

This new policy—which adheres to the World Health Organization's new treatment guidelines—stands in stark contrast to the views of Zuma's predecessor, Thabo Mbeki, who throughout his presidency believed antiretroviral medications are harmful and questioned whether HIV causes AIDS.

According to the article, Zuma's new HIV policies will include earlier treatment for HIV-positive people who also have tuberculosis, when their immune systems are stronger. Tuberculosis is the leading cause of death for positive South Africans.

Zuma announced the policy during a national address December 1, World AIDS Day.

"What does this all mean?" Zuma asked in his speech. "It means that we will be treating significantly larger numbers of HIV-positive patients. It means that people will live longer and more fulfilling lives."

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