



# Importance of PEPFAR in Ending the HIV Epidemic among Women and Girls

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Monday, March 10 is [National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#) (NWGHAAD), a day to raise awareness about the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls and acknowledge what needs to be done to end the epidemic. In 2023, globally, [44% of all new HIV infections](#) were among women and girls of all ages. Adolescent girls and young women are disproportionately impacted by HIV worldwide. According to UNAIDS, in 2023, there were an estimated [1.9 million women and girls](#) ages 15-24 living with HIV. To eradicate HIV among women and girls globally, funding and resources must be invested to improve access to and uptake of HIV prevention, testing, surveillance, care, and treatment services.

Through the [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief \(PEPFAR\)](#), the U.S. government has invested over \$110 billion to the global HIV/AIDS response. PEPFAR is a global HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment initiative that provides essential foreign assistance to countries most impacted by the ongoing epidemic. This program has made tremendous progress in preventing and treating HIV/AIDS globally, especially in women and girls. Continued investment into this vital program is imperative in order to achieve optimal health outcomes for women and girls worldwide.

PEPFAR, founded in May 2003, has planned and implemented HIV/AIDS interventions in more than [50 countries](#), which have resulted in saving millions of lives. As of [2023](#), through PEPFAR:

- More than 71 million people received HIV testing
- Almost 2 million people were newly enrolled on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention
- An estimated 20.5 million people were supported for antiretroviral treatment (ART)

For [women and girls](#), specifically:

- 2.5 million adolescent girls and young women were reached with comprehensive HIV prevention

services

- New HIV diagnoses among adolescent girls and young women declined in all geographic areas implementing the PEPFAR-led DREAMS ([Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe](#)) public-private partnership

Recently, PEPFAR funding and programming has been [threatened](#). The impact of ending PEPFAR will be detrimental to the fight to end HIV/AIDS. Millions of people will lose access to HIV testing and diagnosis, ART, PrEP, and other life-saving resources and services. Public health and policy experts predict that women and girls will be severely impacted. For instance, it is estimated that every day [1,400 babies will be born with HIV](#) if PEPFAR programs that help their mothers remain frozen. Over the past 22 years, PEPFAR has been effective and its impact on women and girls is significant. Between 2000 and 2023, new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women [fell by 63% worldwide](#), and the rate of that decline has accelerated over the past decade.

NASTAD's vision is a world committed to ending HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, and intersecting epidemics. PEPFAR's continued success is vital to achieving this vision. Policymakers, activists, public health experts, and stakeholders must defend PEPFAR, and advocate for it to continue its operations and receive substantial funding. The lives of millions of women and girls depend on it.

For more information about PEPFAR or NWGHAAD, visit:

- [PEPFAR](#)
- [2025 NWGHAAD](#)

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