



# LAOS

## CDC Division of Global HIV & TB's Strategic Focus



Since 2009, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has collaborated with multilateral organizations to treat and prevent HIV and tuberculosis (TB) in Laos. CDC initiatives promote sustainable solutions that have been adopted, integrated, and scaled up within existing government health systems. CDC works with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and partners in five high-burden provinces to improve access to HIV treatment and adherence, advance HIV testing and treatment, laboratory services, strengthen and streamline surveillance to monitor the HIV epidemic, and the use of strategic information for quality improvement efforts to improve HIV service delivery.

## Key Activities and Accomplishments

### Building Public Health Capacity

- Implemented an HIV index testing monitoring system and integrated index testing, recency testing, and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) variables into the national HIV monitoring system.
- Established the national recent HIV infection surveillance system with real-time reporting.
- Provided technical assistance in updating national HIV surveillance guidelines and conducting bio-behavioral surveys with population size estimates among people at greater risk of HIV.
- Improved HIV data analysis following global definitions to update the national HIV dashboards.
- Provided data analysis and tracked interruptions in treatment among people living with HIV.
- Assisted with developing a national website to serve as the official HIV information hub.
- Developed a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) training course for healthcare workers and public health officers to build local capacity for M&E and data use.

### Strengthening Laboratory Systems and Networks

- Established national external quality assurance programs on HIV rapid point-of-care tests and HIV viral load tests. Eighty two percent (156) of HIV testing laboratories participated in an HIV serology external quality assessment (EQA) in FY2024. Over 90 percent of participating laboratories achieved "Good" and "Excellent" proficiency levels.
- Provided capacity building for the National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology to become the National EQA Center.
- Supported the implementation of a laboratory information management system.
- Developed a monitoring program to track the distribution of HIV testing kits.

## **HIV Prevention and Treatment**

- Improved the quality of HIV testing, treatment, and counseling services. Helped the MOH update standard operating procedures, including guidelines for treating HIV and opportunistic infections, retaining patients in care, adherence counseling, PrEP and index testing, and expanding HIV treatment and care services to point-of-care sites for antiretroviral therapy (ART).
- Supported national HIV quality improvement workshops, trainings, and the development of quality improvement manuals and activities. This included mentoring and implementation of strategies at ART point-of-care sites to promote same-day and rapid ART initiation, reduce treatment interruptions, and facilitate the transition to Tenofovir-Lamivudine-Dolutegravir. Efforts also included increasing the uptake of viral load testing coverage, TB preventive treatment, and multi-month dispensing (MMD).
- Increased the percentage of same-day ART initiation from 25 percent in FY2022 to 46 percent in FY2024, MMD dispensing for over six months from 6 percent in FY2022 to 19 percent in FY2024, and the overall MMD for over three months reached 90 percent in FY2024.
- Trained healthcare providers and expanded index testing services and monitoring systems to 11 ART sites and community-based locations. As a result, the rate of HIV detection among partners increased from 25 to 36 percent among 15–19-year-olds and from 41 to 48 percent for 35–49-year-olds in FY 2024.
- Supported the decentralization of HIV viral load and established an external quality assurance program to improve the access and quality of viral load testing services.
- Conducted data quality assurance for testing, counseling, and ART services.

## **Key Country Leadership**

**President:**

Thongloun Sisoulith

**Minister of Health:**

Bounfeng Phoummalaysith

**U.S. Ambassador:**

Heather Variava

**CDC/DGHT Program Director:**

Sanny Northbrook

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## **Country Quick Facts**

**Per Capita GNI:** \$2,110 (2023)

**Population (millions):**

7.95 (2024)

**Under 5 Mortality:**

37.2/1,000 live births (2024)

**Life Expectancy:**

69.22 years (2024)

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## **Global HIV Epidemic**

**Estimated HIV Prevalence (Ages 15–49):**

0.4% (2023)

**Estimated HIV Deaths (Age ≥15):**

<500 (2023)

**Reported Number Receiving**

**Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) (Age ≥15):**

11,277 (2023)

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## **Global Tuberculosis (TB) Epidemic**

**Estimated TB Incidence:**

132/100,000 population (2023)

**Reported Percent of People with TB and HIV: 4.7% (2023)**

**TB Treatment Success Rate:**

88% (2022)

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## **DGHT Country Staff**

Locally Employed Staff: 1

Direct Hires: 0

Fellows & Contractors: 0