

Western Cape launches U=U campaign

By  Katja Hamilton

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The Western Cape Province has launched its Undetectable Equals Untransmittable, or U=U, campaign in Mitchells Plain on the Cape Flats. This coincides with the launch of a mobile health hub in Westridge where residents will be able to access a wide range of healthcare services including HIV testing.



Source: [Pexels](#)

The U=U campaign is an international initiative aimed at promoting HIV awareness and fighting the stigma associated with HIV transmission.

The core message of the campaign is that if an individual living with HIV has an undetectable viral load due to effective antiretroviral treatment, they cannot sexually transmit the virus to others. In other words, when someone's viral load is undetectable, it means that the amount of HIV in their blood is so low that it cannot be detected by standard laboratory tests.

U=U aims to prevent HIV transmission and increase HIV testing and the uptake of life-saving anti-retroviral medication. It is a message used in HIV campaigns and relays that if someone has an undetectable viral load, they cannot sexually transmit HIV to others.

Health authorities in the Western Cape say about half a million people in the province are living with HIV, but that only around 59% of those are on ARV treatment.

“If you look at the statistics, what’s really scary is that the number of younger women who are HIV and Aids positive is almost double that of men, and among young women, it is the leading cause of death,” Alan Winde Premier of the Western Cape said.

Empowering HIV management

“It is something that through medicine, we can stop. So you must get tested, you must know your status. If you are HIV and Aids positive, you can actually be undetectable which means you’ve got to be on your antiretrovirals. And it’s as simple as that; it’s not a difficult thing to do.”

TLD is the recommended treatment option for most people living with HIV in the country. About 4.7 million people in SA are taking dolutegravir. It is a three-in one combination of antiretroviral drugs tenofovir, lamivudine and dolutegravir recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2018 for the treatment of HIV, and was included in the SA treatment guidelines as first line treatment for HIV in 2019.

SA has awarded TLD a three year tender, and it replaces the antiretroviral, efavirenz.



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The U=U campaign was launched in early 2016 by the Prevention Access Campaign, a non-profit organisation that advocates for widespread understanding and acceptance of the U=U concept. It is based on a Scientific Consensus Statement that affirms the scientific evidence supporting the notion that effective treatment can prevent the sexual transmission of HIV.

The U=U campaign is a global effort to decrease the stigma around HIV and improve health outcomes. It was launched by the Prevention Access Campaign in early 2016 from a [Scientific Consensus Statement](#).

U=U is supported by numerous health groups and organisations worldwide, including the WHO.

ABOUT KATJA HAMILTON

Katja is the Finance, Property and Healthcare Editor at Bizcommunity.

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