

Logistics upset Zambia's HIV test kit delivery

A number of civil society organisations have condemned the shortage of HIV/Aids test kits in the country, saying that someone should be held accountable for the logistical blunder.



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Poor supply chain

The delivery of expired test kits to facilities in February and the expiration of about 500,000 test kits in the country's medical store has highlighted Zambia's poor supply chain management system. If this system is not dramatically improved there are likely to be grave consequences for the nation's HIV/AIDS response.

"As a country that is moving towards meeting the ambitious 2020 UNAIDS target of getting 90% of all people living with HIV know their status, 90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection to receive sustained antiretroviral therapy and 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy to have viral suppression, it is disheartening to learn that we are currently experiencing stock outs of HIV testing kits in most of our health centres."

"Furthermore, it is sad and disappointing to learn that 500,000 HIV test kits expired in the month of February 2016 alone are scheduled for destruction," says Eunice Sinyemu, national director: NZP+ (Network of Zambian People Living with HIV/Aids).

Too many questions

"Too many questions come to mind here. What could have caused these stock outs? Is it that someone was negligent in their duty and ended up wasting 500,000 test kits bought from either donor or tax payers money?"

"Are there no mechanisms within medical stores that could have detected that the kits were due to expire and could have been sent out to the facilities for use long before the expiry date? Is it that the mistake was at provincial, district or facility level?" asks Carol Nyirenda, Director, COZWHA (Coalition of Zambian Women Living with HIV/Aids).

The groups called on the government to ensure that someone is held accountable for these avoidable lapses in HIV test kit supply. The coalition stressed that CSOs have a moral responsibility to speak out against acts of negligence, corruption and misapplication of resources in any public office that might bring disrepute to the country and suffering to Zambian citizens.

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