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## **CONTROLLING THE HIV EPIDEMIC**

CONTRACTOR(S)/GRANTEE(S): **JAMAICA AIDS SUPPORT FOR LIFE (JASL)**

DURATION: SEPTEMBER 2019- SEPTEMBER 2022

TOTAL PROJECTED INVESTMENT: \$6 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCE: PEPFAR

The Caribbean Regional Program continues to align operations through its HIV/AIDS strategy of “focusing resources and leveraging finances to address the most vulnerable populations.” To this end Jamaica’s HIV program includes funding for both Barbados and Guyana until FY2020.

HIV prevalence among the general population in Jamaica is 1.8 percent. The epidemic is described as a generalized epidemic although concentrated in certain key populations, namely men who have sex with men (MSM), with a prevalence of 29 percent; and women of Trans Gender experience, with a prevalence rate of 51 percent. HIV prevalence among female sex workers (FSW) is similar to the general population prevalence at 2.0 percent.

To reach epidemic control, Jamaica AIDS Support for Life (JASL) aims to address key barriers across the HIV continuum of care. The main objectives of the program are: 1) finding the undiagnosed persons living with HIV (PLHIV); 2) initiating on antiretroviral therapy (ART) for persons diagnosed but not on treatment; and 3) achieving viral suppression for persons on ART.

Additional program objectives include:

- I. Increase activities around finding persons who are diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. JASL will work with three other NGOs (ASHE, Children’s First and Jamaica Network of Seropositives (JN+)) to implement both facility and community-based testing approaches coupled with robust monitoring and evaluation, in an effort to scale up case finding of those persons that are undiagnosed.

2. A major programmatic gap in reaching epidemic control is the significant numbers of PLHIV who were previously diagnosed with HIV and are not presently on treatment. JASL's program is to strengthen patient education on adherence and routine care to reduce attrition, programming includes the launch and promotion of "Undetectable equals Untransmittable" (U=U) messaging that conveys the importance of treatment, adherence, and viral suppression.
3. With only 57 percent of ART patients virally suppressed, JASL has expanded activities to help clients achieve and maintain viral suppression. Proactive review of unsuppressed cases and implementation of Enhanced Adherence Implementation Plans also helps to achieve suppression at all JASL clinics to address the low suppression rates among those on ART.