



U.S. Agency for  
International  
Development

Bureau for  
Global Health

# COUNTRY PROFILE

HIV/AIDS

## SENEGAL

Senegal is considered one of the developing world's success stories in HIV prevention. It has maintained one of the lowest HIV prevalence levels in sub-Saharan Africa, and HIV prevalence has stabilized since 1997. The Senegal Ministry of Health reported a 1.0 percent prevalence (HIV1 and HIV2) for 2002, with approximately 70,000 persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Estimated Number of Adults and Children Living with HIV/AIDS	70,000
Total Population (2001)	9.7 million
Adult HIV Prevalence (HIV1 & HIV2)	1.0%
HIV-1 Seroprevalence in Urban Areas	0.8%*

Sources: Senegal Ministry of Health, \*USAID

Senegal's comparatively low HIV/AIDS prevalence in relation to other African countries has been attributed to cultural norms that promote responsible sexual behavior, comprehensive strategic approaches to controlling the epidemic, and continued commitment from Senegalese officials. An analysis conducted by UNAIDS in 1997 and again in 2000 attributed the low prevalence of HIV/AIDS among the general population to the following factors:

### *Conservative cultural norms regarding sex*

Premarital sex is relatively less common in Senegal than in other countries in the region. For women in urban areas, the probability of first sexual encounter before the age of 20 years is 20 percent, compared with 30 percent or 40 percent in neighboring countries.

### *Creation of safe blood supply for transfusion*

The national blood supply system, which has been systematically tested for syphilis and hepatitis since the 1970s, was reinforced in 1987 to prevent the transmission of HIV through blood transfusion. National and regional blood banks have appropriate equipment and personnel trained for HIV testing in the country's 11 regions.



### *Registration and regular medical checkups for commercial sex workers*

Since 1969, registered commercial sex workers have been required to undergo quarterly health checkups and receive treatment for curable sexually transmitted infections. This system of registration has provided a framework to approach this target group with educational and health campaigns.

### *Promotion of condom use*

Condom promotion is a major component of the National AIDS Control Program strategy. Condoms are distributed free to commercial sex workers, patients with sexually transmitted infec-

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Map of Senegal: PCL Map Collection, University of Texas

tions, youth, and the military. In addition, condom social marketing programs sold 3.9 million condoms in 2002 through 3,500 sales points across Senegal. The 2001 behavior surveillance survey found 99 percent of registered sex workers used a condom with their most recent nonregular partner.

### ***Information, education, and communication interventions***

Comprehensive information, education, and communication programs through nongovernmental organizations have targeted specific groups, such as commercial sex workers, youth, female domestic workers and vendors, truck drivers, and spouses of migrant workers. In addition to mass media campaigns and widespread production of HIV/AIDS education materials, significant efforts have been made to reach youth and women through special events, such as World AIDS Day, Youth Week Against AIDS, and Women's Week Against AIDS. Toward both groups, an emphasis is placed on abstinence and fidelity to one partner as a means of preventing the transmission of sexually transmitted infections.

### ***Active involvement of community, political, and religious leaders***

Senegal has many experienced associations, movements, and community organizations working in the health field. As early as 1989, the government collaborated with religious organizations to discuss its AIDS prevention strategy. In 1995, a national conference resulted in a proclamation of support for HIV prevention and a partnership between health care providers and both Christian and Muslim religious leaders in the fight against AIDS.

### ***Strengthening the management of sexually transmitted infections***

At hospitals, health centers and larger health posts, the diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections is based on testing and confirmation, while at smaller health posts, the syndromic approach is used. This dual approach has improved service quality and increased awareness about these infections among the general population. The advent of rapid tests for HIV will facilitate the diagnosis of HIV at increasing decentralized levels.

### ***Monitoring HIV prevalence on a continuous basis***

Sentinel surveillance of HIV started in 1987 and provides useful and regular information on the evolution of the epidemic.

## **National Response**

The Senegalese government demonstrated its political commitment to confront HIV/AIDS soon after the epidemic began. In 1986, the government collaborated with the World Health Organization to establish the Programme National de Lutte contre le SIDA et les MST (changed in April 2002 to Conseil National de Lutte contre le SIDA et les MST). Strategies employed by Conseil National de Lutte contre le SIDA et les MST to maintain low HIV/AIDS prevalence include measuring the scope of the epidemic; guaranteeing the safety of blood transfusions; promoting education activities for the prevention of sexual transmission of HIV; supporting the psychological and clinical needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS; and reinforcing prevention efforts for sexually transmitted infections.

Since 1989, prevention strategies for HIV and sexually transmitted infections have been integrated. From the start of the epidemic, civil society and religious groups, as well as political leaders, have been actively involved in HIV/AIDS prevention activities. In 2000, the government made antiretroviral drugs available to pregnant women at three sites in Dakar and has increased access to antiretrovirals. At the end of 2002, 1,300 persons living with HIV were treated with antiretrovirals, which were available in the Dakar, Thies, and Kaolack regions.

The Conseil National de Lutte contre le SIDA et les MST has adopted a multisectoral strategy for 2000–2006, including the following components: 1) increased information, education, communication, and behavior change activities; 2) improved HIV epidemiological surveillance; 3) reinforcement of the blood screening program; 4) management of sexually transmitted infections; and 5) care and support of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

## **USAID Support**

USAID/Senegal supports interventions at the national, central, district, and community levels. At the national level, USAID provides training and supervision in application of service delivery norms and protocols throughout the country. At the central level, the Mission supports policy dialogue, research, monitoring and evaluation, and information dissemination and communication. At district and community levels, USAID supports local health services and systems support, including development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of local health action plans. Through private voluntary organizations, USAID provides assistance to targeted vulnerable populations to ensure adequate knowledge and access to treatment and prevention of sexually transmitted infections and HIV.

For 2004, USAID will allocate \$6 million to HIV/AIDS activities in Senegal.

USAID supports the following country programs:

### ***Behavior change***

Initiatives target vulnerable populations such as patients with sexually transmitted infections, mobile populations, and commercial sex workers to encourage abstinence, fidelity, treatment, and protection through multiple communication channels. Community-based organizations receive support to develop outreach activities targeted to these populations.

### ***Capacity development***

Specific objectives of the USAID program include the enhancement of high-level political support for HIV/AIDS prevention and reinforcement of high-level policy dialogue within neighboring countries. USAID works with members of Parliament to address the legal and regulatory framework surrounding HIV/AIDS.

Activities in the workplace consist of advocacy with decision-makers for the development and implementation of HIV prevention and treatment programs within their companies, and the publication of an information bulletin for widespread distribution among business leaders, ministries, and unions. USAID programs focus on building a sustainable partnership with various media outlets, enhancing their role in increasing public awareness, and supporting advocacy for HIV/AIDS prevention.

USAID also works with private companies to ensure HIV/AIDS activities and services are made available to employees, and with the national telephone company to provide an AIDS information hotline service.

### ***Care and support***

Linking prevention and care is an essential component of USAID's strategy in Senegal, as is increased access to care and increased involvement in prevention activities for people living with HIV/AIDS.

USAID provides assistance to the National AIDS Council to assess the care and support situation in Senegal and design a national strategy for decentralization of the care continuum. In addition, USAID programs reinforce the national unit of the Center for Ambulatory Care for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS. Finally, USAID and its partners work to reinforce networks of persons living with HIV/AIDS by identifying nascent partnerships, expanding model support networks developed by USAID's community mobilizing partners, and linking them to voluntary HIV counseling and testing services.

### ***Condom promotion***

Since 1985, USAID has provided the National AIDS Control Program with more than 10 million condoms for distribution to sex workers, patients with sexually transmitted infections, youth, and adults through clinics and during AIDS-related event days. In addition, since 1995, USAID has promoted social marketing efforts with a local nongovernmental organization that works through 3,500 pharmacies and nontraditional outlets.

### ***Mother-to child transmission***

In 2003, USAID will support the Ministry of Health's initiative to expand the program to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. USAID's support will be directed to implementing this service in the regions where it supports antenatal care and improved birthing practices.

### ***Monitoring and evaluation***

In collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USAID plans to help the National AIDS Program build its capacity and infrastructure to more effectively monitor and evaluate both the evolution of the epidemic and the effectiveness of various interventions. There is a need to expand the geographic coverage of the surveillance system, which is based on pregnant women.

A more comprehensive surveillance system will track the epidemic within groups at risk for HIV infection, such as truckers and fisherman, and collect behavioral information as a means to record trends in HIV/AIDS across the country. Specific objectives of the program are to develop and implement a second-generation surveillance system and establish a laboratory quality assurance and control program at both the national and local levels.

### ***Reaching in-school youth***

USAID employs a two-pronged approach aimed at primary, secondary, literacy, and technical and vocational students to establish a positive environment for HIV/AIDS prevention among educational personnel. The goal is to encourage abstinence, fidelity, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections and HIV among targeted youth groups through innovative channeling of messages.

### ***Voluntary counseling and testing***

USAID plans to increase access to high-quality voluntary HIV counseling and testing services, establish a quality assurance mechanism for testing sites, and establish an effective and broad-based network linking testing facilities to basic care and support services for persons with HIV/AIDS. Currently, five voluntary HIV counseling and testing centers are operating in Senegal.

### **For More Information**

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USAID HIV/AIDS Web site, Senegal:  
[http://www.usaid.gov/pop\\_health/aids/Countries/africa/senegal.html](http://www.usaid.gov/pop_health/aids/Countries/africa/senegal.html)

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*For more information, see [www.usaid.gov/pop\\_health/aids/](http://www.usaid.gov/pop_health/aids/) or [www.synergyaids.com](http://www.synergyaids.com).*

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