



**ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA  
GLOBAL AIDS  
MONITORING 2017  
REPORT**

NARRATIVE FOR 2016

[cochrane\\_sonia@yahoo.com](mailto:cochrane_sonia@yahoo.com)

## **Abstract**

During 2016, Antigua and Barbuda continued to find new and innovative ways to address the HIV and AIDS situation in the country. This report shows some of these activities utilized by government and civil society and Non-governmental organizations to help the country reach the 90/90/90 targets and by extension mitigate the transmission of HIV in the country. The activities included educational sessions, street fairs, marches, participation in national activities as well as prevention interventions among the MSM and Sex worker populations. Through these activities increased number of children, adolescents and adults were reached with HIV prevention messages and people became knowledgeable of their HIV status, while those who were HIV positive were empowered to access care and treatment free at the point of service.

## **Content**

Abstract.....	1
Introduction.....	3
Cross-cutting Measures HIV prevention and control activities.....	3
HIV Prevention.....	3
HIV Prevention in Schools.....	5
HIV Prevention in Barbuda.....	5
HIV Prevention among key populations.....	6
Health System Strengthening.....	6
PMTCT: HIV Testing Training.....	6
Free HIV Testing.....	7
Reaching Key Populations with HIV-related Services.....	7
Other HIV testing outreaches.....	7
Private Sector HIV Testing data reporting.....	8
Gender-based violence.....	8
Conclusion.....	8

## **Introduction**

Antigua and Barbuda continues to strive toward the achievement of the 90/90/90 targets set by UNAIDS and adopted by the Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and success toward reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. The process to decentralization HIV care and treatment into Primary Health care continues in an effort to help the country augment the HIV intervention with strengthening of the prevention activities. In addition to routine HIV-related activities, a number of Cross-cutting measures have been taken to increase the intensity of the HIV response in the country. The interventions included activities that were carried out to mitigate the transmission of HIV through Community Mobilization and partnership between government and non-governmental Organizations as well as a wide cross-section of individuals and agencies, inclusive of organizations reaching key populations with HIV prevention services. This narrative will show some of the innovative measures that have been used to ensure that HIV-related services reach key population as well as people in the general population that may not have realized risk of contracting HIV with HIV prevention knowledge and skills and other relevant services.

## **Cross-Cutting HIV Prevention and Control Activities**

### **HIV Prevention**

During 2016, a number of HIV prevention interventions were carried out in collaboration with Non-governmental Organizations, governmental institutions as well as Community-based Organizations. These included HIV prevention education, condom application demonstrations and distributions and the issuing of other HIV prevention commodities. These activities were implemented at varying times during the year to include Valentines outreaches activities where

couples were encouraged to access HIV testing and offered a Valentine Day card with special HIV prevention messages, condoms and chocolate as an incentive for testing.

Additionally, HIV prevention outreaches were also held in collaboration with the National Parks Authority. At this time the staff of the AIDS Secretariat in collaboration with its partners conduct HIV prevention activities during the Sailing Week festivities. Activities include HIV prevention education, condom application demonstration and distribution. These services were accessed by locals and visitors alike.

Likewise, Regional Testing Day was held in collaboration with Scotiabank where a Street Fair was held and Free HIV Testing offered at three separate locations. Through this effort over 400 people accessed HIV-related services. Similarly, during carnival festivities in the summer month of August, the AIDS Secretariat, partnered with the Directorate of Gender Affairs and sponsored by Scotiabank, participated in the Opening for Carnival under the theme **“Experience Greatness-Rise Up-Act Smart – Make safe sex your choice”**. During this occasions, the team distributed condoms and other HIV prevention commodities at the Opening Parade and during nightly Shows via a booth that was set up inside Carnival City.

Similarly, the AIDS Secretariat also collaborated with the State Insurance Cooperation during the World AIDS Day March at which time the department was joined by its many partners march to the beat of the Police Band through the streets of St. Johns symbolizing their support for people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. The occasion was also used to celebrate the successes in HIV prevention and control and recognize the need for additional efforts by organizations and individuals to reach the set targets. The occasion was also used to distribute condoms and other

HIV prevention paraphernalia to individuals requesting the services on the route of the march. This year, the march was joined by Antigua and Barbuda's Governor General; Dr. Sir. Rodney Williams who addressed the young people during the closing ceremony. Other individuals, groups and organization present included Ministry of Health and the Environment Chief Technicians, the Red Cross, Path Finders, Secondary and Primary Schools, Rotary Club, the Ministry of Social Transformation and Community Development among others.

### ***HIV Prevention in Schools***

Other HIV Prevention Education activities continued in schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports. These activities were conducted in varying primary and secondary schools. The students were informed about HIV and strategies to prevent transmission in appropriate language.

### ***HIV Prevention in Barbuda***

In collaboration with the Barbuda Council and people of Barbuda, the department continues to increase its efforts to ensure that residents of the sister island enjoy the same benefits of HIV prevention and control as their peers in Antigua. During the year, Barbuda was visited four times by a team of workers from the AIDS Secretariat. As usual during the visit, HIV prevention education activities were conducted.

This year, two special exercises were held with the schools on the island. A debate on the topic: **"Students Living with HIV attend public schools"** was held at the Sir Mc Chesney George Secondary School between four students after researching the topic. At the Holy Trinity Primary School, a reading competition was held between a number of students who read from PAHO

News Week and the Daily Observer News Paper. The winners were awarded trophies and tokens as prizes. The trophies were donated to the winners by a government Senator and the tokens by the State Insurance Cooperation. The usual educational sessions were also held in schools on the island and students were treated with two HIV focussed movies.

State Insurance World AIDS Day March was also a high point of HIV prevention in Barbuda during 2016. During the Barbuda leg of week of activities the natives engaged in a Digicel sponsored Red and White Zumbaton Fun Time on the Barbuda Tennis Court.

### ***HIV Prevention Education among Key Populations***

During 2016, a total of 90 Men who have sex with Men were reached with HIV prevention information through Men Meeting Emotional and Social needs Holistically (MESH). During the period, 10 MSM reportedly accessed HIV testing. In total there were 15 of the MSM accessing services who reported being HIV positive during the year. The MSM population continues to express concern about perceived Stigma and Discrimination and confidentiality at established testing sites.

### ***Health System Strengthening***

#### ***PMTCT: HIV Testing Training***

Two major PMTCT educational intervention were held during 2016. One of these events were held in Barbuda when the nursing and medical staff at the Hannah Thomas Hospital were trained in Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV. The other was conducted in Antigua where three days of training were held for the community and hospital midwives. The trainings in Antigua and Barbuda were conducted by the Clinical Care Coordinator, a senior obstetrician from the Mount St. John Medical Centre and other technical members of the AIDS Secretariat staff.

In an effort to increase the capacity to conduct HIV Rapid Testing among the health care staff, an HIV Rapid Testing Training were for midwives and House Officers attached to the Mount St. John Medical Centre was held. The nursing and medical staff in Barbuda also received training in HIV Rapid Testing during 2016.

***Free HIV Rapid Testing:***

In an effort to increase the uptake of HIV\_Rapid Testing, additional efforts were made to extend the service to the population. These services were offered in collaboration with Scotiabank, National Football Association, Antigua Public Utilities Authority, brothels, the Antigua Teacher's Union and other agencies throughout the country.

***Reaching Key Populations with HIV-related Services***

A total of three HIV testing outreaches targeting Female Sex Workers were held during 2016. These outreaches were held by the AIDS Secretariat in partnership with Civil Society Organizations as well as the management of one brothel. During these outreaches over 25 Female Sex Workers (FSW) accessed free and confidential HIV testing. Outreaches were also conducted in populations where there were high populated by migrants. During one such outreach, 29 residents accessed HIV testing all of whom tested negative.

***Other HIV Testing outreaches***

Other HIV testing outreaches targeted uniform bodies and hotel workers were held. In total 22 hotel workers and 51 individuals from uniform bodies accessed HIV tests during the outreaches.



All other HIV Rapid Testing services continue to be offered as usual during which time the service is accessed by the general population. Included in the general population are all groups of people inclusive of Men who have Sex with Men, FSW and people with other vulnerabilities.

### ***Private Sector HIV-Testing data reporting***

Since the inception of HIV intervention, the country has had challenges with reporting its national HIV data. To address this impediment in data collection, two days of discussions were held with representatives of all private medical laboratories. The objective of these meeting were:

- Encourage all private labs in the country to commence monthly reporting of HIV-related data.
- Reinforce the benefits of reporting all national data.
- Share basic HIV-related information
- To encourage closer synergy between government and private sector in data reporting.

All private laboratories were represented at these meetings and a data reporting tool was developed to aid in cost effective, convenient and timely by the labs.

### ***Gender-based Violence***

According to the Directorate of Gender Affairs, during 2016, there were 27 women who reported experiencing physical violence at the hands of their partners. Additionally, 10 women reported having experienced sexual violence during the same period. All reports were handled in accordance with the national established standards.

## **Conclusion**

The country's sustained efforts in HIV prevention and control is evidenced through all activities mentioned above along with those reported on in the ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA GLOBAL AIDS MONITORING 2017 REPORT online platform. Through these activities the country continues to empower residents in HIV prevention, identify new cases, ensure access to treatment and care for all and work toward ending HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination. With further development of the programme and enhanced cross-cutting measures, it is expected that the country will remain consistent in the accomplishment of the 90/90/90 targets and all HIV-related Sustainable Developmental Goals that were set.