

# Dispelling Myths about HIV/AIDS

## *Dispelling the Myth*

*Children's AIDS Fund International*

### ***Myth # 1 – The HIV/AIDS Pandemic is Under Control & Going Away***

Many believe that the incredible investment of funds to fight HIV/AIDS and the great strides have been made in effective HIV/AIDS treatment mean the pandemic is under control and waning. After more than 30 years HIV/AIDS is rarely in the news, which also leads to the perception that it is no longer an issue.

While it is true that much progress has been made in the global fight against the pandemic, reality is there is much more to be done before we've won the war.

- Consider the following:
- Every week, nearly 35,000 people are infected with HIV globally:
- Young people ages 15-24 account for about 30% of new infections.
- In sub-Saharan Africa young women account for 63% of young people living with HIV.
- In 2014, there were 220,000 new infections among children.
- While HIV incidence has declined by 50% since its peak in sub-Saharan Africa, the region's population has increased by 340 million during the same time period. Africa has the

world's youngest population with 200 million people between ages 15 and 24—a time when they are most susceptible to HIV infection.

- New HIV infections globally have declined by 35% since 2000. In 61 countries new HIV infections have decreased more than 20%. Still, there were 2 million new infections in 2015, or about 5,600 new infections per day.
- Although HIV testing capacity has increased over time allowing more people to learn their status, nearly half of all people with HIV are still unaware they are infected.
- Globally 30 countries account for more than 80% of the world's new HIV infections.

In 2014, UNAIDS data showed the world a five-year window (2015 – 2020) to accomplish a fast-track response which would change the pandemic's course. If we succeed, the world will be on track to end HIV infections by 2030. If we don't, HIV infections will continue to rise to previous levels; the opportunity to end HIV infections lost.

We do have the change to end HIV infections globally, that has not happened yet. We must all continue to be vigilant and engaged if we hope to see an HIV-free generation become reality in our lifetimes.

Sources: PEPFAR 2016 Annual Report to Congress; UNAIDS Fast Track: Ending the AIDS Epidemic by 2030; The Henry Kaiser Family Foundation November 2015 Fact Sheet: The Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic