

GAO@100 Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-21-374](#), a report to the Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

To address the HIV epidemic, the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator oversees about \$6 billion annually across several U.S. implementing agencies and two international organizations through the PEPFAR program. According to S/GAC, without concentrated efforts to reach the growing youth population, progress achieved toward controlling the HIV epidemic could be reversed.

GAO was asked to review PEPFAR's response to the growing youth population for achieving its goals. This report examines (1) what is known about the growing youth population and HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa, (2) PEPFAR's response to reach the growing youth population, (3) the extent to which S/GAC's PEPFAR program-level budget data are reliable for a resource trends analysis to inform future programming, and (4) the extent to which PEPFAR officials have determined the long-term resources needed to achieve and sustain HIV epidemic control given known factors.

GAO reviewed PEPFAR documents and budget data, and reports by UNAIDS and other entities. GAO also interviewed PEPFAR officials from State, implementing agencies, and country teams in Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, and Uganda.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that State establish documented procedures and develop a plan to improve budget data, and assess the long-term resources it needs to continue progress toward HIV epidemic control. State accepted all three recommendations.

View [GAO-21-374](#). For more information, contact David Gootnick at (202) 512-3149 or gootnickd@gao.gov.

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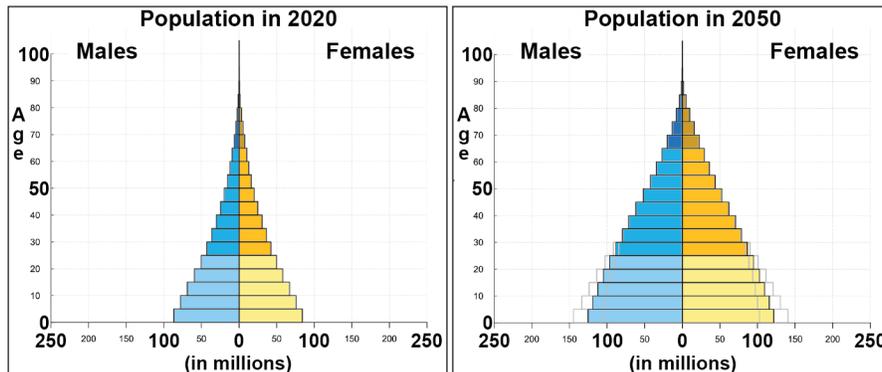
PRESIDENT'S EMERGENCY PLAN FOR AIDS RELIEF

State Should Improve Data Quality and Assess Long-term Resource Needs

What GAO Found

While HIV infection rates have declined in Sub-Saharan Africa since 2010, the doubling of the youth population—a group particularly vulnerable to acquiring new HIV infections—partially offset the rate of decline, according to the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The youth population in Sub-Saharan Africa is growing as part of overall population growth, which more than doubled from 1990 to 2020 and is projected to nearly double again by 2050.

Estimated Population Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2020 to 2050



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). *World Population Prospects 2019, Volume II: Demographic Profiles* (ST/ESA/SER/A/427). Copyright © 2019 by United Nations, made available under a Creative Commons license (CC BY 3.0 IGO) <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/igo/>. | GAO-21-374

The Department of State, through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), allocated an estimated \$4 billion from fiscal years 2016 through 2020 to three key interventions that officials identified as PEPFAR's response to reach the growing youth population. These interventions aim to address the cycle of HIV transmission among youth. For example, through MenStar, PEPFAR aims to treat HIV-positive men to prevent HIV transmission.

State's Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (S/GAC) lacks procedures to reasonably assure PEPFAR program-level budget data, including data for congressional reporting, are reliable for a resource trends analysis to inform future programming. Specifically, GAO found issues with data completeness and accuracy. Officials said they are taking steps to improve data quality, but the steps do not fully address the issues and S/GAC does not have a plan to ensure timely implementation of data quality improvements. Without sufficient data quality procedures or a documented plan, S/GAC lacks reasonable assurance that its data are reliable for analysis of resource trends.

PEPFAR officials analyze data to inform short-term decisions; however, officials have not performed long-term resource planning to assess how known factors—including the growing youth population—may affect resource needs. Officials said they generally do not assess long-term resource needs, due in part to uncertainty about future PEPFAR funding levels. Without assessing long-term resource needs, PEPFAR officials cannot adequately advocate, coordinate, and plan resources in response to known challenges to controlling the HIV epidemic.