

2022

October - December



ICAP in Central Asia

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Inside this Issue



- ICAP employs PowerBI analytical tool to assist AIDS Centers in achieving PEPFAR indicators in Tajikistan
- ICAP assists the AIDS Center in Dushanbe in improving Index Partner Testing of PLHIV



- ICAP presents first results of online HIV self-testing service, hivtest.kg
- ICAP develops course on “Pre-exposure and post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV infection” for health workers throughout Kyrgyzstan



- ICAP – with CDC, USAID and EpiC project – organizes Central Asia Workshop on HIV Testing
- ICAP promotes access to life-saving HIV services in remote areas of East Kazakhstan region
- ICAP continues campaign for confidential self-testing for HIV in Kazakhstan
- ICAP presents Almaty Model of HIV Epidemic Control project at Fast-Track Cities conference in Seville, Spain
- ICAP organizes advanced certification training on “Infection Prevention and Control” for epidemiologists

ICAP employs PowerBI analytical tool to assist AIDS Centers in achieving PEPFAR indicators in Tajikistan

PLHIV on Antiretroviral Therapy



To analyze the reasons for not achieving Key Performance Indicators (KPI) from July 1 to September 30, 2022, ICAP initiated work meetings with 15 specialists from Dushanbe AIDS Center. For the first time, ICAP has used the PowerBI analytical tool to showcase statistics and trends for each indicator in an interactive mode.

Experts from ICAP and the AIDS Centers identified the main reasons for not achieving three indicators – antiretroviral therapy (ART) coverage (KPI #4), viral load testing (KPI #5) and viral suppression (KPI #6).

To increase coverage of ART (KPI #4), ICAP plans to continue to work closely with AIDS centers, including conducting mentoring visits and providing off-site support, working with specialists to trace patients lost to follow-up, and promoting early ART initiation, including via [social media pages](#) created by ICAP in cooperation with Dushanbe AIDS Centre.



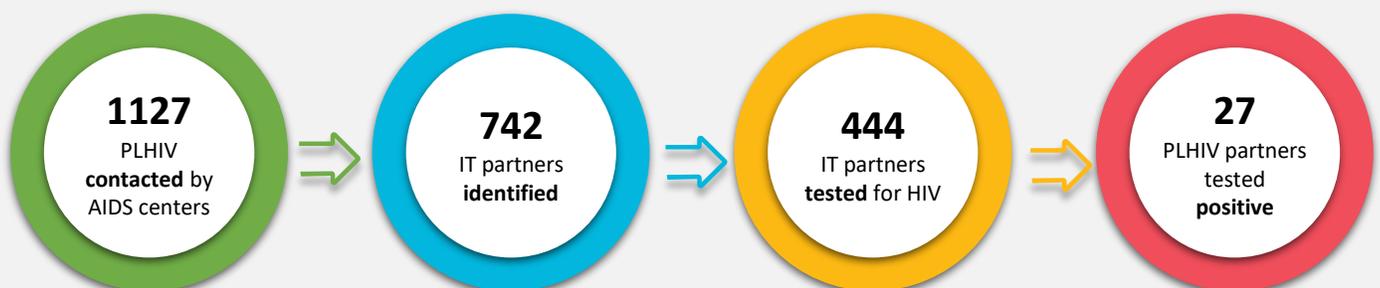
List of KPIs: KPI #1 – Index Testing; KPI #2 – initiation of ART within seven days; KPI #3 – newly initiated on ART; KPI #4 – antiretroviral therapy coverage; KPI #5 – viral load suppression examination; KPI #6 – viral load suppression.

ICAP assists Dushanbe AIDS Center in improving Index Partner Testing of PLHIV

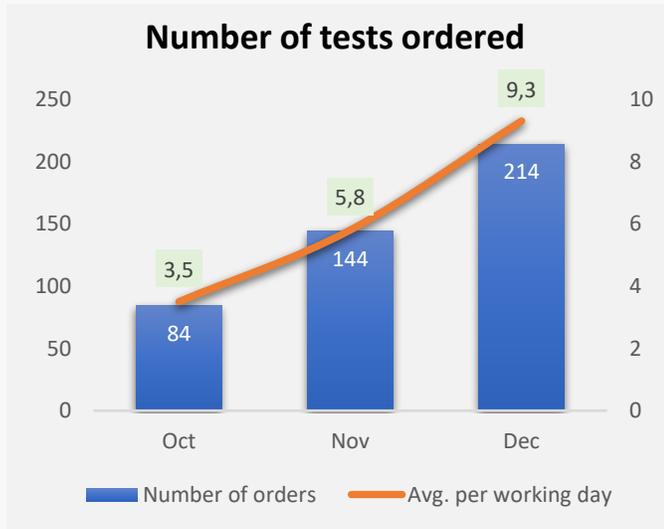
ICAP provided intensive technical assistance to the AIDS center in Dushanbe and district AIDS centers to improve the quality of index partner elicitation and testing activities. On a weekly basis, ICAP discussed progress in index partner testing with site-level staff in Dushanbe.

ICAP developed and distributed scripts for index partner testing counseling to healthcare workers and made a draft video tutorial on eliciting index partners' information. ICAP also created an interaction algorithm between AIDS center physicians, patronage nurses, and peer navigators.

Index testing statistics, October - December, 2022



ICAP presents first results of online self-test service



Ninety-five people participated in the conference organized by ICAP and the AIDS Center, which was held on September 27-28. ICAP presented information on the results of the launch of an online service for ordering tests, <https://hivtest.kg/>.

The online service for self-test ordering aims to increase coverage of HIV testing among key population groups. It will also help expand awareness of preventive services (PrEP & PEP) among people with HIV-negative results and detect new HIV-positive people to initiate ART promptly.

To implement the service, ICAP adapted web application to Kyrgyzstan needs, trained and mentored a coordinator at the Bishkek city AIDS Center, negotiated with local authorities to receive 1000 HIV self-tests from the Global Fund-funded project, supported packaging of HIVST kits, and signed agreements with the courier service and pharmacies to support delivery of tests ordered online. ICAP conducted an in-house workshop for pharmacies on their role in distributing HIV test kits, detecting new cases, and preventing the associated stigma.

Using the hivtest.kg website, customers can choose a convenient way to deliver tests – either through a network of 34 pharmacies throughout Bishkek, Family Medicine Centers, Bishkek Aids Center, or GLOVO courier delivery.

ICAP develops course on pre-exposure and post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV infection for health workers throughout Kyrgyzstan

“The uniqueness of the course is that it will be available to physicians throughout the country, not only to physicians of the AIDS Centers. We will conduct the course together with the faculty of the Kyrgyz State Medical Institute for Retraining.”

- Ainagul Isakova,

Using CDC training materials, ICAP developed a program and curriculum for a short course on PrEP and PEP at the Kyrgyz State Medical Institute for Retraining and Advanced Training in December, 2022.

The course started in January 2023 and will continue in June and September in both offline and online formats, which allows any medical professional from all over the country to enroll in the course.

The participants will have access to 24 hours of offline and 36 hours of online materials, and upon successful completion, participants will receive the corresponding number of credit hours.

Together with CDC, USAID and EpiC project, ICAP organizes Central Asia Workshop on HIV testing



On 30 November-1 December 2022, ICAP – together with CDC, USAID and EpiC project – organized and held the Central Asia Workshop on HIV Testing. The main goals of the seminar were to review existing strategies and approaches to HIV testing of key populations in Central Asia and develop innovative ideas to ensure improved effectiveness of HIV testing efforts.

The workshop was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, where almost 60 representatives from governmental, international, and non-profit organizations from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan gathered to identify and share best practices for engaging key populations in HIV testing, including distributing self-testing HIV kits in the most efficient and effective ways, implementing social network strategies, and facilitating Index partner testing.

ICAP promotes access to lifesaving HIV services for patients in remote areas of East Kazakhstan region

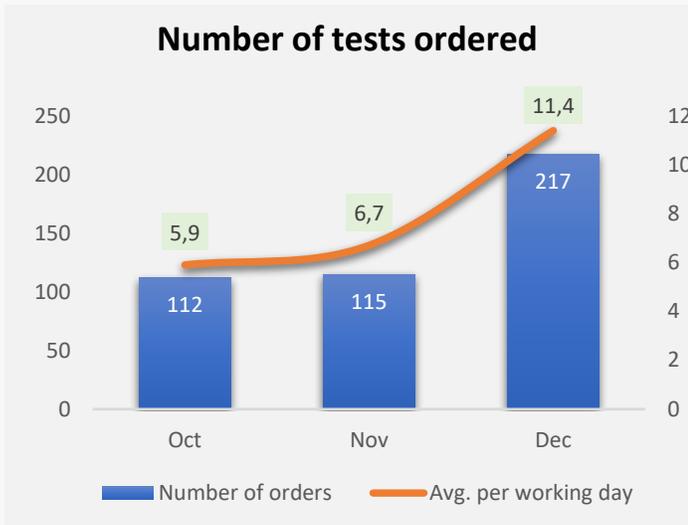
On November 15, 2022, as part of the CDC/PEPFAR project to decentralize HIV services, ICAP conducted training on early initiation of antiretroviral therapy (ART) for primary healthcare workers from remote areas in the East Kazakhstan region (Altai, Shemonaikha, and Glubokoe).

During the theoretical part of the training, the participants were introduced to WHO strategies, including 95-95-95, Test and Start, post-test HIV counseling, HIV treatment, achieving viral suppression, and U=U.

Long distances between AIDS centers and the population needing HIV services living in remote areas of the region poses a major challenge to early initiation of ART in the East Kazakhstan region. To speed up early ART initiation, ICAP is assisting the East Kazakhstan AIDS Center in decentralizing its services to primary healthcare providers located in these remote areas. Initially, primary healthcare workers will counsel patients under online supervision from the specialists of the East Kazakhstan AIDS Center, who will connect remotely and assist in conducting joint consultations.

The decentralization of HIV services will enable ART initiation within seven days in remote areas of the region. It will also save patients money and time as they will no longer be required to travel to the East Kazakhstan AIDS Center.

ICAP continues the campaign for confidential self-testing for HIV in Kazakhstan



Data for Oct-Dec, 2022

Using the hivtest.kz website, customers can choose a convenient way to get tests from a range of locations. Clients can pick up tests at the Sadykhan network pharmacies, self-service kiosks throughout the city and at the Almaty AIDS Center or friendly NGOs.

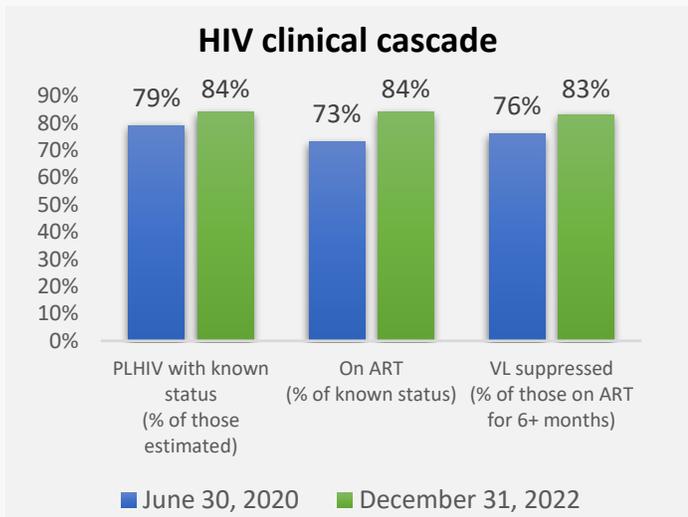
At the beginning of 2022, partners of the “Almaty Model” project launched an online self-testing service, <https://hivtest.kz/>, so that clients can access a convenient and confidential self-testing service for HIV.

The online service for self-test ordering aims to increase coverage of HIV testing among key population groups. It will also help expand awareness of preventive services (PrEP & PEP) among people with HIV-negative results and detect new HIV-positive people to initiate ART promptly. The self-testing for HIV kit contains one OraQuick self-test and various informational materials about HIV and HIV prevention methods.

ICAP presents Almaty Model of HIV Epidemic Control project at Fast-Track Cities conference in Seville, Spain

Almaty Model is a project launched by Gilead Sciences and the Elton John AIDS Foundation in 2020 and is implemented by ICAP, the Almaty AIDS Center, and local NGOs.

Fast-track Cities is an initiative to accelerate action in big cities to end the HIV epidemic. Municipal governments designate their cities as “fast-track” by signing the Paris Declaration, which sets out a series of commitments to achieve the goals of Fast-Track Cities.



The “Almaty Model” is designed to create and implement a cost-effective and sustainable city program that works effectively to achieve HIV epidemic control in Almaty. Implemented by a consortium of local organizations led by ICAP, the project is focused on people living with HIV (PLHIV) and most vulnerable communities, including people who use drugs (PWUD), men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender people, and sex workers.

During an online speech, ICAP in Eurasia Director Anna Deryabina highlighted the key achievements of the partners of the “Almaty Model” in **the last two years**, i.e. launch of the online HIV self-test delivery platform, www.hivtest.kz, PrEP in Almaty, and implementation of a social networking strategy to improve HIV testing effectiveness.

ICAP organizes advanced certification training on Infection Prevention and Control for epidemiologists

From November 1 to December 9, 2022, ICAP, in collaboration with the National Center of Public Healthcare, organized the final part of the advanced Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) certification training for the second group of practicing epidemiologists in online and face-to-face training in Astana, Kazakhstan. Overall, 25 epidemiologists applied to participate in the advanced IPC training. All participants were selected from healthcare facilities that completed a situational analysis of IPC components in 2021.



The curriculum of the IPC training program included the following topics: leadership and management of the IPC program; prevention of bladder catheter infections; prevention of surgical wound infections; organization of infection control training for health workers, visitors and patients; introduction to practical epidemiology and biostatistics; and more.

ICAP and NCPH recruited experienced epidemiologists with advanced professional degrees, Candidate of Medical Sciences (Ph.D.) or Master of Public Health degrees, as course instructors and mentors.

“I have over 18 years of work experience as an IPC specialist. Learning about multimodal strategies made me change my attitude towards IPC work. Before the course, I thought that I am the only one in the hospital responsible for IPC, but now I realize that I need to ensure early engagement of different hospitals departments to effectively solve the problems. Also, previously I knew very little about IPC considerations during construction and renovation of buildings; during the course I’ve learnt how routine building maintenance activities can facilitate the spread of infections and measures to decrease such risks”

— Galina Nikiforova, IPC course participant, epidemiologist from the Regional Center of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Karaganda

Trainees completed a two-week field assignment under the guidance of mentors to practice the knowledge they acquired during the specialized IPC cycle. Given the high requirements for trainees, only 12 out of 25 epidemiologists completed the final part of the IPC program and received certificates of advanced training in 7 credits/210 hours.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ART	—	Antiretroviral Therapy
CDC	—	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
EPIC	—	Maintaining Targets and Epidemic Control
HIV	—	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IPC	—	Infection Prevention and Control
LGBTQ+	—	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer+ people
NCPH	—	National Center of Public Healthcare
NGO	—	Non-governmental Organization
PLHIV	—	People Who Live with HIV
PEP	—	Post-exposure Prophylaxis
PrEP	—	Pre-exposure Prophylaxis
USAID	—	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	—	World Health Organization

COMMUNICATION TEAM

Aida Kosmuratova

Communications Specialist
ICAP at Columbia University

34/1, Samal 3, 050020, Almaty, Kazakhstan
+7 (727) 2640886, 2640892, ext. 113
aa4780@cumc.columbia.edu

Almat Juvashv

Program Management Officer
ICAP at Columbia University

34/1, Samal 3, 050020, Almaty, Kazakhstan
+7 (727) 2640886, 2640892, ext. 107
aj3081@cumc.columbia.edu