Behavioral Solutions to End the World’s Largest HIV Epidemic

We will end South Africa’s HIV epidemic by scaling up proven behavioral interventions that increase young people’s use of highly-effective, widely-available prevention and treatment services.

South Africa has the world’s largest HIV epidemic

- 7.2 million people living with HIV—almost 1 in 5 adults.
- An epidemic of this scale threatens population health, economic well-being, and gender equality

Ending the epidemic is now within our reach...

- Treatment with antiretroviral medications is widely available and free.
- Treatment enables HIV-positive people to live a healthy life and not transmit the virus to others.
- Other HIV prevention services like testing and medical male circumcision are easily accessible. Prophylactic medicines (PrEP) are becoming available.

If these treatment and prevention services are widely used, new HIV infections will drop dramatically.

....but it requires overcoming “last mile” behavioral challenges

- Ending the epidemic requires higher use of HIV services to meet the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets for coverage of HIV testing and treatment.
- However, 1 in 3 HIV-positive people are unaware of their status or not taking HIV treatment regularly.
- This problem is behavioral in nature: Not seeking services is often due to common psychological barriers, decision-making factors, and information gaps. The services and medications are available and free, but are not being used.

Human behavior plays a central role in the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>90%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of all people</td>
<td>will know their HIV status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living with HIV</td>
<td>will receive treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receiving treatment</td>
<td>will be virally suppressed</td>
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If we solve this “last mile” challenge, we can shut down South Africa’s epidemic.
Our solution is a low-cost, comprehensive approach to increase people’s use of HIV services.

Each strategy in our solution is powered by proven insights from behavioral science.

1. **Offer Rewards:** Small rewards can tackle inertia and other psychological barriers to healthy behaviors. Building on prior research and Discovery’s successful Vitality program, we will use rewards to sustainably increase use of HIV services.

2. **Leverage Social Networks:** Social influence is powerful. We will leverage that power by asking people to help us get others in their network to seek services.

3. **Highlight Good News:** People avoid getting tested if they don’t know that HIV treatment enables a normal, healthy life. We will reframe HIV messaging to showcase this positive news.

4. **Reach People Where They Are:** Unfortunately, clinic-based services are not always convenient or welcoming for high-risk, hard-to-reach people. We will use new service delivery channels like pharmacies to increase engagement with prevention.

Opportunities to advance our solution

**$1 Million Investment**
Demonstrate the power of our solution in a high-risk population of 5,000 students at a technical and vocational educational training institution.

**$5 Million Investment**
Deliver our solution to 128,000 people in Gert Sibande district, Mpumalanga Province, a high poverty high HIV prevalence rural region.

**$10 Million Investment**
Scale our solution to 800,000 people in densely-populated urban communities in central Johannesburg.

Help us make this the last generation that knows HIV