



Accessible link: www.cdc.gov/global-health/countries/malawi

For over 23 years, CDC has collaborated in Malawi with local and international partners to build and strengthen the country's core public health capabilities. These include data and surveillance; laboratory capacity; workforce and institutions; prevention and response; and policy, communications and diplomacy. Priority program areas address implementing high-impact HIV and tuberculosis programs through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and supporting malaria control activities under the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Data & Surveillance

- Supported the implementation of Malawi's largest electronic medical record system, now in over 760 facilities



Laboratory

- Facilitated international standard accreditation (ISO:15189) for nine molecular laboratories to test for HIV viral load



Workforce & Institutions

- Supported training for 200 public health workers who graduated from the Field Epidemiology Program (FETP)



Prevention & Response

- Supported the national Public Health Emergency Operating Centre to coordinate emergency response activities, including technical assistance during the recent cholera outbreak response



Policy, Communications & Diplomacy

- Supported field operations for COVID-19 campaigns aimed at bolstering population immunity

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY

CDC's technical support strengthens public health systems to prevent, detect, and respond to emerging infectious diseases. CDC focuses on real-time disease surveillance, laboratory systems and diagnostics, workforce development, and emergency management.

Laboratory Systems

CDC supports the Public Health Institute of Malawi (PHIM) to develop the capacity to prepare for and respond to emerging diseases. PHIM's reference laboratories are producing specimen genotyping and proficiency panels for TB, HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis B tests. These efforts help to sustain the national quality assurance program. CDC also supports a four-tiered approach (central, district, facility, and community) to strengthening laboratory capacity testing for HIV diagnostic and treatment monitoring, COVID-19, and TB. This work includes implementing continuous quality improvement for both conventional and point-of-care testing laboratories. All 28 districts in Malawi participate in this initiative.

Emergency response

Malawi experienced the deadliest cholera outbreak in the country's history from 2022-2023, with over 59,000 cases and 1,770 deaths reported. CDC Malawi supported the cholera outbreak response by providing technical expertise and supporting emergency operations centers. CDC leveraged HIV, TB and COVID-19 funds to support the investigation and response. CDC also supported UNICEF in water, sanitation, and hygiene activities.

After 30 years without a poliovirus case, the Government of Malawi declared an outbreak in 2022 following confirmation of Wild Poliovirus Type 1. Since then, the country has reported four vaccine-derived poliovirus type 1 cases and a confirmed vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 outbreak from an environmental surveillance sample.

CDC supported the implementation of enhanced acute flaccid paralysis surveillance by FETP graduates to improve active case search visits and the detection of poliovirus cases.

The CDC's COVID-19 response activities included setting up diagnostic capacity at the national reference laboratory, implementing response activities in five high-burden districts, establishing a COVID-19 sentinel surveillance system at five health facilities and two land points of entry, and providing support for both community-based and facility-based surveys.

HIV AND TB

As a key implementer of the PEPFAR, CDC works with Malawi to build a sustainable national HIV response program to accelerate progress towards the UNAIDS global goals including:

- HIV testing services and antiretroviral therapy
- PrEP and PEP
- Voluntary medical male circumcision

- Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-Free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS) program
- TB-preventive treatment
- Building public health capacity and infrastructure

IMMUNIZATION

CDC provides technical and programmatic expertise to eradicate, eliminate or control vaccine-preventable diseases such as polio and measles through immunizations. CDC works with international and local partners to strengthen immunization systems and provide evidence-based technical knowledge to expand routine vaccine delivery. CDC continues to support field activities in response to polio outbreaks in Malawi through vaccination campaign planning, program monitoring, acute flaccid paralysis surveillance, outbreak investigations, community outreach, research and data management. CDC has also extended support towards field operations for COVID-19 campaigns aimed at bolstering population immunity. Additionally, CDC has provided technical assistance for the Periodic Intensification of Routine Immunization initiative. This initiative aims to ensure that children receive essential immunizations.

MALARIA

Malaria is endemic in Malawi. Through PMI, CDC provides insecticide-treated nets, diagnostics and malaria case management, and malaria prevention during pregnancy. PMI Malawi supports the National Malaria Control Program to conduct entomological monitoring and operational research to guide malaria program decisions. Recent and ongoing studies include:

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of first-line antimalarials
- Assessments on expanding community case management for malaria from children under 5 to all ages
- Evaluation of indoor residual spray and insecticide treated nets for malaria prevention
- Assessments of the efficacy of an alternative medication for intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancy and of a new delivery method to increase its uptake

