



National AIDS Commission Launches 'Know Your Status' HIV Counseling and Testing Campaign



National AIDS Commission staff and peer educators at the launch of 'Know Your Status' Campaign in New Kru Town, Monrovia

A massive HIV Counseling and Testing Campaign seeking to reach more than 286,000 persons by December 2017 has been undertaken in Monrovia. The 'Know Your Status' HIV Counseling and Testing Campaign was launched late last year by the Vice President of Liberia, Honorable Joseph N. Boakai, Sr.

According to the National AIDS Commission, the HIV Counseling and Testing Campaign seeks to encourage people to know their HIV status through counseling and testing. The Campaign, which is being organized by the National AIDS Commission with support from the Global Fund

through the Population Services International, is taking place in Montserrado, Margibi and Grand Bassa, the three counties with the highest HIV prevalence according to the Liberia Demographic and Health Survey of 2013.



Peer educators march through the principal streets of New Kru Town, Monrovia

The 'Know Your Status' HIV Counseling and Testing Campaign is reaching out to members of the general population particularly pregnant women and youth. Apart from counseling and testing, the campaign includes door-to-door community awareness by peer educators, intended to link communities with HIV counseling and testing centers. Since the start of the campaign in March up to the end of June 2017, achievements are as follows: 81,000 persons have been reached in Montserrado, 16,204 in Margibi, and 21,816 in Grand Bassa, making it a total **119,000** reached thus far during the Campaign. The reason for low referral is lack of test kits. In terms of percentage, the actual achievements against target are as follows: Montserrado - 51 % female and 49 % male; Margibi - 54 % female and 46 % male and Grand Bassa - 48 % female and 52 % male.

HIV counseling and testing is considered the entry point or gateway to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. HIV Testing and Counseling rates among adults in Liberia are low: 23.1% of men and 45.1% of women have ever received HIV tests, according to the Liberia Demographic and Health Survey. To achieve adequate HIV & AIDS treatment coverage, it is critical that people are aware of their HIV status so they can access treatment if required.

Early detection of HIV positive status is good because treating people with HIV can prevent the spread of HIV in the population, keep people living with HIV healthy and prevent them from developing AIDS. HIV is no longer a death sentence.