



Pediatric HIV Champions in Action: A Community-Based Approach to Improve Pediatric Referrals and Care in an Urban Informal Settlement

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Issues

Pediatric HIV remains a critical challenge in Kenya. Children and youth under age 24 represent a significant proportion of existing and new HIV infections (19% and 29%, respectively).¹

¹ Kenya's Fast Track Plan to End HIV and AIDS Among Adolescents and Young People, NACC, 2015

Description

The Strengthening High Impact Interventions for an AIDS-free Generation (AIDSFree) Project, funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and managed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is expanding pediatric HIV services in Nairobi, Kenya, via a Public-Private Alliance (PPA) formed with more than 25 private clinics, as well as key public sector partners.

AIDSFree partner IMA World Health strengthened community engagement through a team of “pediatric champions,” specifically religious leaders, youth leaders, and community health workers (CHWs), to increase knowledge, demand, and uptake of pediatric HIV services. These individuals represent a vital cadre for engaging communities, influencing perceptions, and ensuring that initiatives improve young people’s health outcomes.

AIDSFree mobilized a team of 13 religious leaders, 16 CHWs, and 11 youth leaders as community pediatric champions and trained them on pediatric HIV transmission and prevention and helped develop action plans for community outreach, including referrals for testing. The project also helped equip community religious leaders with faith-appropriate, evidence-informed materials with key messages about pediatric HIV.

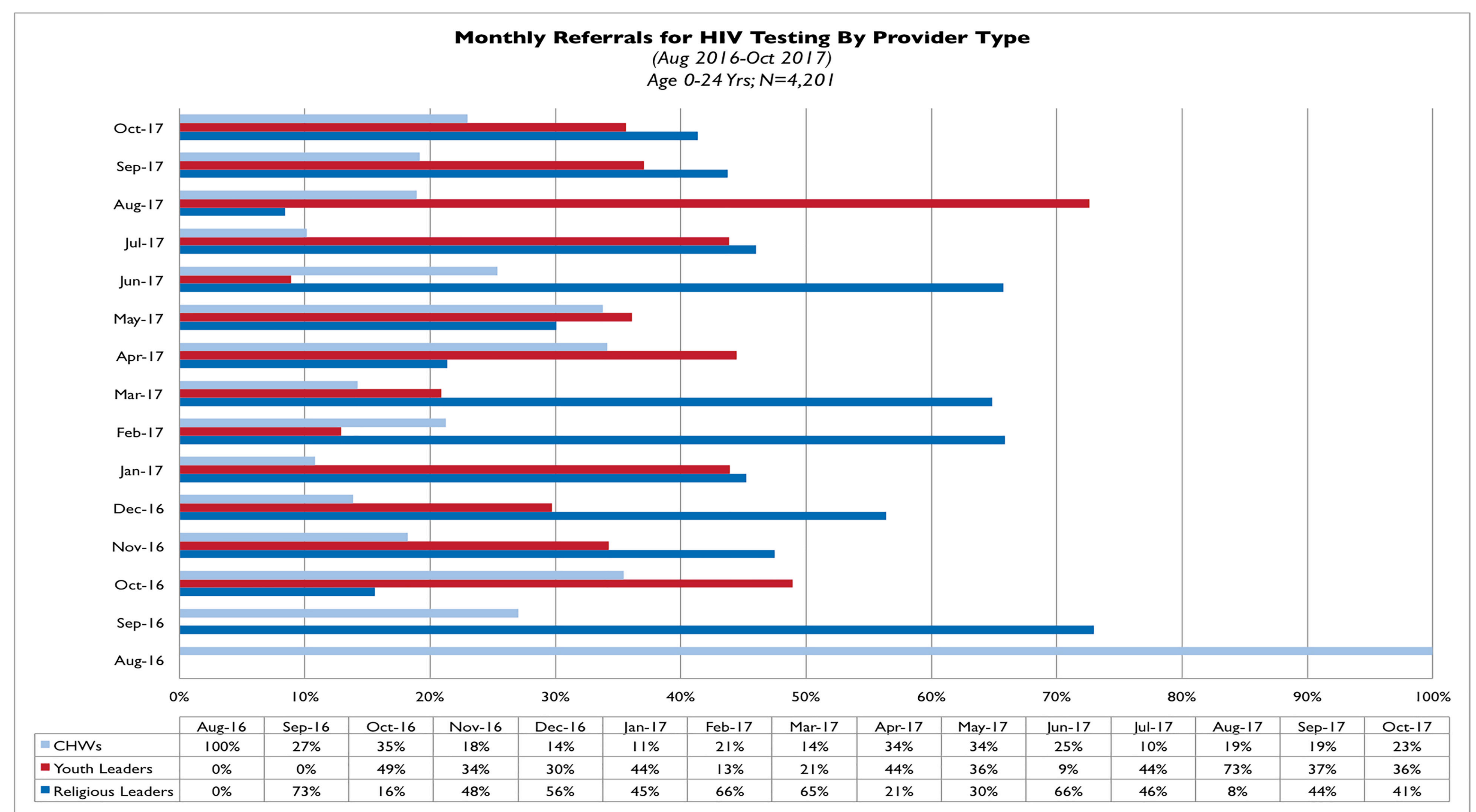
Next steps

Results suggest that CHWs and religious and youth leaders are community assets for increasing demand for and uptake of pediatric HIV services. AIDSFree recommends scaling up this approach to other informal settlements in and beyond Nairobi, and other countries in the region. Religious leaders could also serve as community champions in other HIV areas, such as prevention of mother-to-child transmission.

Lessons learned

Data from August 2016 through October 2017 reveal that champions have been effective. Monthly referrals for HIV testing have steadily increased.

Figure 1: Monthly Referrals by Provider Type, August 2016-October 2017



Overall, 4,201 children, adolescents and young people have been referred for health facility services including HIV testing. Forty-one percent of referrals were young girls; most were for youth 15-19 years (39%) and 10-14 years (29%). In total the pediatric champions provided 7,121 people—about one-third of them ages 10-19—with psychosocial support including nutrition and adherence support.

Figure 2: Support Services Provided to CAYP by Community Providers, By Age

