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**Improvement of HIV/AIDS service quality in the Dominican Republic**

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The Dominican Republic has an estimated population of 9.1 million inhabitants and reports an HIV seroprevalence of 0.8%. With the growing HIV prevalence rates among young people in recent years, the Ministry of Health has been challenged to both maintain prevention efforts, while expanding health services for those living with HIV/AIDS. However, making these services more accessible to the population has required significant support to enable the country's public health infrastructure to support service provision while also guaranteeing quality.

In May of 2005, USAID's CONECTA project partnered with the Ministry of Health to provide technical assistance to expand and improve the quality of HIV/AIDS services in eight focus provinces. Interventions focused on: conducting periodic assessments of HIV/AIDS service quality, formation of multidisciplinary teams in each province who designed and implemented plans for service improvement, management and technical training, and facilitation of analysis of service data for timely decision making.

Ongoing technical assistance from May 2005 to December 2007 resulted in measurable increases in quality of services, increases in patient flow in target hospitals, redistribution of patient volume from the regional hospitals to local services, and the collection and analysis of health service data previously unavailable.

This experience demonstrates that strengthening local initiatives and responses to HIV/AIDS service provision challenges is effective in producing significant changes in access and quality of services.