

Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission (EMTCT) of HIV, Syphilis & Hepatitis B in Vanuatu

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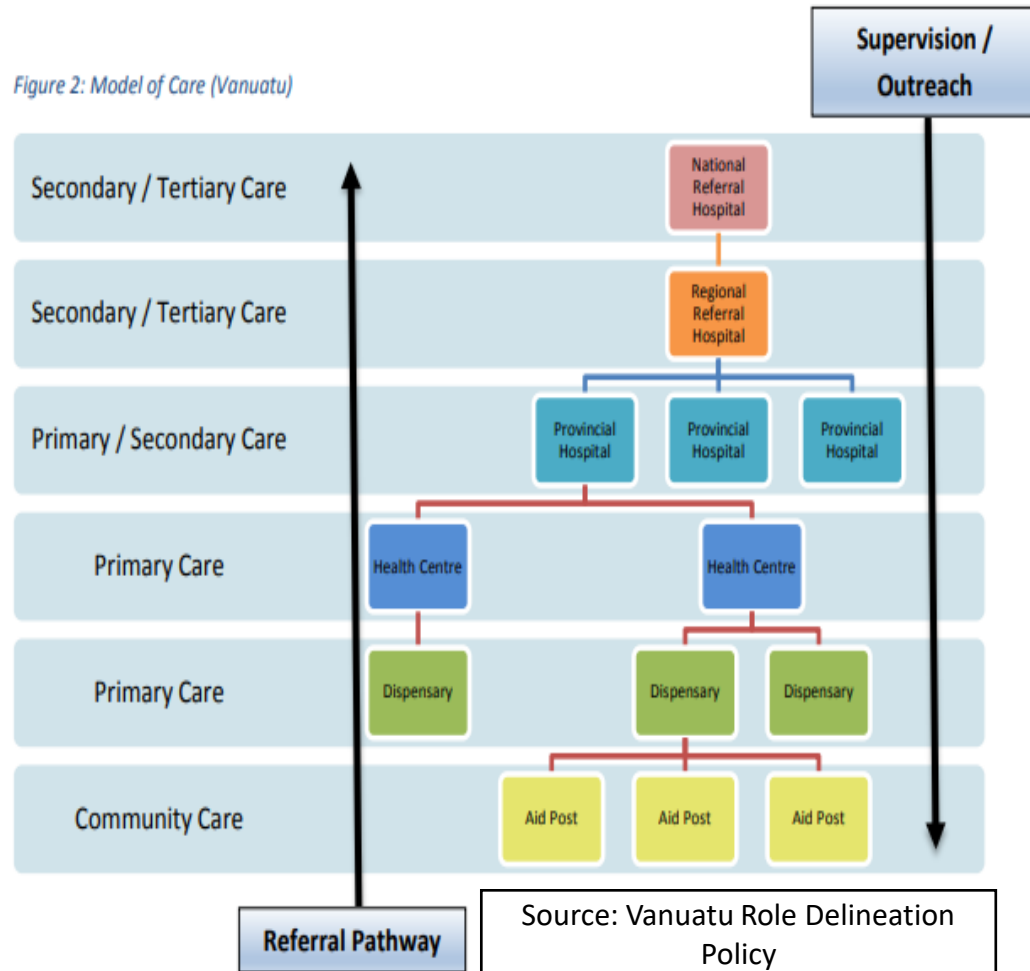


I have no conflict of interest
to declare

Introduction

Vanuatu Health Landscape

Figure 2: Model of Care (Vanuatu)



- Vanuatu has roughly 335,728 people (august. 2025), with over 80% in rural or remote communities across 83 islands.
- Healthcare is coordinated by the Ministry of Health and delivered through:
 - ✓ 1 National Referral hospital (Vanuatu Central Hospital)
 - ✓ 1 Regional Referral Hospital (Northern Provincial Hospital)
 - ✓ 4 Provincial Hospital
 - ✓ 34 Health Centers
 - ✓ 91 Dispensaries
 - ✓ 245 aid posts in isolated areas.



Importance of EMTCT in Vanuatu's public health strategy



Preventing illness & death



Containing potential epidemic



Integrated, Rights-Based Care



Empowering women & communities



Strengthening Health Systems



Meeting Global & Regional Commitments



Current situation / Background

Disease	New infection 2023	New infection 2024	New infection 2025 (January – June)	Remarks
HIV	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total HIV cases from 2002 – 2025: 21 cases. 7 death related to AIDS Remain 14 cases, 12 on ART & 2 are migrate oversea. <p><u>Transmission breakdown: Among 14 cases recorded</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 10 cases were acquired through sexual transmission. ✓ 1 case From MTCT (2002). ✓ 2 cases was among MSM. ✓ 1 case was link to IDU.
Syphilis (ANC) <i>Source: Dashboard triple elimination</i>	No records	10	171	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triple elimination dashboard start to introduce in July 2024. 191 were treated. Could be partner treatment included.
Hepatitis B <i>Source: Dashboard triple elimination</i>	No records	10	53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of treated not reported.

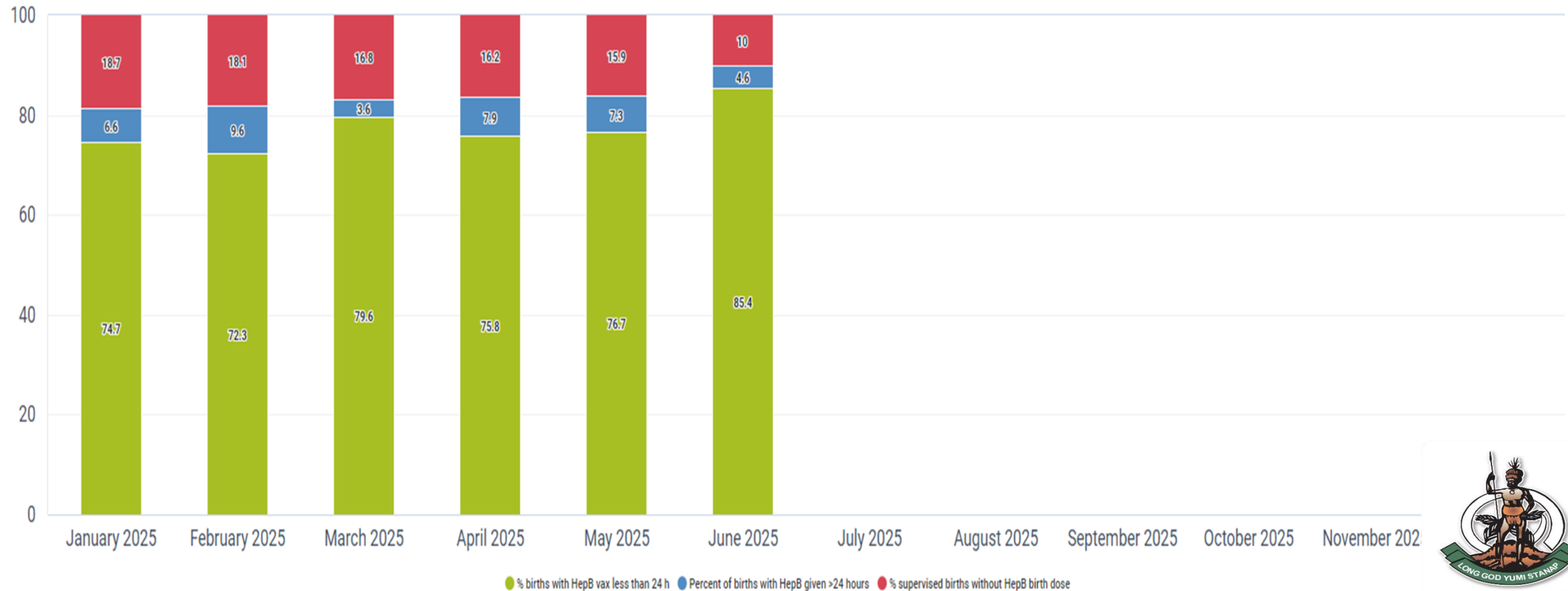


Hepatitis B birth dose ratios

HepB birth dose ratios



Vanuatu



● % births with HepB vax less than 24 h ● Percent of births with HepB given >24 hours ● % supervised births without HepB birth dose



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Data 2025 January – June (Triple elimination dashboard)

Number of HIV Tests done at ANC this year



HCD - ANC intervention HIV test

Province levels in Vanuatu - January 2025, February 2025, March 2025, April 2025, May 2025, June 2025, July 2025, August 2025, September 2025, October 2025, November 2025, December 2025

1 255

Number of HIV Cases reported at ANC this year



HCD - ANC HIV positive result

Province levels in Vanuatu - January 2025, February 2025, March 2025, April 2025, May 2025, June 2025, July 2025, August 2025, September 2025, October 2025, November 2025, December 2025

1

Number of Syphilis Tests done at ANC this year



HCD - ANC Syphilis test

Province levels in Vanuatu - January 2025, February 2025, March 2025, April 2025, May 2025, June 2025, July 2025, August 2025, September 2025, October 2025, November 2025, December 2025

1 761

Number of Syphilis Cases detected at ANC this year



HCD - ANC Syphilis positive result

Province levels in Vanuatu - January 2025, February 2025, March 2025, April 2025, May 2025, June 2025, July 2025, August 2025, September 2025, October 2025, November 2025, December 2025

171

Number of Syphilis Cases Treated this year



HCD - ANC Syphilis treated

Province levels in Vanuatu - January 2025, February 2025, March 2025, April 2025, May 2025, June 2025, July 2025, August 2025, September 2025, October 2025, November 2025, December 2025

190

Number of HepB Tests done at ANC this year



HCD - ANC Hep B test

Province levels in Vanuatu - January 2025, February 2025, March 2025, April 2025, May 2025, June 2025, July 2025, August 2025, September 2025, October 2025, November 2025, December 2025

1 523

Number of HepB Cases reported at ANC this year



HCD - ANC Hep B positive result

Province levels in Vanuatu - January 2025, February 2025, March 2025, April 2025, May 2025, June 2025, July 2025, August 2025, September 2025, October 2025, November 2025, December 2025

53

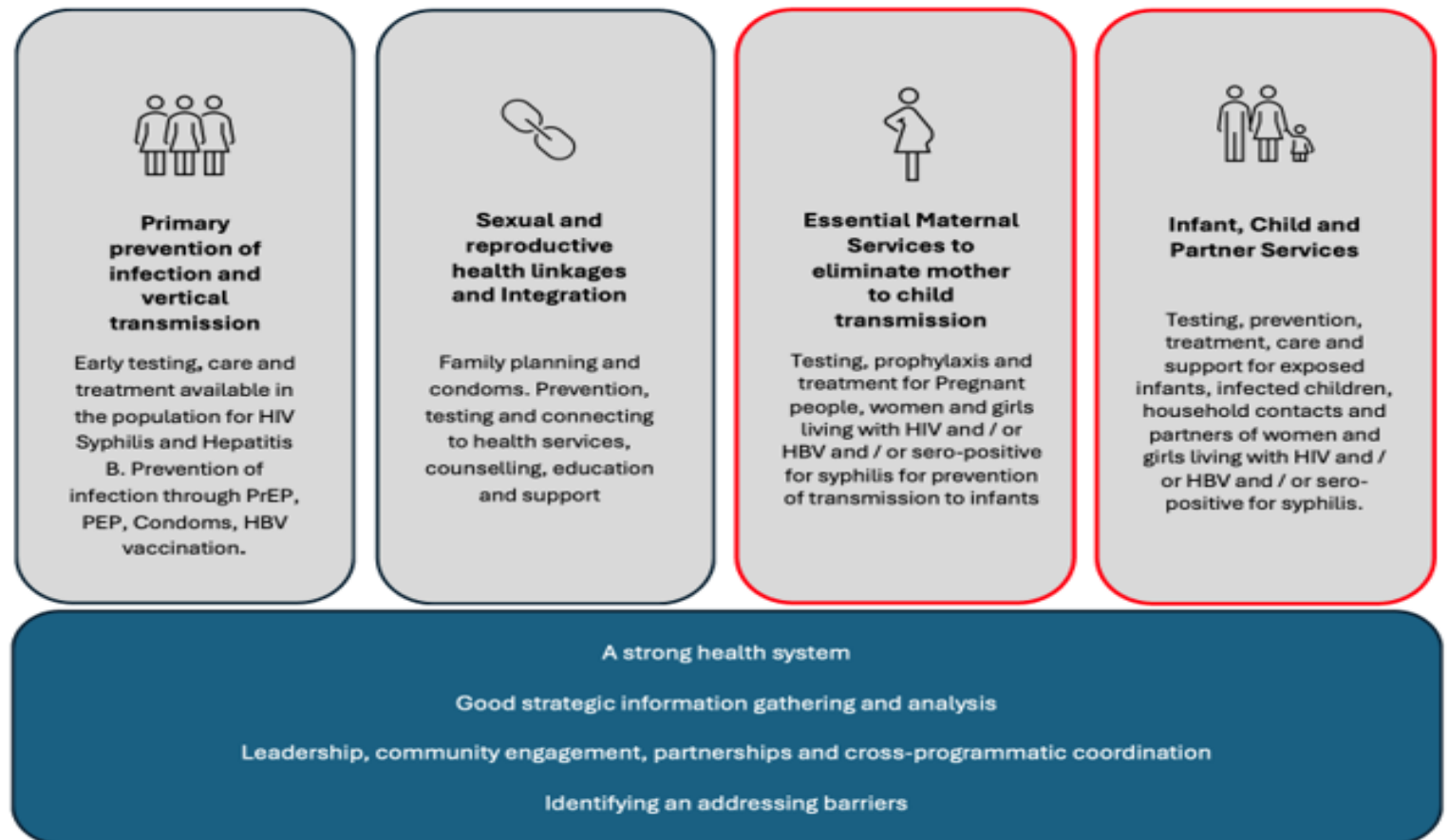


National Commitment & Priorities

Policy framework on EMTCT in Vanuatu



Figure 1: A Framework for implementing triple elimination in Vanuatu.



National Commitment & Priorities(cont.)

Involvement of stakeholders (Burnet Institute)

Burnet Institute's Role:

“Protectem Pikinini Blong Mi” Burnet Institute plays a critical role in the national EMTCT response through the “**Protectem Pikinini Blong You**” (PPBM) program, which supports integrated RMNCAH services with a strong EMTCT component.

Key contributions of Burnet through PPBM:

- **Capacity building and training** for health workers in EMTCT service delivery.
- **Support for PMTCT data systems** and reporting, ensuring better tracking of progress.
- **Community engagement**, promoting ANC attendance, testing uptake, and awareness of EMTCT.
- **Pilot projects** on point-of-care testing and same-day treatment initiation.



**Protectem
Pikinini
Blong Yu trial:**
Prevention of mother-to-child
transmission of hepatitis B in
Vanuatu



Awareness tool kit for Vanuatu Pregnant women is in progress with the support of Burnet Institute



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EMTCT/PMTCT Approach in Vanuatu

Vanuatu is implementing an integrated approach to eliminate mother-to-child transmission (EMTCT) of HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis B, following the WHO Western Pacific regional framework.

HIV

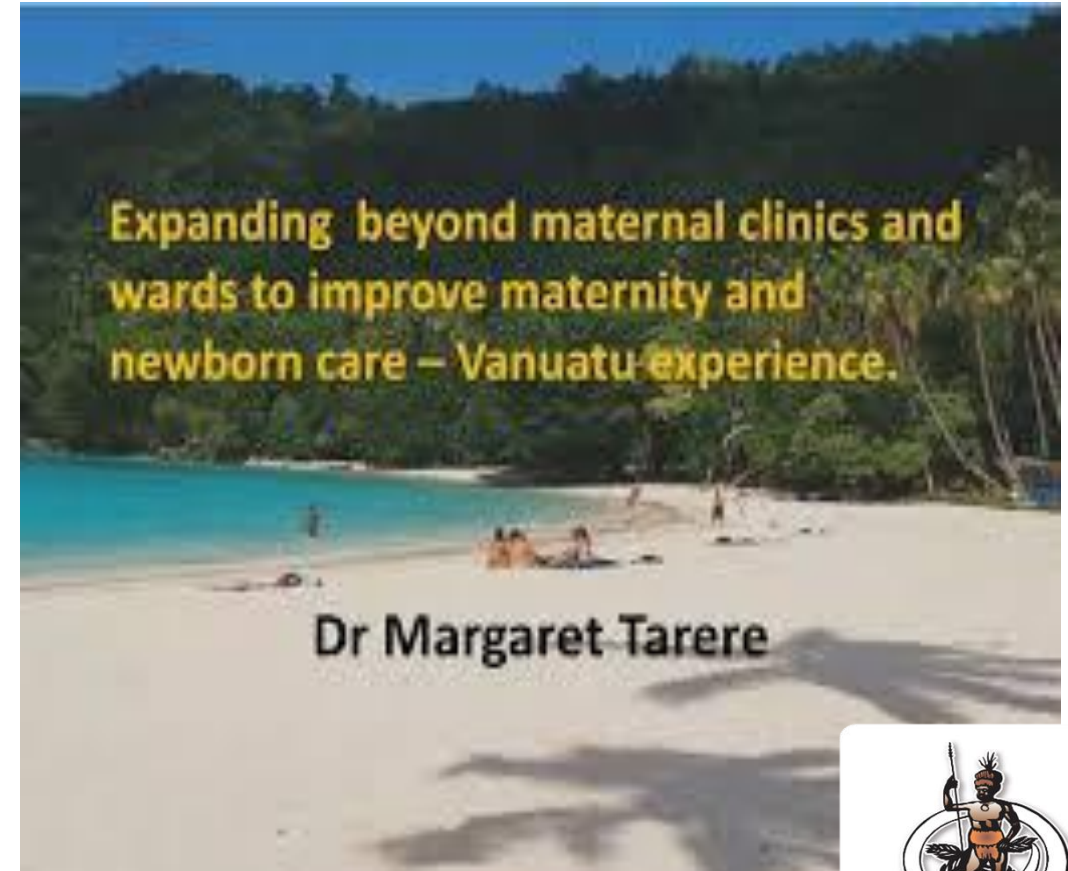
- HIV testing is offered to all pregnant women during antenatal care.
- Women who test positive are started on lifelong ART (Option B/B+).
- Services are integrated with maternal and child health (MCH) to improve retention and outcomes.

Syphilis

- Routine antenatal syphilis testing is provided.
- Over 95% of positive cases are treated, meeting WHO standards.
- Testing coverage is improving but still considered moderate.

Hepatitis B

- High prevalence (8.5%) among children under 5 years.
- Birth-dose and 3rd-dose vaccine coverage is suboptimal.
- Limited access to HBV viral load or HBeAg testing, but WHO now recommends universal prophylaxis without testing.



Early Infant Diagnosis (EID) of HIV

Infant Age	Who to Test	Purpose of Test	Type of Test
Birth (0–2 days)	High-risk HIV-exposed infants	Detect intrauterine infection early	DBS – HIV PCR
6 weeks	All HIV-exposed infants	Detect infections from pregnancy or delivery	DBS – HIV PCR
9 months (<i>optional – per national guideline</i>)	All HIV-exposed infants	Detect early breastfeeding transmission	DBS – HIV PCR
6 weeks after breastfeeding stops	All HIV-exposed infants	Detect late postnatal transmission	DBS – HIV PCR
≥18 months	All HIV-exposed infants	Confirm HIV-negative status (maternal antibodies cleared)	Rapid HIV antibody test

DBS – HIV PCR not done in country, we have to send sample to Australia at the St Vincent Hospital in Sydney for confirmation

Key issues & challenges

- Geographic barriers and decentralization.
- Limited lab capacity and logistics.
- Stigma & Discrimination.
- Human resource constraints



Success Stories

- Integration of testing into ANC Services.
- Community Based awareness campaigns in outreach activities.
- Decentralize POC testing to provinces in ANC services.
- Work in collaboration with implementing partners e.g.: Vanuatu Family Health Association.
- Pilot a project research on “Protectem Pikinini blong yu” with the support of Burnet Institute.



Integration into RMNCAH Services

- Combining ANC, Immunization, Family Planning and STI services.
- Role of midwives and nurses in service delivery.
- Use of integrated MCH registers and patient tracking.

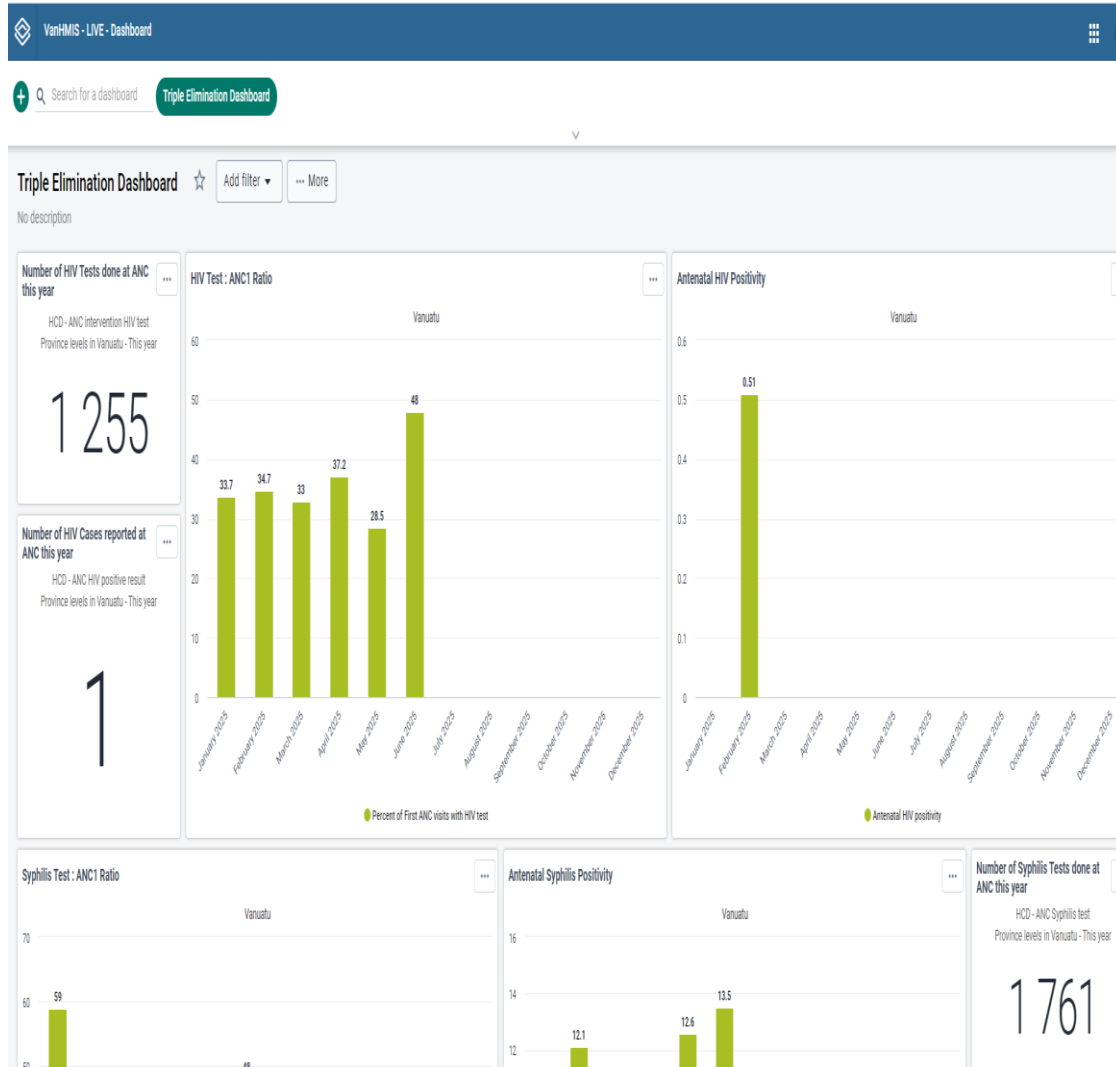


Impact of POC Testing

- Introduction of rapid HIV/Syphilis tests.
- Benefits: Faster diagnosis, same day results, improve coverage.
- Gaps: Training, supply chain.



Data Collection & Surveillance



notifiable diseases

Public Health Act, health care workers **must** inform the Ministry of Health of new cases of notifiable diseases.

Health care workers include medical officers, nurses, midwives, nurse aides and laboratory technicians.

Notifiable diseases can be identified in a health clinic, dispensary or a hospital. It also includes diseases identified in health services.

Notifiable diseases can include confirmed cases or suspected cases.

Notifiable diseases can include detection through laboratory tests and point-of-care or rapid tests.

For electronic notification, scan the QR code and follow the prompts.

A paper notification form is available on the MOH websites.

For more information, contact your Provincial Health Officer or the Vanuatu National Surveillance Unit on survan2017@gmail.com

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HIV, Syphilis & Hepatitis B are notifiable disease that is mandatory to report to the Ministry of Health

Addressing Key Populations

Our Civil Society Organization (CSO) and implementing partners are actively addressing the needs of key populations, including Sex Workers (SW) and Men who have Sex with Men (MSM). The activities provided include:

- Distribution of condoms to promote safer sex practices
- Peer-led HIV testing to increase accessibility and acceptance
- Providing information and raising awareness about HIV prevention and care
- These efforts aim to reduce HIV transmission and improve health outcomes within these vulnerable groups.

Lessons Learned

- Importance of integration and community engagement.
- Need for consistent supply of diagnosis and treatment.
- Role of donor and partner support.



Future Direction

- Goal: Triple EMTCT validation (HIV, Syphilis & Hepatitis B).
- Scale up of birth dose HBV vaccine.
- Expansion of PoC and mobile services.
- Strengthening data system and M&E.



Thank you tumas!!



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