



United States Diplomatic Mission to Nigeria, Public Affairs Section
Plot 1075, Diplomatic Drive, Central Business District, Abuja
Telephone: 09-461-4000. Website at <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>

PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. Delegation Visits Taraba State to Announce New PEPFAR Assistance

Jalingo – Last week, a U.S. government delegation led by Chargé d'Affaires Kathleen FitzGibbon visited Jalingo in Taraba State as it prepares to re-engage the state with U.S. assistance through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief ([PEPFAR](#)).

The interagency team included the U.S. Agency for International Development ([USAID](#)) Acting Mission Director Katie Donohoe, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) Country Director Dr. Mary Boyd, U.S. Walter Reed Army Institute of Research ([WRAIR](#)) Country Director Dr. Laura Chittenden, and PEPFAR Coordinator Mark Giambrone. The Director General of Nigeria's National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) was part of the joint delegation.

The joint team met Governor Darius Ishaku to initiate the new partnership under the governor's leadership and the strong support of the State Commissioner of Health Dr. Innocent Vakkai.

The team asked the governor to build on his impressive commitment to the health care system, including prioritizing recruitment of healthcare workers to help sustain the expanded HIV program and other critical public health services. An increased budget allocation and releases of funds for health will ensure that the drive to enroll additional patients on treatment succeeds.

“We look forward to working with Taraba to adopt best practices in client-centered care and improving local capacity to implement high quality services”, CDA

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FitzGibbon said. “With the state’s commitment to reducing barriers to care, Taraba is well-positioned to achieve HIV epidemic control.”

The team announced the United States will re-initiate HIV/AIDS programming in Taraba on October 1, 2021. Ranking among the top eight states in Nigeria in terms of [HIV burden](#), Taraba plays a “critical role” in the country’s goal of being free from AIDS by 2023, she said.

The U.S. delegation and NACA briefed stakeholders on the key objectives of the partnership. Taraba State and USAID, through the Reaching Impact, Saturation, and Epidemic Control (RISE) activity implemented by Jhpiego, presented findings from a joint assessment and priorities for collective action.

The delegation visited the Federal Medical Center in Jalingo, a 320-bed facility that serves as a referral center and offers medical services including those for HIV and tuberculosis (TB). More than 3,000 HIV-positive patients currently receive lifesaving antiretroviral therapy in the Center.

Finally, Deputy Governor Haruna Manu facilitated a tour of the Taraba State Specialist Hospital to observe ongoing USAID work to support identification and treatment of people living with TB, as well as a state-of-the-art laboratory commissioned last year to diagnose COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

“We look forward to celebrating our collective success when we achieve HIV epidemic control in the State in the coming months and years,” FitzGibbon said.

PEPFAR supports HIV treatment for over 1.5 million Nigerians and is working with state and federal government agencies to build health systems to achieve and sustain control of HIV and AIDS in the country.

More information: Abujadoc@usaid.gov

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Photo Caption: The U.S. government and Taraba State express commitment to building a new model for collaboration to ensure delivery of patient-centered care and sustainability of HIV epidemic control



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ABOUT CDC Nigeria: *CDC Nigeria is the country office of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), with a vision of public health excellence for healthy Nigerians. The office supports the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), its department, agencies and states ministries of health, as well as several key partners in the development, implementation, and evaluation of disease response efforts and programs that contribute to stronger public health infrastructure in Nigeria. [More information about CDC and its programs](#)*

ABOUT PEPFAR: *The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is the largest commitment by any nation to address a single disease in history, enabled by strong bipartisan support across ten U.S. congresses and four presidential administrations, and through the American people's generosity. PEPFAR shows the power of what is possible through compassionate, cost-effectiveness, accountable, and transparent American foreign assistance.*

ABOUT WRAIR Nigeria: *WRAIR provides unique research capabilities and innovative medical solutions to a range of force health protection and readiness challenges currently facing U.S. Service Members, along with threats anticipated in future operations. It has created a model of vaccine and therapeutic development that is unique, nimble, and responsive to dynamically evolving infectious disease threats of military importance. In Nigeria, WRAIR works shoulder to shoulder with the Nigerian military tri-services and key collaborators on infectious disease programming and research, disease response, and laboratory strengthening.*

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