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**BOLIVIA**

# CASE STUDY

## Using Data to Fight HIV/AIDS

### A real-time electronic database helps disease prevention and control



Photo: USAID

Dr. Percy Calderon, left, assists a La Paz health worker in analyzing HIV/AIDS trends using a new automated reporting system in the La Paz regional HIV/AIDS center.

***“USAID has provided essential support to the Bolivian HIV/AIDS program to achieve an important breakthrough in advanced data management and epidemiological surveillance. This allows decision-makers and health workers to improve the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS,” said Dr. Percy Calderon, an HIV/AIDS epidemiologist at Bolivia’s Health Ministry.***

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### Challenge

High quality, real-time data are helping Bolivian health officials carry out more effective HIV/AIDS prevention education, including counseling and testing services. While HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in Bolivia in the general population have remained under 0.1 percent — a remarkable success compared to Bolivia’s neighbors — the rates are much higher in specific risk groups. One study in Santa Cruz detected a prevalence of 22 percent among high risk groups. Tracking these groups remains a high priority for the government, but effective public health programming depends on access to reliable information. Until recently, data were not automated and were sometimes incomplete. This inadequacy limited the ability to make informed and timely decisions.

### Initiative

Since 1992, USAID has been assisting Bolivia’s national HIV/AIDS program in the areas of clinical services, epidemiological surveillance, laboratory services, health education, and information systems. In 2005, an epidemiologist and a data manager began working with the program and with Bolivia’s nine regional HIV/AIDS clinics to revise and complete existing data, automate and standardize clinical records, and improve notification forms. The work was conducted in partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

### Results

USAID developed a new computer program to manage surveillance information in the nine regional centers to monitor HIV/AIDS and other infections in high risk groups. The project installed 18 computers and built an automated epidemiological information system that provides real-time clinic-based data on HIV/AIDS and other diseases. The system was quickly recognized as the best ongoing source of such data in Bolivia. With accurate and timely data, Bolivia will be better equipped to identify and respond appropriately to diseases of growing global importance. Bolivia still has South America’s lowest HIV prevalence rate, and with the new information system it has the tools to keep its HIV/AIDS prevalence at one of the lowest levels worldwide.