



Ministry of Health

Guidance for HIV Services during COVID-19 pandemic

The Ministry of Health through department of HIV and AIDS is mandated to offer policy guidance to public and private institution providing health services. This 4th edition circular provides updated implementation guidance to ensure continued effective HIV service delivery in Malawi while following COVID – 19 preventive precautions.

1 st Edition	3 rd April 2020
2 nd Edition	17 th April 2020
3 rd Edition	15 th June 2020
4th Edition	14th August 2020

General technical guidance in Context of COVID-19 Pandemic

A. Resume delivery of HIV services: all health facilities to provide health services including HIV each day of the week **upon fulfilling infection prevention procedures for COVID – 19** listed below.

1. All health providers always put on full personal protective equipment (PPE)
2. Screen all patients before entering the facility for cough and fever. Both providers and clients should always wear face mask when providing and accessing services
3. Provide a face mask to all clients with cough, investigate and manage them in a separate area as appropriate.
4. Provide a hand-washing facility at all waiting areas. Enforce thorough hand washing with soap for at least 20 seconds for anyone before entering the facility.
5. Wipe all objects and surfaces that are touched by many people such as doors, desks, chairs, etc. with disinfectant on a regular scheduled several times per day.
6. Patients to que at a distance of 1 metre apart.

B. Resume all HIV related community services: Provide community health workers with personal prevention supplies (hand sanitizer, face masks and shields) to minimise physical contact with clients while offering services.

C. HIV related training sessions: Conduct trainings when preventive precautions are followed. The trainings include Initial HTS, Skills Intensive, VMMC, Cervical Cancer, ART providers and Refresher, Advanced HIV Disease Management, etc. The precautions especially:

- a. Limiting to 20 participants per session in well ventilated spacious room.
- b. Temperature checks were done upon entry of each participant
- c. Participants sit 1.5 meters apart, and were provided with face masks, hand sanitizer.



The HIV program recommends general measures to avoid crowded facilities, reduce client time at the facility and to suspend non-essential services. This will contribute to minimize spread of COVID-19, free up health worker capacity for screening and management of potential COVID-19 patients.

The table below indicates HIV services that will **resume**, **remain suspended** and those **provided with additional measures**

HIV Services	Resume normal service	Suspended	Provide with Precautions	Comment
HIV TESTING SERVICES (HTS)				
Provider-initiated HIV testing and counselling (PITC)				
Quality Controls, Proficiency Testing, RTCQI and ECHO sessions				
Routine VCT & active partner notification (AIT)				Only when adequate PPE is available
Community mobilization, testing and tracing services				Only when adequate PPE is available
Use of HTS screening tool				
Opening of new HTS sites				Only when adequate PPE is available
Community distribution of HIVST kits				Only to KPs through DICs and AGYW through peer educators upon client's request
HIV Recency testing				
VOLUNTARY MEDICAL MALE CIRCUMCISION				
VMMC services in static clinics				Provided on routine basis
VMMC post op care				
Out-reach mobile or campaigns models				
Demand creation				Use Inter-Personal Communication Strategy
CONDOMS (MALE AND FEMALE) AND LUBRICANTS				
Facility distribution				
Community distribution				Only when adequate PPE is available
PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS				
Demand creation				Only when adequate PPE is available
PrEP initiation				
CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING				
Screening and treatment among PLHIV				Limit daily bookings to 15-20 clients
HIV TREATMENT, CARE AND SUPPORT				
Prioritized 6 months dispensing				For regimens 13A, 15P & 15A Contact DHA for stock refill
Routine and targeted viral load testing				
TB preventive therapy (TPT) initiation – IPT and 3HP				Align dispensing intervals with ART and CPT refills
Advanced HIV Disease screening using CD4, TB LAM and CrAg test				
Active defaulter tracing				Only when adequate PPE is available
Teen clubs				Only when adequate PPE is available