JAN- MAR ISSUE

PZ NEWSLETTER

Driving health. Inspiring progress.



ROSES FADE, PROTECTION LASTS

INNOVATION NEEDS INVESTMENT

EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES

LOVE BOLDLY. TEST PROUDLY - HIV PREV CONVERSATION

TOP STORY

ZIM LAUNCHES LEN

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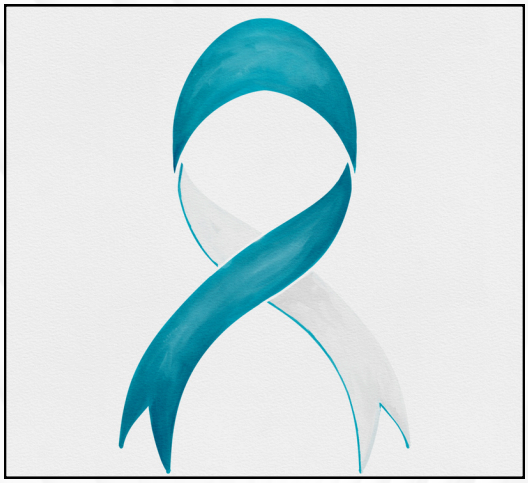
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WHAT TO EXPECT



Science Alone Cannot Sustain the HIV Response

The shift in the health landscape across the globe is calling for the reframing of the HIV response to promote sustainability. The messaging has shifted to more of understanding global systems, financing and collaboration to make the science behind prevention possible.



Early Detection Saves Lives

It is important to continue emphasizing the awareness on cervical cancer screening to encourage women to seek early treatment where detection has been made, to develop better health seeking habits and equips communities with the knowledge needed to take informed action.



NEWS

1. Zim Urged to Boost Local Investment for HIV response
2. Choice. Protection. Power- Why condoms matter
3. Love Boldly. Test Proudly - HIV prev conversation



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Minister of Health, Dr Douglas Mombeshora leading the official launch process for LEN

Expanding Prevention Choices: Zimbabwe LAUNCHES & Rolls Out Lenacapavir

PZ) participated in the national Lenacapavir (LEN) launch and rollout held on 19 February 2026 in Epworth. The launch, led by the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC), marked an important milestone in expanding Zimbabwe's combination HIV prevention options and positioned the country as a regional leader in advancing equitable access to HIV prevention services.

As PZ, we welcomed the LEN rollout as a significant milestone in our national HIV prevention programming. LEN is the new long-acting injectable HIV prevention option, which works for up to 6 months.

As part of supporting the launch our team exhibited the range of services we provide and delivered on-site clinical services, including HIV testing, initiation of long-acting Cabotegravir (CAB-LA), and referrals for Lenacapavir initiation to partner organizations.

The Minister of Health, Dr Douglas Mombeshora, visited the PZ's exhibition stand where Program Manager, Precious Moyo, highlighted PZ's ongoing HIV prevention efforts, including community-based HIV testing and



Minister of Health, Dr. Douglas Mombeshora, NAC Director and US State department representative at the PZ exhibition stand in Epworth, Harare

strategic referrals to Population Services Zimbabwe (PSZ) and the Zimbabwe Technical Assistance, Training and Education Center for Health (Zim-TTECH) facilities for Lenacapavir initiation.

Long-acting prevention options such as Lenacapavir offer critical advantages for adolescents and young people, young women, high-risk populations, and underserved communities who often face barriers to daily prevention



PZ YALA community champions using interactive performance to spread the LEN message

PZ team at the LEN launch in Epworth

PZ Executive Director, Imelda Mahaka, reinforced the importance of evidence-based policy and political commitment in driving health outcomes.

Long-acting prevention options such as Lenacapavir offer critical advantages for adolescents and young people, young women, key populations, and underserved communities who often face barriers to daily prevention methods. By reducing the burden of daily adherence, these innovations help address challenges related to stigma, mobility, and inconsistent access to health services.

As part of demand generation and community mobilization during the launch, PZ's Young African Leadership Academy's (YALA) champions used interactive performances on stage to entertain crowds and inviting communities to come and learn about LEN from the various stakeholders who were present. The use of interactive performances, a concept from the Theatre for A Change approach, was also used to create open dialogues around HIV risk and prevention choice.

Zimbabwe's rollout of Lenacapavir demonstrated that prevention innovation is most effective when it is equitable, community-driven, and supported by strong partnerships.

"The introduction of Lenacapavir demonstrates that prevention progress is as much a political choice as it is a scientific one. Introducing long-acting prevention strengthens our national response and signals regional leadership in expanding prevention options for those most at risk".

PZ Executive Director, Imelda Mahaka



"It was a great opportunity to be part of the launch and showcase our work under YALA. The use of interactive performances such as dance and drama during the launch, helped us to spread the HIV prevention message by engaging with the Epworth community and the champions helped mobilizing clients to access services at the PZ's exhibition stand".

YALA Program Facilitator, Artwell Manyemba









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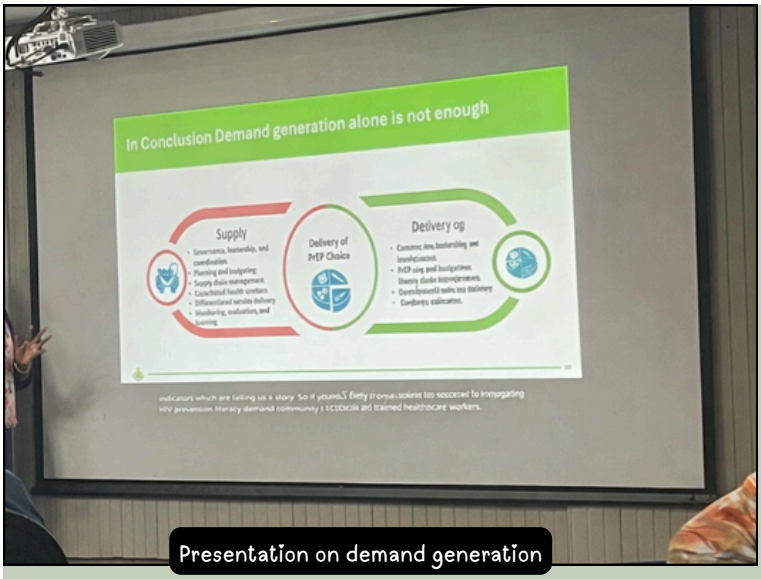


LEN LAUNCH IN PICS

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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: OUR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH BLURB EDITION IS NOW AVAILABLE, READ IT HERE: IWD2026



Presentation on demand generation

Zimbabwe Urged to Boost Local Investment in Long-Acting HIV Prevention

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP Zimbabwe) convened a meeting with government ministries, civil society organizations and development partners in February 2026. The goal of the meeting was to invite stakeholder to collaborate in the designing/ co-creation of the strategy plan for one of its upcoming Power of Prevention project.

One of the major issues discussed was the need for Zimbabwe to strengthen domestic financing to sustain and scale up HIV prevention, particularly for high-risk populations who continue to bear a disproportionate burden of new infections at a time when global health financing is increasingly uncertain.

It was indicated that although Zimbabwe had made a commendable progress in reducing HIV incidence over the years, stakeholders needed to know that sustaining these gains requires a greater national ownership in raising and securing local predictable local investment, especially as innovative prevention technologies such as long-acting pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) begin to enter the market.

Coordination and collaboration were emphasized as one of the key elements of strengthening domestic funding. Dr Tendai Mbengeranwa, Key Populations Coordinator at the National AIDS Council of Zimbabwe, indicated that the MOHCC, the Centre for Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Research Zimbabwe (CeSHHAR) and PZ were collaborating on the phased rollout of lenacapavir (LEN), a long-acting HIV prevention. This was in alignment with the National HIV Prevention Strategic Plan and this ensured that resources allocated were directly channelled where they were needed the most. Biomedical prevention innovation alone was was highlighted as not enough in closing prevention gaps if domestic financing and collaboration remained fragile. PZ is currently leveraging its robust HIV service delivery infrastructure and long-standing partnerships to collaborate in the cost-sensitive, epidemiologically driven rollout of LEN.

A presentation was also shared on how demand generation alone is not enough to ensure effective HIV prevention. Strong supply systems are equally important to support the delivery of PrEP choice. This includes effective governance, proper planning and budgeting, reliable supply chain management, and continuous capacity building for health workers.

Differentiated service delivery ensures services meet the needs of diverse populations, while monitoring, evaluation, and learning help improve program outcomes. When these supply-side efforts are combined with demand-side strategies such as community involvement, PrEP literacy, demand creation, and clear communication, they create a balanced approach that improves access, uptake, and sustained use of HIV prevention services.

By prioritising areas and populations with the highest incidence rates, the country aims to maximise impact while strengthening long-term sustainability. However, participants at the meeting emphasised that biomedical innovation alone will not close prevention gaps if financing remains fragile.

Speaking during the discussions, PZ's Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Officer, Joseph Njowa emphasized the urgent need to reinforce domestic

resource mobilisation for HIV prevention. Njowa specified that scaling up access to long-acting PrEP for high-risk populations requires deliberate allocation of national resources and stronger accountability systems to track prevention spending.

This is a call to shift from dependency to resilience. With the way the external funding landscape is evolving, the challenge is for countries to take great ownership of their health programming.

"As a country, we need to draw on experiences the work that has been done by different partners. COMPASS Africa has done a recommendable job in advocating for domestic funding. Through the establishment of the development of the Budget Expenditure Monitoring Forum, COMPASS Africa has created a multi-stakeholder platform to track and influence health spending in Zimbabwe. This is something that the UNDP can enforce and advocate for among its implementing partners."



PZ MERL Officer, Joseph Njowa during the co-creation meeting

For Zimbabwe, this means embedding HIV prevention financing within national and sub-national planning frameworks, safeguarding dedicated budget lines, and ensuring that community voices inform policy and expenditure decisions. As PZ, our work also includes advocacy which is instrumental in assisting various stakeholders to implement approaches that align with national priorities while responding directly to the lived realities of communities.

Stakeholders agreed that solidarity across different across government, civil society, researchers and communities will be essential. The expansion of long-acting PrEP presents a transformative opportunity in Zimbabwe's HIV response, but its success will ultimately depend on bold financing decisions made today. Strengthening domestic investment is not merely a fiscal adjustment; it is a strategic and moral imperative to ensure that HIV prevention remains accessible, equitable and sustainable for generations to come.



PZ Executive Director, Imelda Mahaka, at the co-creation meeting

PZ Executive Director, Imelda Mahaka noted on the importance of correct PrEP message. This will help reduce stigma and discrimination by improving the understanding of what PrEP is and who it is for. When communicated clearly, PrEP is seen as a responsible HIV prevention choice rather than something to judge. Accurate information encourages open conversations, builds trust in health services, and supports people to access prevention without fear or shame.

Choice is Prevention: Why Condoms Matter

Condoms continue to play a critical role in HIV prevention. They remain the only method that provides triple protection: preventing HIV, unintended pregnancies, and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). As new HIV prevention options emerge, condoms remain an essential component of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health.

As many new options for HIV prevention emerge, there is a common belief that has started to take share among our communities. Most people now believe that condoms are no longer an essential and a must. Everything is just correct with PrEP. This is the general misconception that is shaping the choice made in HIV Prevention.

However, it is time we take a detour and rephrase the HIV prevention messaging, to reaffirm that combination HIV prevention, with condoms at the centre is the only way to go. Today, condoms still matter. This is the HIV prevention message we need to share with communities.

The SHAZ! Hub clinic nurse, sister Mupakati also weighed in on the conversation and added her view,

"Condoms are still at the core of our HIV prevention messaging. It is an emphasis we make when young people come to access services at the hub. The use of condoms is always embedded in the pre and post counselling sessions with clients. To this day, condoms remain essential to prevent pregnancy, STIs and HIV."

As we reflect on International Condoms Day, we are reminded that while innovation is advancing the HIV response, simple and proven tools remain powerful. Condoms continue to save lives, prevent new infections, and strengthen communities. At PZ, we reaffirm our commitment to promoting choice, expanding access, and ensuring that prevention remains people centered.

Because when individuals are informed, empowered, and supported; protection becomes possible-and progress becomes sustainable.

Speaking during International Condoms Day reflections, PZ Program Officer, Rolland Holland said,

"We need to repackage the HIV prevention message under combination HIV prevention for people to not believe the lies that condoms do not matter, because they still do. This is part of the work that we continue to reinforce during community outreaches programs.."



PZ Program Officer, Rolland during an outreach in Epworth





PZ during an outreach distributing condoms





Skip the Roses, Start the HIV Prevention Conversation!

In the month of February-love was in the air. People are sending flowers, writing sappy messages, and double-tapping hearts on every social media post. But let's be honest... love isn't just about roses and chocolates. Love is also about caring for yourself and the person you're with, even when it means talking about the stuff that isn't exactly romantic at first glance. The stuff that seems crazy lol. Yep... we're talking HIV prevention.

Imagine this: Tinashe and Tariro have been seeing each other for a few months. One evening, over some takeout and a rom-com marathon, Tinashe decides to ask, "Hey... have we ever talked about HIV prevention?" Tariro laughs, a little embarrassed, but also relieved. Because it turns out, love isn't just about butterflies-it's about having honest conversations, knowing your options, and supporting each other.

They sit down, go through the available HIV prevention options, and realize there's a whole menu of choices: condoms, PrEP, regular testing... even new options, the long-acting prevention methods. They joke about picking "the combo platter," but deep down they feel empowered knowing that whatever they choose, they're protecting each other.

See, that's the thing about love: it's not only about the heart-eyes emojis. It's about creating space to talk, to understand, and to respect each other's choices. When you talk openly about HIV prevention, you're showing your partner that you care about their health, their life, and the life you're building together.

PrEP ♥ IS CHOICE

#ICHOOSEME

So, don't just celebrate love with chocolates. Celebrate love by giving your partner the gift of choice. Start the conversation. Ask questions. Listen. And pick the prevention method that works best for both of you. Because real love? It's protective, thoughtful, and sometimes a little practical.

> *It is not about mistrust. It is about reassuring our safety comes first and we are confident with our love, to know that we are both making decisions to protect our love.*



Prevention is Power: PZ Promotes Cervical Health

Through understanding the need to promote awarenessPZ joined the rest of the world in January 2026 to observe the Cervical Cancer Awareness Month under the theme was "Empower the Storytellers," focusing on sharing survivor experiences to break stigma and encourage HPV vaccination and screenings.

PZ has been actively working across the health facilities where it operates to integrate cervical cancer screening into its HIV Test, Prevent and Care programming. This approach ensures that women accessing the services can simultaneously receive cervical health services, reducing missed opportunities for early detection.

Observed globally every January, the Cervical Cancer Awareness Month highlights the importance of prevention, early detection, and timely treatment of cervical cancer, drawing attention to a disease that remains one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths among women despite being largely preventable.

It is important to continue emphasizing the awareness on cervical cancer screening to encourage women to seek early treatment where detection has been made, to develop better health seeking habits and equips communities with the knowledge needed to take informed action.

The low-risk perception among communities has been one driving element to continue raising awareness each year. People need to learn and understand that cervical cancer caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), can often be prevented through vaccination and detected early through regular screening. It is easy to not see the signs, to be unbothered with the regular checkups, to think the smelly odour will go away soon, the pain will disappear. However, it is the ignorance that later results in people noticing cervical cancer a bit too late.

Myths and misconceptions surrounding cervical cancer are also challenges faced in protecting early and regular screening. These include only older women get it and that those with multiple partners are the only one at risk. PZ has been working to demystify these through promoting safe spaces for support and educational sessions during community outreaches and the SHAZ! Hubs where adolescent girls and young women come to access services.

PZ calls for regular screening throughout the year and not only limit cervical cancer awareness to the month of January. It takes the effort of everyone to promote personal health ownership.



CROI 2026 Sounds Alarm: Science Alone Cannot Sustain the HIV Response

The shift in the health landscape across the globe is calling for the reframing of the HIV response to promote sustainability. The messaging has shifted to more of understanding global systems, financing and collaboration to make the science behind prevention possible.

This shift in global systems, shifted the annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) 2026 message. The conference took place from February 22nd to the 25th, 2026, in Denver, Colorado.

Voices at the conference such as AVAC indicated that the interruptions of the HIV research and programming support threatened the decades of work and it is time that this is sustained through localised sustained financing, activism and collaboration between governments, researchers and communities.

The remarkable strides in long-acting HIV prevention technologies, improved treatment regimens, and ongoing cure-related research were applauded. it was indicated that to ensure the research strives, there is need to address the investment is available to support it.

The HIV response is sustained by resilient health systems, community-led movements, and consistent financing mechanisms that ensure research translates into real impact.

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For countries like Zimbabwe, these discussions carry immediate relevance. The nation has made notable progress in expanding access to antiretroviral therapy and strengthening combination HIV prevention. However, much of this success remains intertwined with global partnerships and financial commitments. As new technologies such as long-acting prevention options move closer to widespread rollout, ensuring equitable access will require both domestic investment and sustained international solidarity.

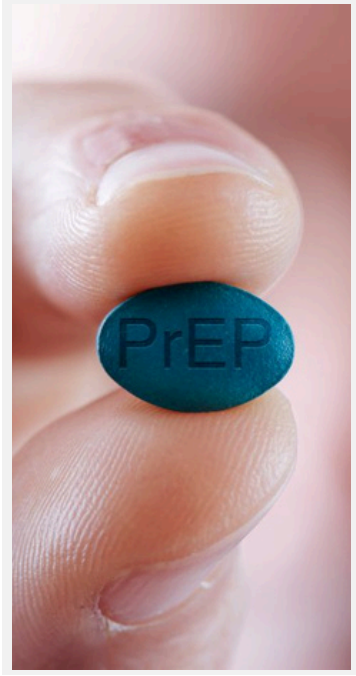
PZ views the outcomes of CROI 2026 as both a warning and a call to action. Evidence-based interventions must remain firmly rooted in community engagement and human rights principles. As Zimbabwe navigates the evolving prevention landscape, PZ continues to support the scale-up of innovative HIV prevention tools while strengthening community awareness, combating misinformation, and advocating for sustainable domestic financing.



A panel discussion during the CROI 2026 conference









Rethinking PrEP Support for Young Women in Zimbabwe

Under the Comprehensive Adherence Resource and Empowerment Support (CARES) Study, Pangaea Zimbabwe (PZ) convened two adaptation workshops in Harare and Bulawayo to reimagine what effective PrEP support looks like for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). The goal was clear: refine what works, discard what does not, and ground interventions in the lived realities of young women.

Efforts to strengthen HIV prevention among adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) increasingly point to the importance of designing approaches that are grounded in their realities. Evidence continues to show that interventions are more effective when they are responsive to the diverse needs, preferences, and circumstances of young women.

AGYW do not experience health services in isolation from their everyday lives. Their decisions and behaviours are shaped by social, cultural, economic, and relational factors. As such, interventions that fail to take these lived experiences into account risk being misaligned with the very populations they are intended to support.

A key consideration is the need for health systems and programs to move beyond one-size-fits-all approaches. Instead, there is a growing recognition that support strategies must be adaptable, context-sensitive, and grounded in an understanding of what young women value and face in their daily lives.

Equally important is the meaningful involvement of AGYW in the design and development of these interventions. Young women are not merely beneficiaries of services; they are experts in their own experiences. When they are actively engaged in shaping programs through consultation, co-creation, and feedback interventions are more likely to be relevant, acceptable, and effective.

This approach also strengthens trust and ownership, which are critical for sustained engagement with HIV prevention services.

Ultimately, developing useful and impactful support interventions requires a shift in perspective: from designing for young women to designing with them. By prioritizing responsiveness, centering lived experiences, and fostering meaningful participation, HIV prevention efforts can better meet the needs of AGYW and contribute to improved health outcomes.

PZ
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We envision an environment in which all human beings live healthy, productive, and quality lives.

We strive to transform the lives of underserved populations by working to increase access to quality, responsive, evidence based, client-centered comprehensive health services through facility and community engagement and policy advocacy

Equity

Intergrity

Inclusivity

Stewardship