

## HEALTH POLICY PROJECT



Photo by: Health Policy Project

## Transgender Health

### Overview

“Transgender” is an umbrella term for people whose current gender identity, expression, and/or behavior is different from those typically associated with their sex assigned at birth. Transgender people are at heightened risk for HIV transmission, even when compared to other key populations at high risk of contracting HIV. In most countries, stigma and social factors reduce access to healthcare and HIV services for transgender individuals. Various structural and interpersonal factors contribute to the increased risk of HIV infection for transgender people:

- Formal or informal environmental factors that contribute to stigmatization and discrimination
- Invisibility of transgender populations from the mainstream (both voluntary and involuntary), making it difficult for these individuals to be reached with needed services

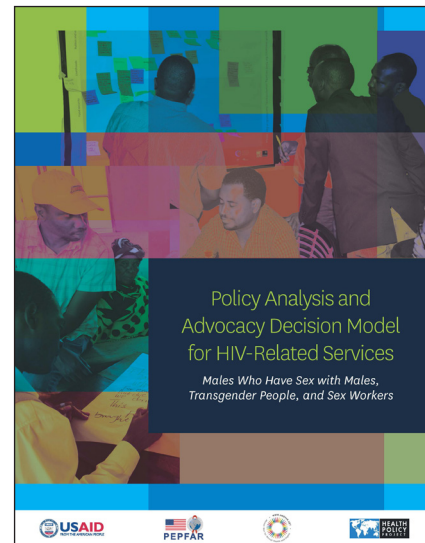
- Overt criminalization of gender nonconformity, and the perpetration or threat of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual assault due to gender identity and/or expression
- Sexual risk-taking to gain social support and protect against violence, particularly when engaging in sex work
- Governmental restrictions placed on access to condoms and lubricant for men who have sex with men (MSM)/transgender (TG) people/sex workers (SWs) in many countries, which increase the likelihood that these individuals will engage in unprotected sex

There are significant barriers to care for this population, including lack of information, lack of access to appropriate services, and lack of participation in policy and community decision-making processes that affect health.

## What We Do

The USAID- and PEPFAR-funded Health Policy Project (HPP) is committed to enhancing access to high-quality and welcoming healthcare services among transgender individuals who are often at higher risk for HIV infection and morbidity. To do so, we strengthen the capacity of government, health institutions, civil society, community-based organizations, regional networks, and individuals to advocate for stronger policies and equitable health services for people most at risk of HIV infection. We also work to empower transgender individuals and other vulnerable populations to become more involved in the policy process. We

- Strengthen the capacity of transgender (and gender-nonconforming) individuals to participate in political decision-making processes and influence policy change for equitable access to health services
- Provide technical assistance to government and health institutions in developing policy and advocacy tools to improve health and HIV services for transgender people
- Foster partnerships among government institutions, national HIV councils, and transgender populations to devise and implement policies and strategies that curb HIV-related stigma and discrimination
- Develop capacity-building tools for healthcare providers, in collaboration with transgender networks, to train providers on appropriate, respectful care of transgender patients, and in the identification and prevention of gender-based violence



HPP's *Policy Analysis and Advocacy Decision Model for HIV-Related Services: Males Who Have Sex with Males, Transgender People, and Sex Workers* provides tools targeted for those who work with key populations, including transgender communities.

To download the decision model please visit [www.healthpolicyproject.com/t/HIVPolicyModels.cfm](http://www.healthpolicyproject.com/t/HIVPolicyModels.cfm).

## How to Work with Us

For over 40 years, Futures Group has managed large and complex international health and development projects for a range of major development players, achieving significant results on the ground in more than 100 countries. Host-country partners with interest in receiving project assistance should contact their USAID Mission. All Missions may participate through field support. For information on how to work with the Health Policy Project please contact:

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