

Know your numbers: A catalyst to improve viral load coverage in the Western Region of Ghana



Authors: David Tetteh, Nartey;¹ Edward, Adiiobokah;¹ Jacob Eyiah, Ayetey;¹ Henry Tagoe;¹ Thomas Ayoumah, Azugue;² Yussif Ahmed, Abdul Rahman;¹ Henry, Nagai¹

¹JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.

²Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital

Poster number: EPB020

Viral Load Suppression Challenges

According to the Global AIDS Monitoring 2019 report, viral load (VL) coverage in Ghana for persons on ART was only 48%, and 68% of those were virally suppressed. Challenges include frequent breakdown of VL testing machines, reagent shortages, low demand-generation, poor access to tests, sample transportation, and delayed test results.

Results

The Western Region experienced a reduced VL result turnaround time by integrating the logistics management information system with the VL management system (VLMS) so that VL requests and test results are electronically transmitted to health facilities through the HIV data management e-Tracker system. This led to faster treatment initiation while ensuring those on treatment continued to receive ART. Additionally, stakeholders suggested synchronizing dates of VL samples collection and ART refill appointments dates leading to an enhanced VL sample collection.

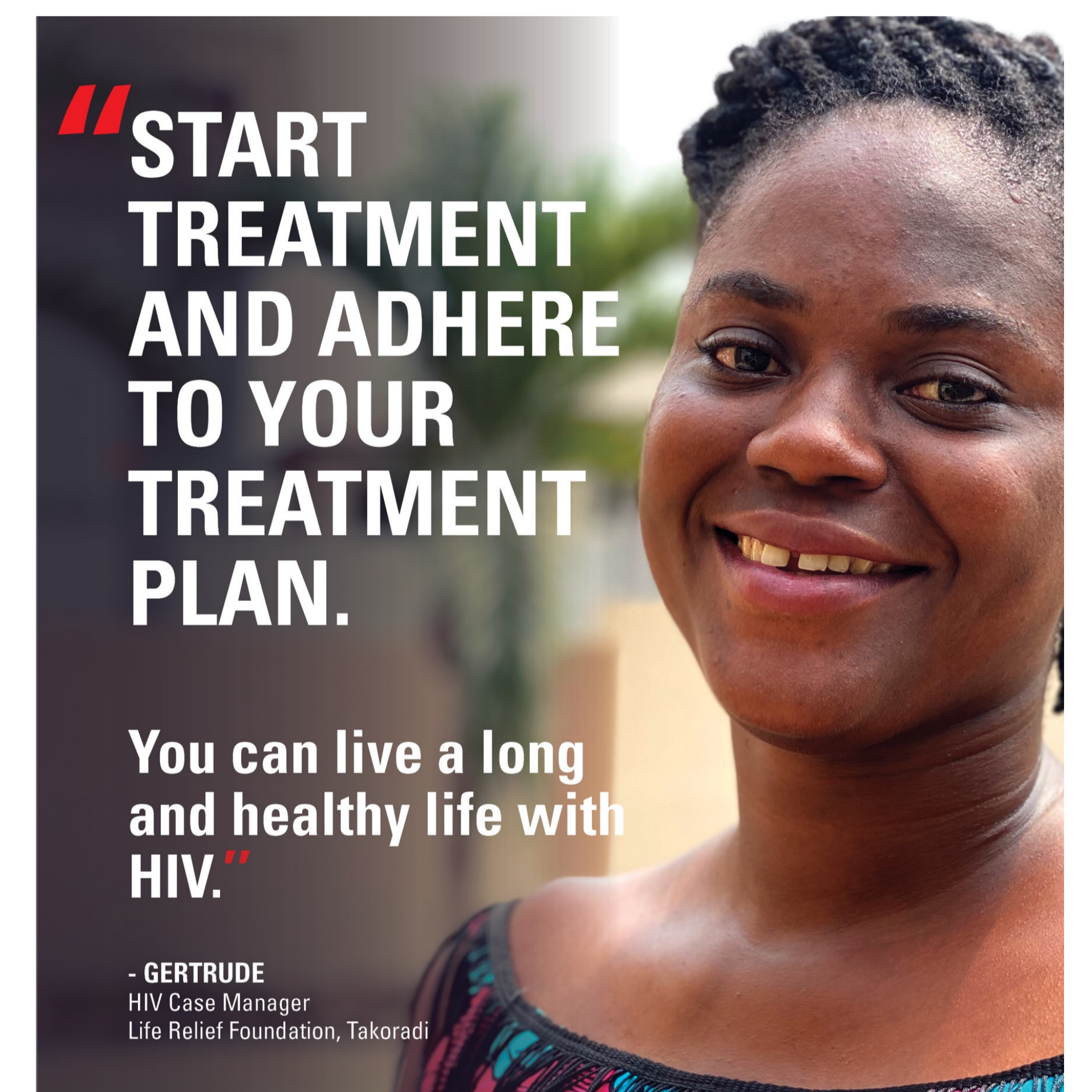
Response

The USAID Strengthening the Care Continuum project, led by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc., implemented enhanced demand-generation activities in the Western Region to increase VL testing. These include the "Know Your Numbers" campaign, which developed VL awareness messages promoting Undetectable=Untransmittable (U=U). The project met with key stakeholders to discuss practical solutions to close the VL testing

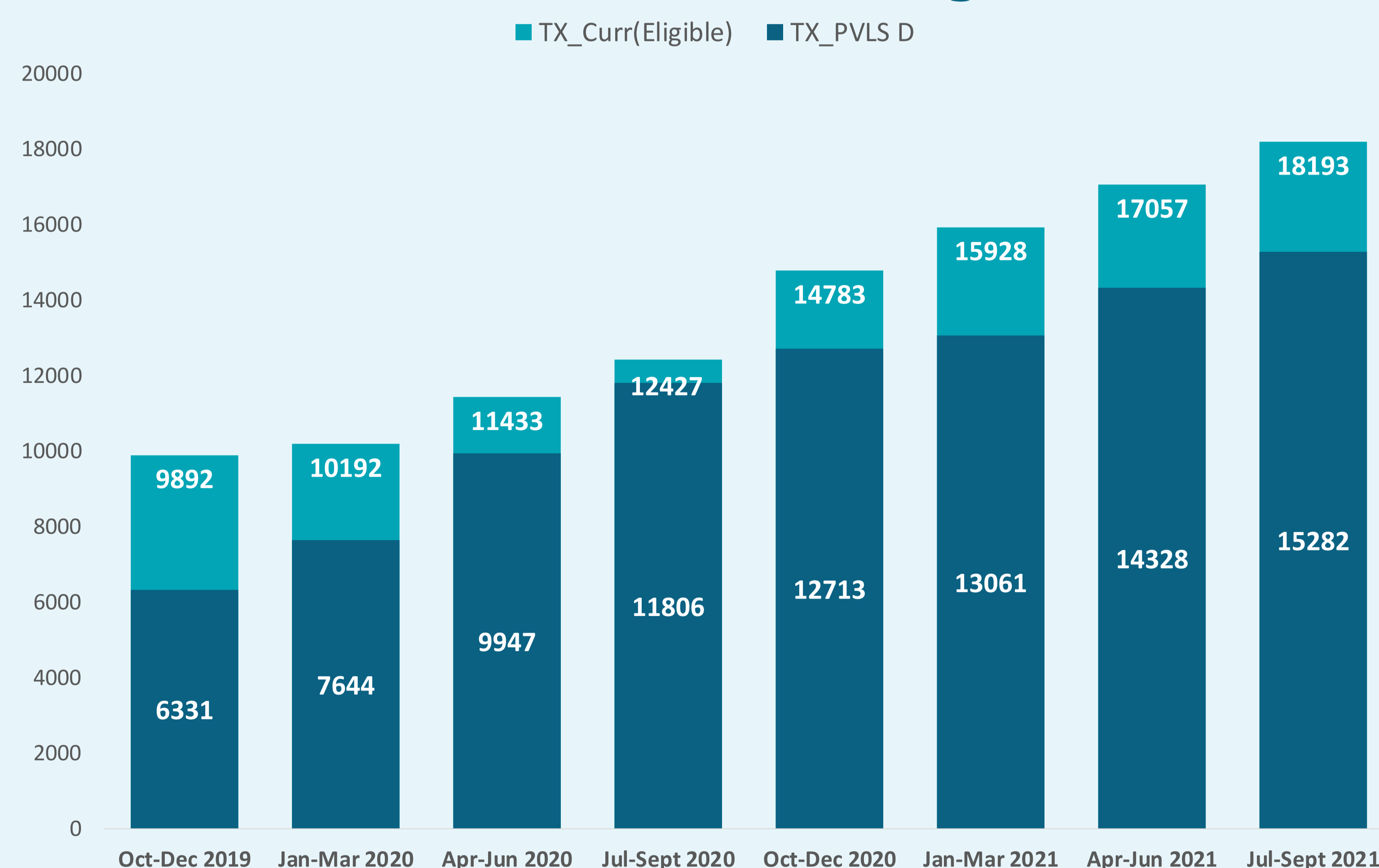
gaps. The project also trained case managers (CMs) to support newly diagnosed clients with HIV to navigate and start ART treatment. These CMs provide motivational counseling on adherence and track people living with HIV due for VL testing using Google calendar reminder alerts prompted by the Ghana Health Services' DHIS2 eTracker at all sites providing ART services.

Moving Forward

- Replicate VL awareness and demand creation efforts in other regions of Ghana to improve VL coverage.
- Involve people living with HIV in community advocacy for the U=U campaign to meet the third '95 goal.'
- Ensure availability of VL testing logistics to improve VL coverage.



Trends in VL Coverage



VL Coverage and Suppression

