

Integrated and user-centered care model for pregnant adolescents living with HIV in the Dominican Republic



AIDS2024: 10695

C. Valdez¹, E. Barillas¹, M. Thormann², M. Jiménez², R. Santos³, M. Encarnación³, S. Menéndez⁴

- 1- UNICEF-GIS consultants, Dominican Republic;
- 2- Ministry of Health's, Directorate of Sexual Transmissible Diseases and HIV/AIDS (DIGECITSS), Dominican Republic;
- 3- National Health Service' Health Care Providers Network, Dominican Republic;
- 4- UNICEF, Dominican Republic.

BACKGROUND

According to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), in 2022 the adolescent fertility rate in the Dominican Republic was 97 births per 1,000 women between the ages of 15 and 19, significantly higher than the average for Latin America. As of December 2023, the National Health Service (SNS, by its Spanish acronym) reported 76 HIV pregnant adolescents in the health service facility network.

Pregnant adolescents with HIV are cared for in adult health units and do not have access to differentiated care, which is necessary to avoid stigma and discrimination, and to provide confidentiality and clinical care appropriate to their age

The SNS and the Ministry of Health's General Directorate for the Control of Sexually Transmissible Diseases and AIDS (DIGECITSS, by its Spanish acronym), with the support of UNICEF and GIS Grupo Consultor, designed and implemented a user-centered model of care for pregnant adolescents to increase health care demand and adherence to treatment, and contribute to the reduction of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

METHODS

A baseline study was conducted in 12 Specialized Adolescents Units reporting the highest incidence of HIV in pregnant adolescents. The study focused on the conditions to organize the provision of HIV care services in the UAA:

- a) Availability of physical space;
- b) Personnel trained in adolescent care, sexually transmissible diseases, and HIV;
- c) Conditions to offer a comprehensive care package, including counseling focused on adolescent health, HIV rapid tests, CD4, viral load, TB screening, Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), and syphilis treatment.

INTERVENTION AND RESULTS

To close the gaps identified in the baseline study a 12 Specialized Adolescents Units were conditioned and habilitated to provide HIV services and 223 health personnel were trained in adolescent care, pre and post HIV test counseling, HIV, syphilis treatment, and adherence to treatment strategies.

An electronic dashboard combining different sources of information was developed to monitor the results and impact of the intervention. From May to December 2023, 3,247 pregnant adolescents attended these improved Specialized Adolescents Units and were provided with HIV tests and same-day results. Out of all the adolescents tested, 37 were HIV positive, and 25 (68%) of those received ARVs and counseling on the same day of the diagnosis.

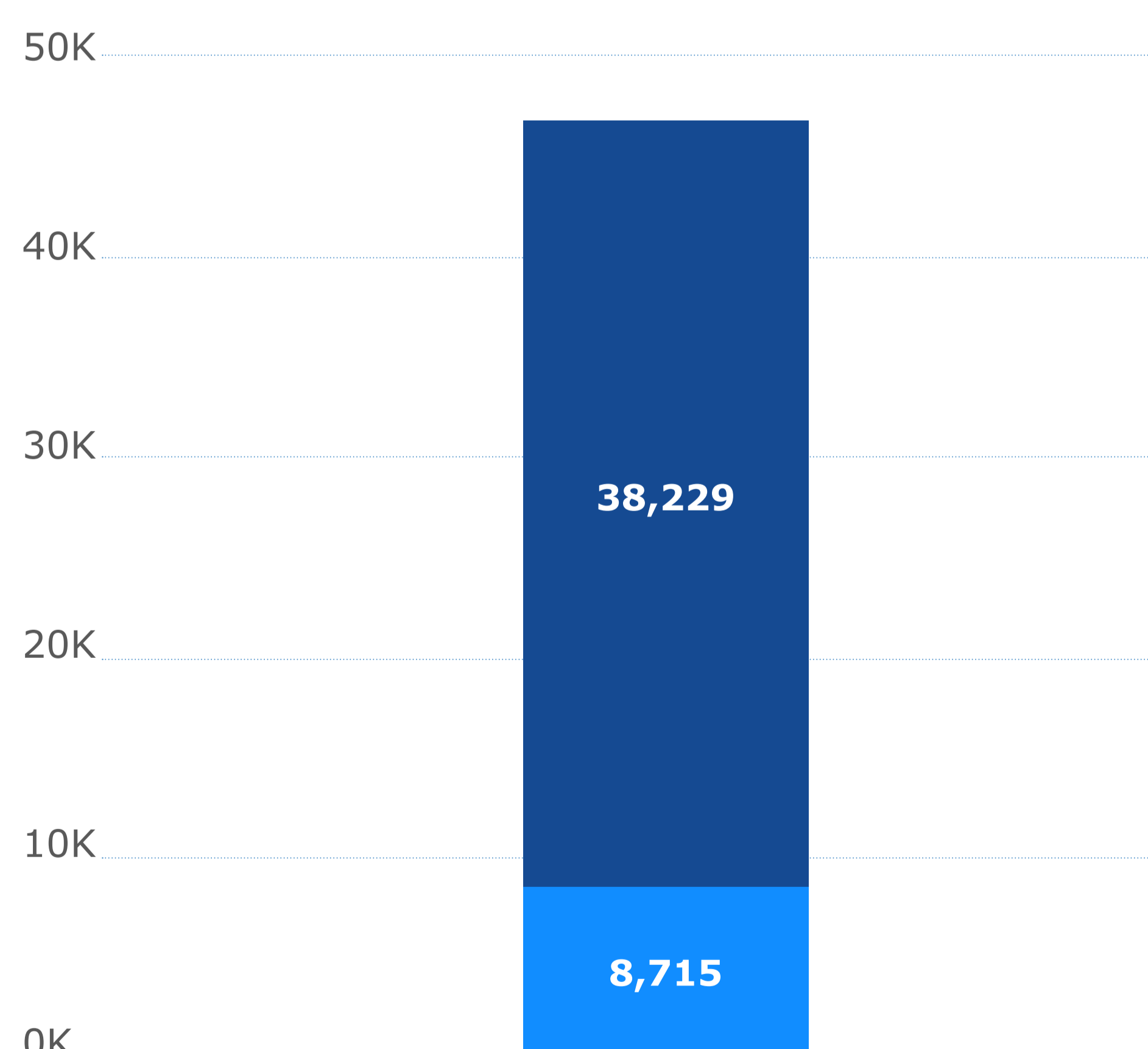
Conclusion

HIV and pregnancy care of adolescents in adult health facilities was identified as a barrier to health care demand, adherence to treatment, and the reduction of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. The improvement and habilitation of Specialized Adolescents Units to provide comprehensive HIV services proved to be an effective strategy to increase demand, diagnosis, and early treatment of HIV in pregnant adolescents.

SOURCE: HIV CARE CASCADE
SIS-01, SIRENP / 71 Health Facilities

Tested Pregnant Women

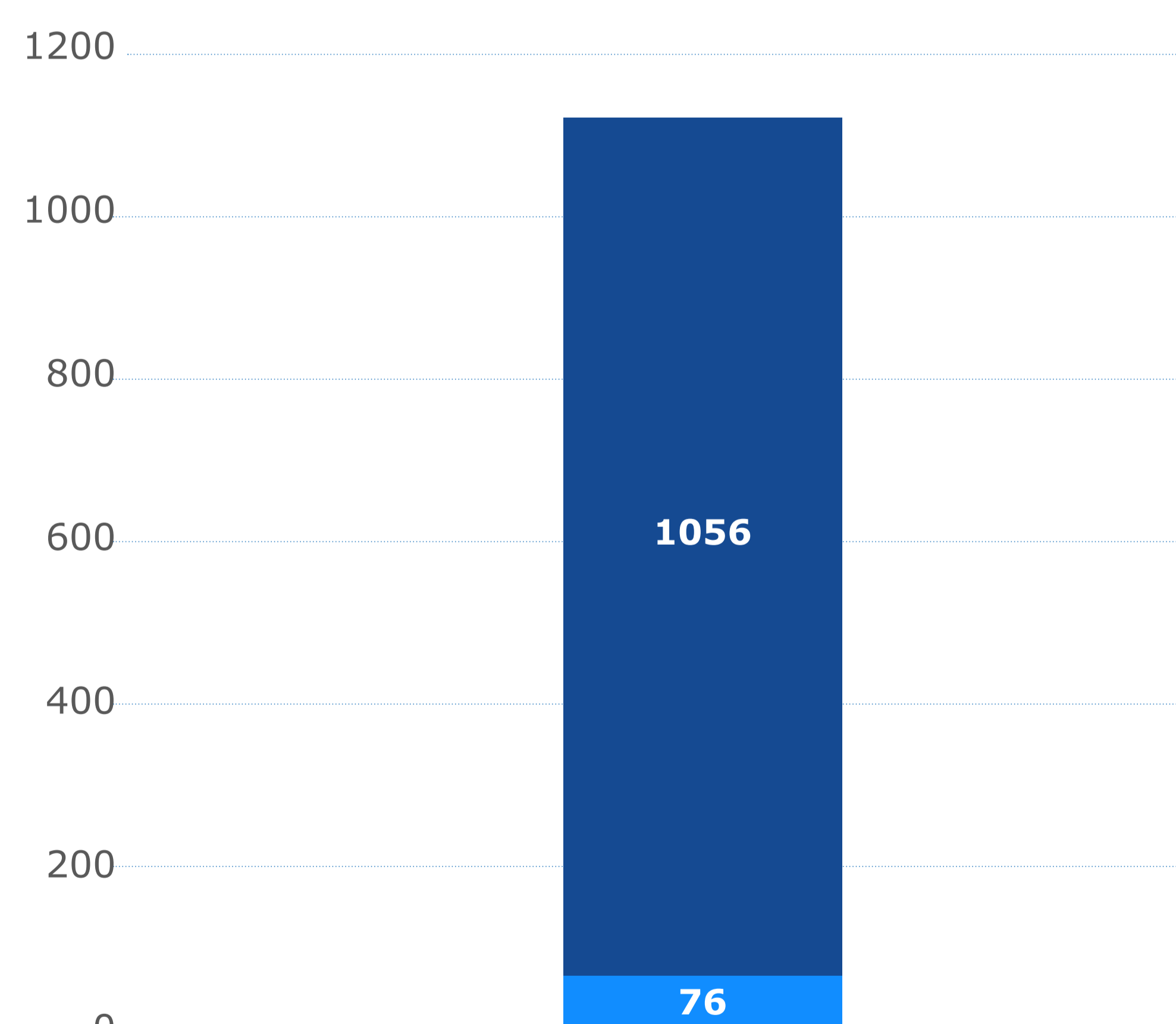
● Adolescents ● Adults



SOURCE: HIV CARE CASCADE
FAPPS / 72 Health Facilities

HIV Pregnant Women Linkages to the Facilities

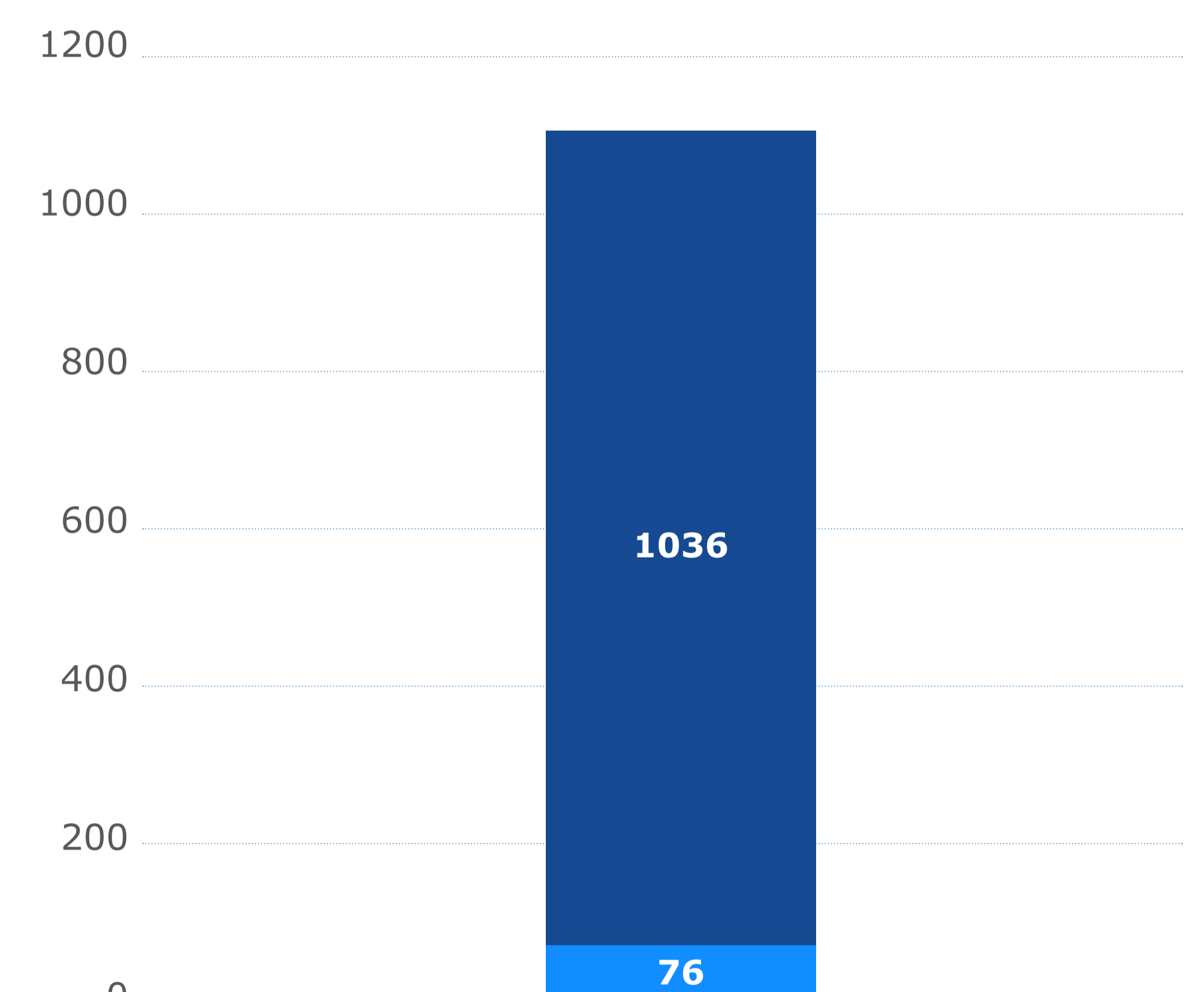
● Adolescents ● Adults



SOURCE: HIV CARE CASCADE
FAPPS / Health Facilities

HIV Pregnant Women on ART

● Adolescents ● Adults



TO READ THE FULL STUDY SCAN THE CODE →

