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**HIV high in Homa Bay, says report**

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Homa Bay is on the spot with reports showing it has the highest number of HIV cases.

The county has a prevalence rate of 27.1 per cent with 127,140 adults and 22,851 children living with the virus.

And the county government is already taking steps to reverse this trend.

Governor Cyprian Awiti is currently engaged in a campaign encouraging people to know their status for early management of the disease.

Speaking during the launch of a Unicef sponsored ‘Wadagi’ programme in Rusinga Island recently, Mr Awiti stated that the area had been hit hard since most people took long before they enrolling for HIV Care.

The county boss said that challenges were still being experienced in the crafting of a strong message on the importance of people knowing their status and being placed on anti-retroviral drugs.

“I am making a passionate appeal to my people not to shy away from visiting health facilities to know their status. In case you are found positive, be ready to be put on a strict drug regime,” he added.

In an interview with the Nation, the county executive in-charge of Health, Dr Lawrence Oteng, said the youth who were sexually active were the most affected.

“Many of our youth form the bulk of those getting new infections and which we must control,” said Dr Oteng.

He noted that if the youth could abstain from irresponsible sexual behaviour, then the county’s HIV infection rate would drastically reduce.

Dr Oteng said although majority of youth were aware of the disease, they still got lured into unprotected sex, adding that the county had embarked on an initiative to send a message of prevention to schools and colleges in the region.

“We want to target peer groups in schools besides involving parents,” he said.

The Health executive revealed that the other target group was pregnant women since only 50 per cent had been placed under the programme to prevent transmission to the child.

He also complained of lack of support from religious leaders.