

Brazil

National Day for the Fight Against Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis (Third Saturday of October)

On October 17, 2024, the fight against syphilis took to the field at Brazil's most iconic soccer stadium, the Journalist Mário Filho Stadium, globally known as Maracanã. On a match day between two of the country's most famous teams, during the Brazilian Championship, an awareness campaign was carried out with videos (displayed on the stadium's big screens) and banners (on the field in the beginning of the game and during the interval) to promote the National Day for the Fight Against Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis. A group of activists and representatives from the Brazilian Society of STDs, the Sexually Transmitted Diseases Sector of the Fluminense Federal University, the Municipal Health Department of the city of Rio de Janeiro, and representatives from Casa Reviver (civil society group) took a symbolic "Olympic lap" around Maracanã, in Rio de Janeiro.

The initiative was supported by the Social Responsibility and Citizenship Department of "Clube de Regatas Flamengo" soccer team, and the match was attended by 58,117 people. In the end, Fluminense won the game. However, the widespread impact of the campaign's messages through banners and videos was the real highlight of the night. And for the cause, one of the victories came from Flamengo (the home team for the match), which immediately embraced our request to take the field with banners alluding to the campaign against syphilis.



Source: Paula Reis

The **Latin American Congress on STI/AIDS** will take place from June 3 to 6, 2025 in Rio de Janeiro, and will feature distinguished international experts, including Drs. David Lewis, Magnus Unemo, and Janet Wilson, who will discuss the latest advancements in the field.



Ecuador

In 2024, Ecuador made significant strides in addressing sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The country finalized its STI protocol, which is now ready for publication and includes 42 STIs, including MPOX. Additionally, the National Strategy for EMTCT Plus has reached its final stage, pending validation, publication, and implementation. Efforts to expand vaccination coverage have also advanced, with the acquisition of the hepatitis B vaccine for nationwide administration to university students and the HPV vaccine for people living with HIV up to 45 years old. Diagnostic improvements are another key milestone, as HPV testing in people living with HIV using GeneXpert is set to be implemented starting in April 2025. Similarly, testing for *N. gonorrhoeae* and *C. trachomatis* will be introduced in inclusive primary care health centers serving key and vulnerable populations, such as adolescents, and in secondary and tertiary hospitals for people living with HIV, utilizing GeneXpert technology. A major achievement in maternal and child health was the approval of dual testing for pregnant women, marking an important step toward early detection and prevention. Furthermore, Ecuador is supporting the mandatory reporting of syphilis and 10 other STIs, reinforcing surveillance and response efforts. These initiatives demonstrate the country's commitment to strengthening STI prevention, diagnosis, and treatment nationwide.

Through the Ministry of Public Health and civil society, Ecuador successfully organized the First National HIV Congress in Quito from November 27-29, 2024. The opening ceremony took place on the evening of November 27, led by Dr. Antonio Naranjo Paz y Miño, Minister of Public Health. The congress featured 55 national and international speakers and provided free participation for 400 healthcare professionals, public servants, academic representatives, civil society organizations, and key and vulnerable population groups. The Minister emphasized the need for a strengthened effort from the entire National Health System and highlighted that there is still a long way to go in strengthening various initiatives for effective HIV and STI control. Ecuador has committed to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis, as well as to improving access to comprehensive sexual education services and harm reduction strategies.





Source: Gabriela Yerovi