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Russia Urges HIV Testing for One-Third of Population as Cases Rise

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Sergei Kiselyev / Moskva News Agency

Russia should test roughly one-third of its population for HIV each year to curb the spread of the virus, Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said Friday, as official data show infections continuing to rise.

Murashko, speaking at a ministry meeting, said expanding screening coverage was essential to reducing transmission of the virus that causes AIDS.

"Further expansion of medical testing is necessary. Every third citizen should be tested, with particular attention to at-risk groups," the Health Ministry's press service quoted him as saying.

The push for broader testing comes as Russia faces one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in Europe, with infections continuing to climb despite record screening levels.

According to state consumer health watchdog Rospotrebnadzor, more than 54 million people

— about 37% of the population — were tested for HIV in 2024, the highest level in at least a decade.

That figure was 7% higher than in 2023 and nearly double the 28.3 million tests conducted in 2014.

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Even so, World Health Organization data show Russia's HIV prevalence at 890 cases per 100,000 people.

That is comparable to several African countries such as Guinea (874), Liberia (944), Chad (771) and Ethiopia (601), and is markedly higher than in European countries including France (358), Britain (191) and Sweden (171).

The total number of people living with HIV in Russia rose by 35,000 in 2025 to reach 1.25 million, according to Vadim Pokrovsky, head of the Federal Scientific and Methodological Center for AIDS Prevention and Control.

"Infection risks are very high," Pokrovsky said. "If we look only at adults aged 15 to 50, more than 1% are infected — that is, every hundredth person."

The figure rises to around 4% among men aged 40 to 45, he added.

Pokrovsky also noted that not all HIV-positive individuals are registered in the healthcare system. According to Health Ministry data, around 900,000 people were officially under medical supervision in 2025, suggesting a gap between recorded cases and those receiving treatment.

Murashko said early detection through expanded testing was the only effective way to prevent further spread of the virus.

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