By Ambassador-at-Large Deborah L. Birx, M.D., U.S. Global AIDS coordinator and U.S. Special representative for global health diplomacy

It was not easy for Zimbabwean child care worker Future Kaseke to convince her countryman Dafer Nketeza to have his 6-year-old daughter tested for HIV. True, Kaseke had convinced Nketeza himself to be tested and to start lifesaving antiretroviral treatment, but Kaseke said he wouldn't seek medical care for his daughter. "Because of the influence of the church," he said, "we did not think our daughter needed to be tested."

After three months of regular visits from Kaseke, Nketeza realized his daughter's health was deteriorating and agreed to take her for testing—she tested positive for HIV.

Now 12, his daughter is still much shorter than she should be for her age and has missed so much school due to HIV-related illness that she is two grades behind. But because she has received HIV treatment and support services, her family now hopes her health will improve.

Her father, meanwhile, has become an HIV testing and treatment advocate. "At work, when I meet my friends, I always encourage them, 'when you fall sick, it's important to go to the hospital and get tested and know [your] HIV status,' because of what I went through," he said.

As part of PEPFAR's Orphans and Vulnerable Children outreach in schools, a psychosocial support teacher quizzes students about reporting sexual, physical and other abuse they may experience.
Photo by Veronica Davison