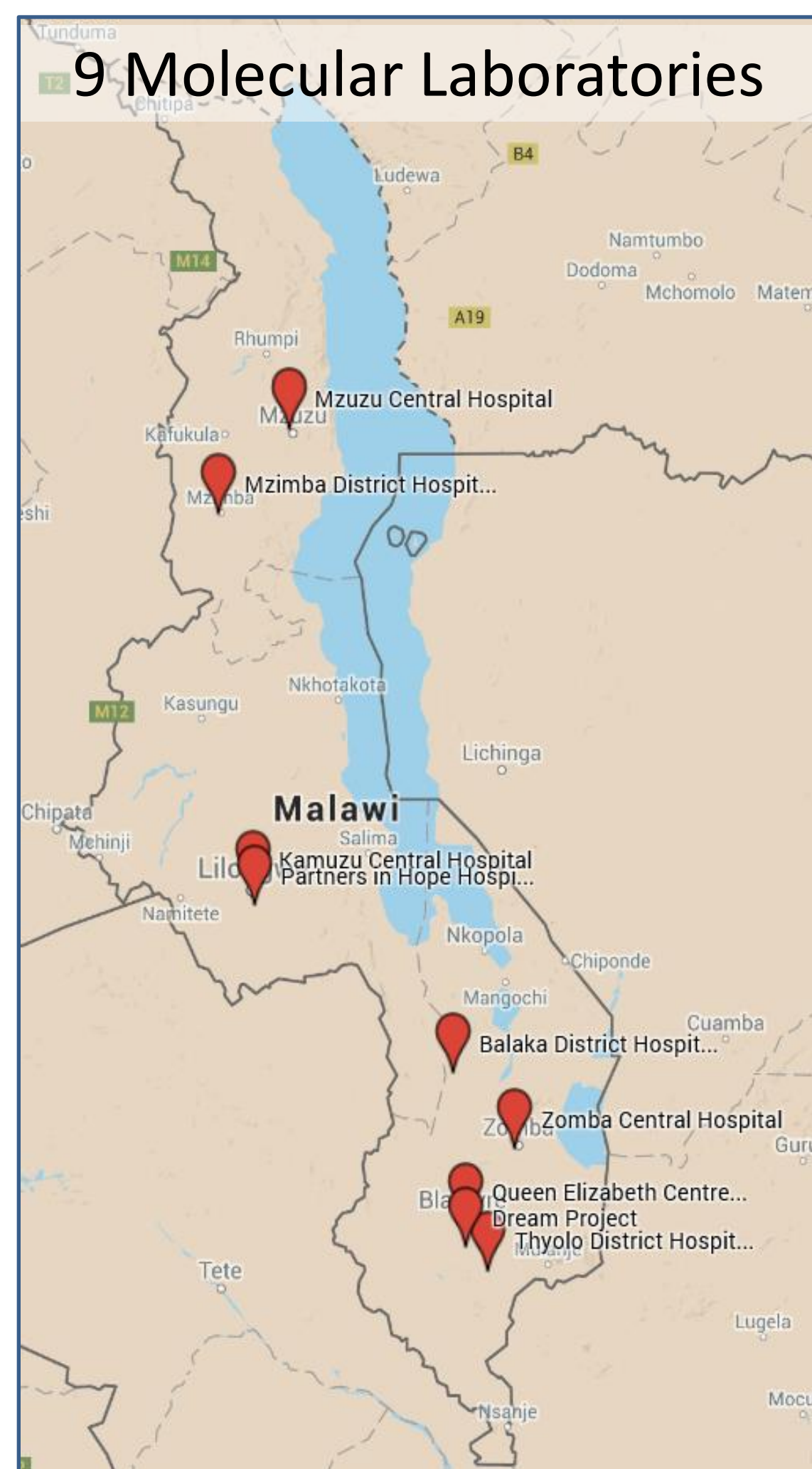




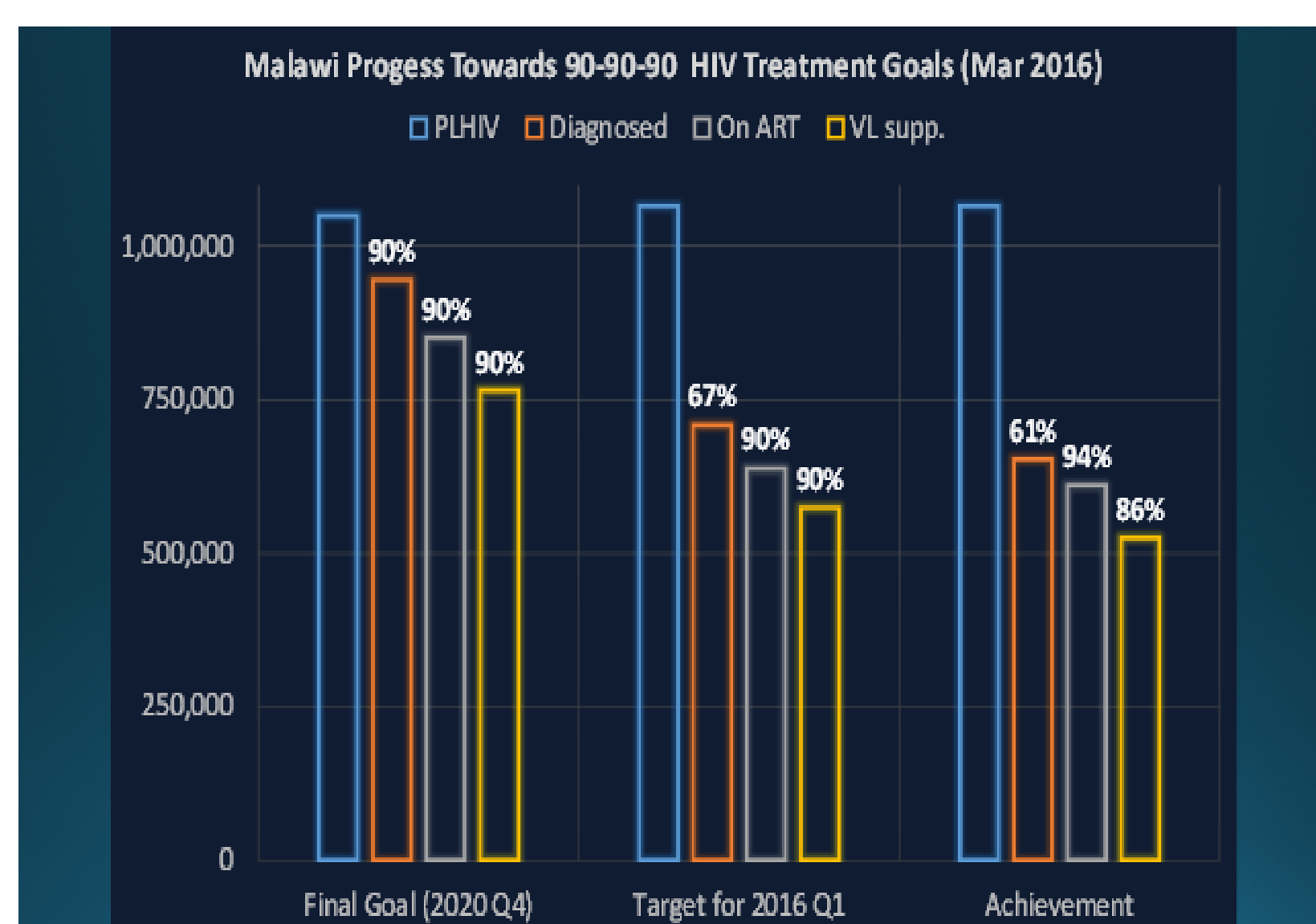
# Reaching the Third 90: Implementing Routine Viral Load Monitoring in Malawi

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## Country Context



- Population of 16 million
- HIV prevalence 10.6%
- 1.1 million PLHIV
- 962,782 in need of ART
- 551,566 on ART
- 4.4 TFR



## Clinical/Program Systems for VL Monitoring

**Routine scheduled VL** is recommended for all patients at specific times after ART initiation:

- ✓ At 6 months
- ✓ 2 years
- ✓ 4 years, and every 2 years thereafter



**Targeted/Repeat VL** is recommended for patients meeting specific criteria:

- ✓ Routine VL result was 1,000+ and patient has received Intensive Adherence Counselling for 3 months
- ✓ Mandatory before starting 2<sup>nd</sup> line ART to confirm suspected ART failure

VL testing protocol reinforced during clinical mentoring and supportive supervision visits

## Laboratory Systems for VL Monitoring

Laboratory systems are monitored at all levels (national, zonal and district)

1. VL Advisory Committee is tasked to use evidence and program data to advise the ministry on performance and considerations.
2. Quarterly review meetings are conducted to track performance of each reference laboratory
3. Supervision of laboratories forms an integral role to monitor progress of viral load
4. Electronic Laboratory Information Systems

## Engagement of Patients and Communities

1. Viral Load scale up plan was launched in August 2015
2. Viral load messages have been developed, and pre testing underway
3. A mass media campaign is also recommended by the VL Advisory Committee
4. Inclusion of advocacy plan in the Viral load scale up plan

## M&E Systems for VL Monitoring

Anticipated challenges in measurement, population surveys, CHIPS, MPHIA, need to rely more on service data though likely to be biased.

Impact of VL monitoring:

- Identify failing patients and switch to the right 2<sup>nd</sup> line as soon as possible
- (Very expensive) adherence motivation

Routine VL result: consistently 85-90% below 1,000 copies/ml

## Next Steps/Way Forward

1. Strengthen sample transportation
2. Strengthen monitoring system, and scale up monitoring tools
3. Strengthen engagement of communities
4. Strengthen laboratory capacity

## References

- Malawi viral load scale up plan 2015-2018
- Malawi HIV clinical guidelines for management of HIV 2016
- Malawi Health Demographic survey 2010 and 2015 preliminary report results

