**Janell Wright, HIV and TB Program Director, CDC Central America:**

The Quiché group is in the central part of Guatemala in the central highlands, and they represent a really big Indigenous population there. While there is tremendous amount of beauty in the region, there's also a tremendous amount of poverty creating disparities for people to be able to use their resources to access services.

**José Rodas, Lead Epidemiologist, CDC Central America:**

90% of the population of Quiché is Indigenous and 86% of the population is poor. Quiché has an estimate of 2,000 people living with HIV. Because HIV is a chronic disease, they need to be in treatment to reach viral suppression. They need to go frequently to these services.

**Janell Wright:**

Without that intervention, the virus continues to expand, expand, expand, and that creates the viral load inside somebody's body.

**José Rodas:**

So, we work at the local level with the Mayan authorities and the Minister of Health, and we agree to open this new center.

**Astrid Girón, Coordinator, Unidad de Atención Integral:**

We are working in all aspects, such as at the hospital level, supporting the services, giving them an educational plan about what HIV is, so that everyone is familiar with it.

**German Cuyuch, Regional HIV Projects Coordinator, SE-COMISCA:**

In terms of access to treatment, the required time has really decreased, since, on average, it took a person between 4 to 6 hours to go from the department of Quiché to Guatemala City for their treatment. Now, it only takes them an hour and a half to two hours.

**Don Juan, Indigenous Mayor of El Quiché:**

We, as authorities, see the importance of supporting the health aspect of the entire population because we believe it is very important that people are healthy of the entire population,

because we believe it is very important mentally, spiritually, physically.

**José Rodas:**

And now they have 95% of viral suppression. Retention is perfect. In the last two years, not one patient has interrupted treatment. So, everybody continued their treatment. And no deaths.

**Don Juan:**

What we want is that this unit, this center, continues to be cared for, because it really helps a lot with the pain of so many people, the suffering of so many people and as I said, because it is nearby, this is also very important so that we continue to work harder.

**Janell Wright:**

This is, you know, the first site that we’ve decentralized to a local hospital near an Indigenous population. And we hope to do that across Guatemala, using this as sort of evidence

that this is working well.

**José Rodas:**

And now the Minister of Health is willing to open 18 more sites in Guatemala based on the experience of Quiché.