



# **Global Health**

## Supply Chain Summit

[ABSTRACT # 35]

<sup>1</sup>Theophilus Faruna\*, <sup>1</sup>Kehinde Otto, <sup>1</sup>Michael Egboh, <sup>1</sup>Nelson Ekeh, <sup>1</sup>Ameh Sunday Ameh,  
<sup>1</sup>Kayode Martins, <sup>1</sup>Chinenyenwa Agbo,  
<sup>2</sup>Babatunji Odelola, <sup>2</sup>Victor Obianeri.

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# National Integrated Specimen Referral Network (NiSRN) in Nigeria: Responding to the impact of COVID-19 challenges

**Theophilus Faruna**

USAID GLOBAL HEALTH SUPPLY CHAIN PROGRAM

Procurement and Supply Management

Laboratory and Logistics Program  
Director, Nigeria



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**PEPFAR**  
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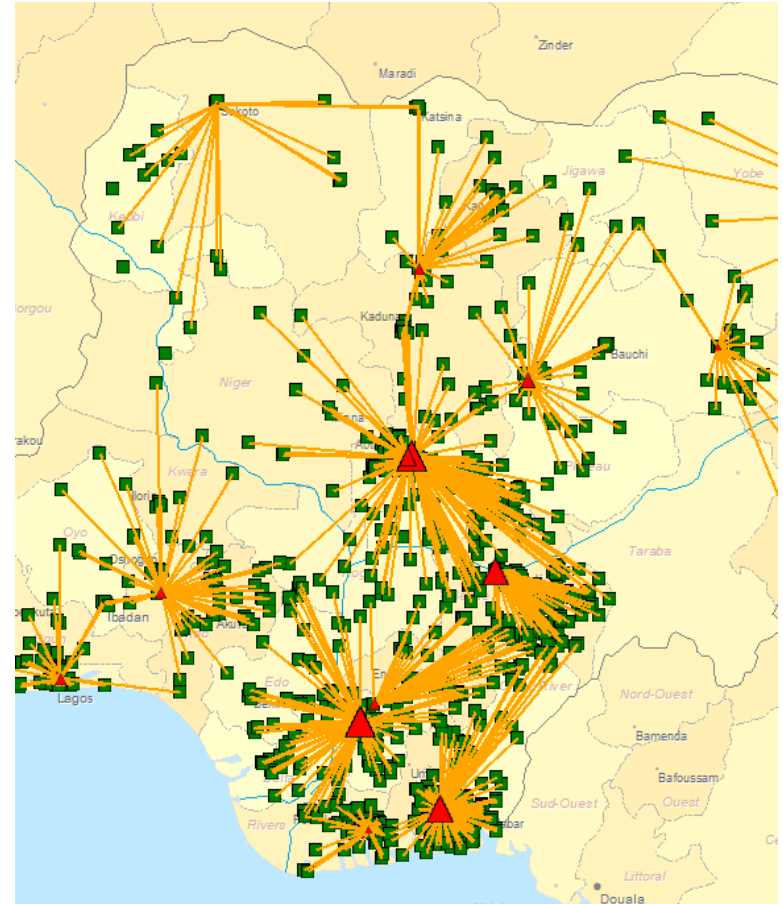
# Specimen referral through 3PL

GHSC-PSM implemented NISRN on behalf of the Nigerian government using private-sector third-party logistics (3PL) providers to transport specimens and test results to and from health facilities and testing laboratories. The program, funded through PEPFAR and the Global Fund, covers all 36 of Nigeria's states and the Federal Capital Territory.



# A nationwide program

Structured to meet the needs of more than 190 million people, NiSRN is designed to transport samples for analysis and return results to facilities so that patients can receive adequate care and treatment for HIV/AIDS and TB.



# NiSRN aims to

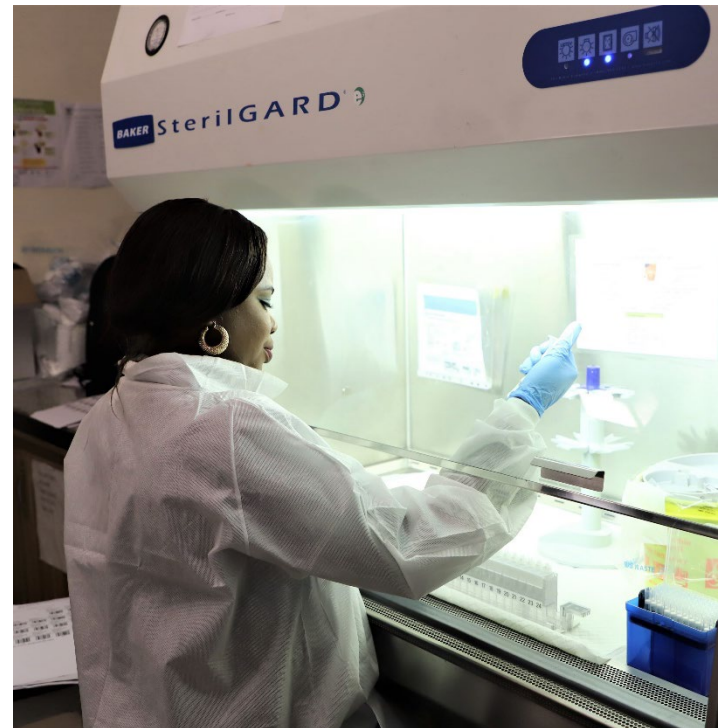
- Enhance access to clinical diagnosis
- Reduce operational costs
- Reduce turnaround time for sample analysis
- Provide secured specimen referral services



# Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on NiSRN

This study seeks to understand the impact of movement restrictions and social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic on the sample referral program in Nigeria.

Sample types include viral load, dried blood spot for early infants' diagnosis, CD4, and TB sputum samples.





## COVID-19 caused challenges for NiSRN

- Movement/travel restrictions
- Social distancing measures
- Flight suspension



The GHSC-PSM obtained written authorization from the Federal Ministry of Health and other relevant agencies, including approval for police escorts for road transportation where necessary.

- ✓ Transportation of samples then continued with less hindrance.
- ✓ Performance monitoring via phone calls ensured that sample and result pick-ups/deliveries stayed on course.

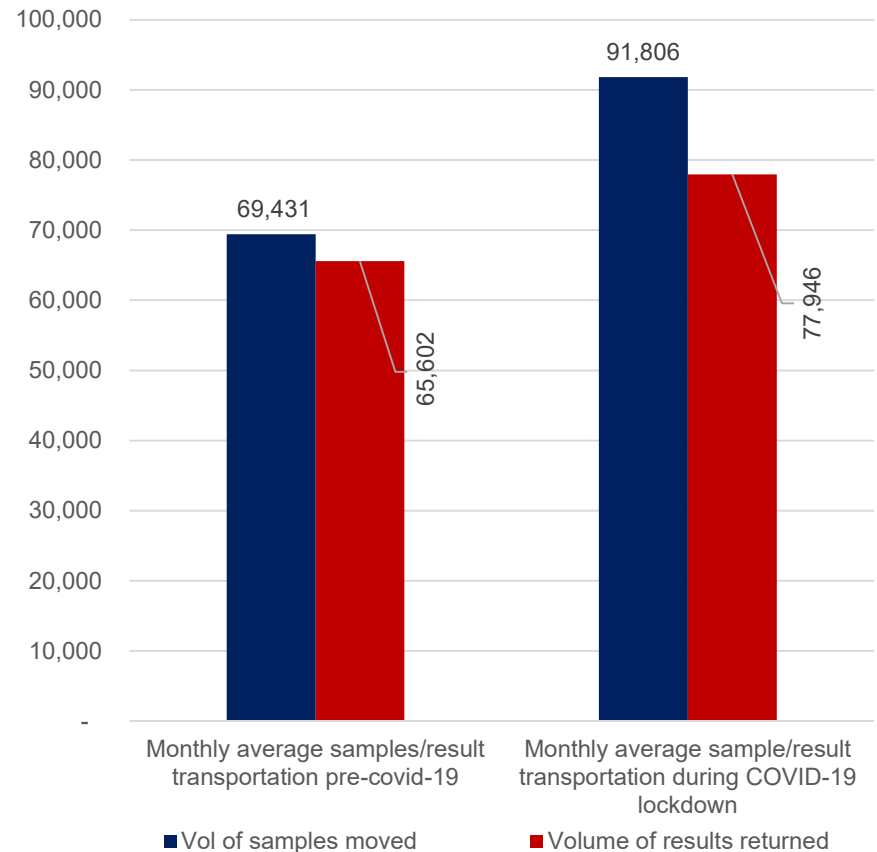


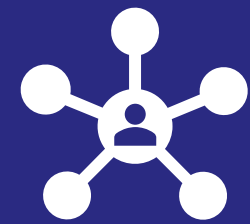


# Despite challenges, NiSRN grew under COVID-19

The number of samples and results transported during the first month of COVID-19 was still above the average number of monthly samples and results transported pre-COVID-19.

Comparison of samples and results transported pre-COVID-19 & During COVID-19 Lockdown





Sample referral programs require national government buy-in, stakeholder cooperation, and supervision to meet objectives. These collaborations made it possible to secure authorization letters from the government and police escorts to mitigate the challenge of intra/inter-state movement.

- ✓ **Constant communication** with partners and health facilities
- ✓ **Effective monitoring** of services
- ✓ **A real-time feedback mechanism** for prompt intervention
- ✓ **Performance review** with GHSC-PSM, 3PL and the NiSRN team through virtual platforms

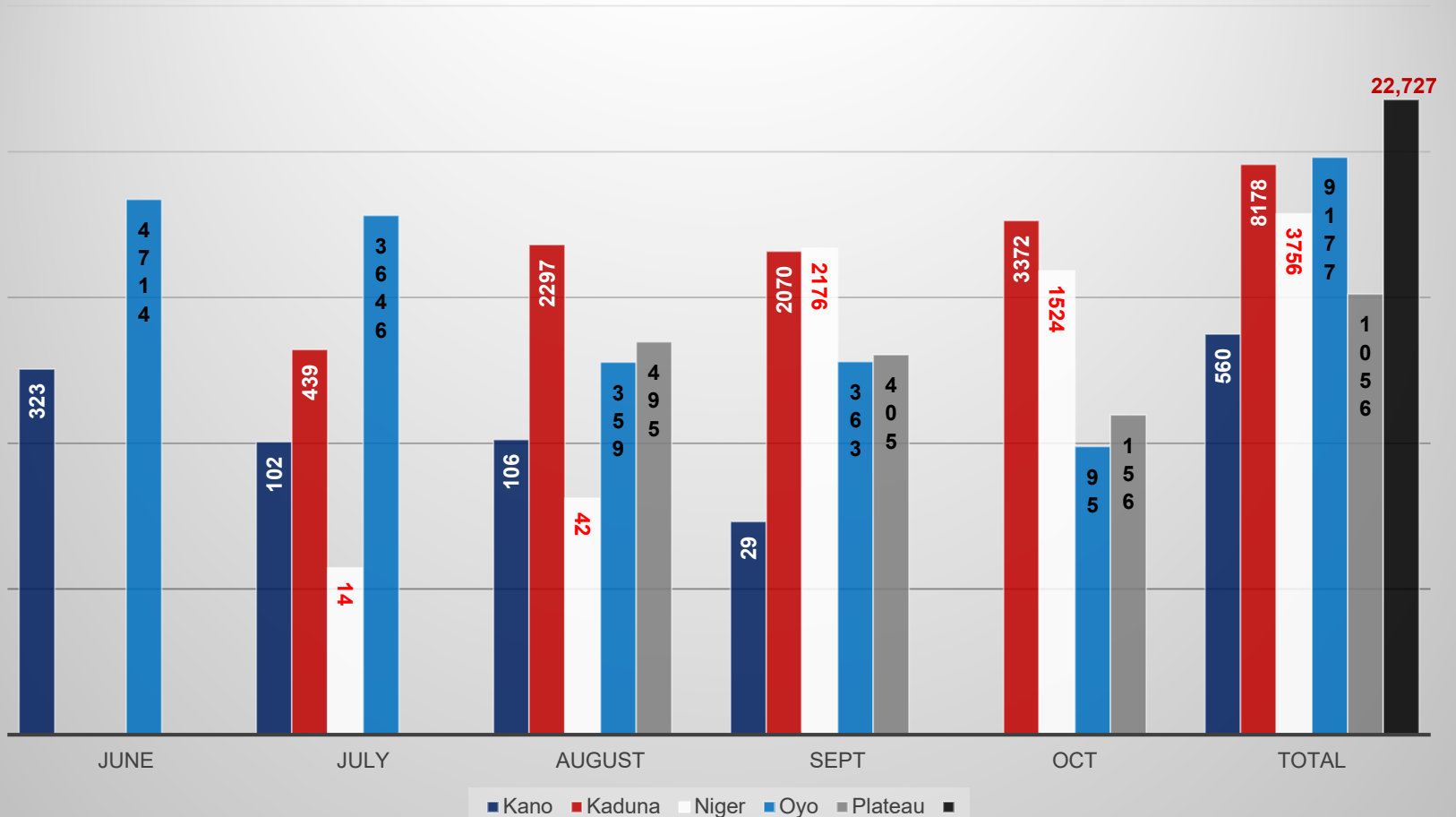
# Conclusion and next steps

Reprogramming the NiSRN strategy while working closely with the host government resulted in uninterrupted clinical sample transportation, especially using documents authorizing movement when restrictions were put into place.

The success of transporting HIV and TB specimen effectively through NiSRN mechanism necessitated the Nigeria Center for Disease Control and some states government engaging NiSRN to transport COVID-19 samples as shown in the graph on the next slide.

# NiSRN support with COVID-19 sample transportation

Total Sample Volume June-October 16th: 22,727





**Thank you!**



\*<sup>1</sup>USAID|Global Health Supply Chain Program-  
Procurement and Supply Management. Director,  
Laboratory Logistics; Theophilus Faruna;  
[tfaruna@ghsc-psm.org](mailto:tfaruna@ghsc-psm.org);

<sup>2</sup>USAID/Nigeria

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