

## Abstract

### Under Option II, Category C-54 Prevention program for general population

#### **“Be Bold Campaign” reduces stigma and increases tests and service uptake**

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#### **Background-**

Andhra-Pradesh state, India has HIV prevalence of 1.4% (0.5 million people). Despite high awareness, prevalence was rising.

**“Be-Bold”** Campaign, launched on 1<sup>st</sup>December,2006, aimed **to translate awareness into action/behavioral-change; reduce stigma; improve health service uptake by infected people; mainstream fight against HIV/AIDS by making it a people’s movement.**

*General messages in the campaign exhorted people to talk about AIDS, get tested etc and targeted messages exhorted families to accept HIV+ve members, doctors to treat HIV+ve patients, teachers to teach infected/affected children; youth to say no to negative peer pressures.*

**Be-Bold was the message; HIV tests the medium.** More tests identified more HIV+ves; got them early treatment and prevented inadvertent spreading by them; normalized the tests, thereby reducing stigma; gave better estimate of disease load for planning and resource allocation.

#### **Issues/Methods**

To improve access, HIV-testing-centers were increased from 286 to 677. Required staff recruited, trained and positioned with kits. To pre-screen people taking tests, a self-assessment questionnaire on risk-behaviors/symptoms was published in newspapers and distributed in villages. Popular leaders were got tested to inspire common people.

To treat those tested positive, capacity building of doctors was undertaken. These HIV+ve-people friendly doctors were formed into “Bold Doctors clubs”. More Care centers started. ART centers were increased from 3 to 24.

#### **Impact:**

**15,32,952 tests were done in 12 months against 13,31,952 in SIX years from 2000. Patients on ART increased from 5280, in October,2006 to 25,021 in December,2007.**

Condom usage increased, new infections declined, HIV-TB cross referrals increased. “0/7-initiative” under the campaign led to significant increase in identification and institutional delivery of +ve pregnant mothers; nevirapine administration to them and their babies. The get-together on 7<sup>th</sup>December,2007 saw 8000 PLHAs boldly converging at Hyderabad “to increase their life span”.

#### **Lessons-Learnt:**

HIV tests and access to health services help in reducing Stigma. Stigma- reduction curtails spread of HIV.