

Ashavani

July-Sept-2007



Bold Moves



It was a mission that needed relentless effort. The goals were clear-cut but tough to meet. And Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society pulled out all the stops to achieve this. Some results are visible and some are just round the corner.

The foundation has been laid, now it is our endeavour to build upon it. Build up a campaign that will serve in prevention as well as in the better management of the epidemic. Our vision is bold, our approach is realistic and based on functional experiences. It is a vision that is bound to make Andhra Pradesh a pioneer in HIV prevention and care and support.

Project Director, AP State AIDS Control Society

0/7 - A Bold Dream



What is 0/7

- ✍ No child to be born Sero positive (Zero HIV positive children) by the end of 2007 – 0/7--- ZERO by SEVEN
- ✍ A brave new concept being tried out for the first time in the world
- ✍ To ensure AIDS free next generation
- ✍ To increase the coverage of mother – baby pairs receiving Nevirapine from 48% to 100%

The number of infants infected with HIV each year through mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) is growing with the increasing number of women infected with HIV.

The 1998 findings from the Thai Short Course Zidovudine (AZT) Regimen study in Thailand and 1999 findings from the Nevirapene Field Trial in Uganda, demonstrated even simple, Inexpensive ARV regimens can substantially reduce MTCT. Recognizing that comprehensive Interventions in reduce MTCT rates by as much as half, we now have the tools to expand MTCT Prevention programs.

Preventing Parent to Child Transmission Background

Parent-to-child transmission (PPTCT) of HIV or prenatal transmission, accounts for 2.72 percent of the total HIV infection load in the country. Parent-To Child Transmission (PPTCT) of HIV can occur during pregnancy, at the time of delivery or through breastfeeding. If an HIV positive Woman becomes pregnant, there is a 25- 30% chance that the baby will also be infected. More than 27 million women including over 92,000 HIV Infected women, give birth in India every year. The number of HIV positive women is increasing, and with it, the number of babies with HIV infection. Fortunately Parent-to-Child Transmission (PTCT) can be prevented with a Combination of low-cost, short-term preventive drug treatment, safe delivery practices, Counseling and support, and safe Infant-Feeding methods.

Rationale of 0/7 campaign Mother to Child Transmission

Children account for 5-10% of HIV infection world-wide 90% of children with HIV are infected by their mothers MTCT is 21-43% (30%) 16 lakh deliveries occur in AP per annum. If we take the prevalence of HIV as 2% around 32,000 pregnant women may be positive. If we take 30% as the rate of transmission from mother to child around 9600 children may get HIV from MTCT, **without any interventions.**










Goal

To ensure that all pregnant women in Andhra Pradesh are covered under PPTCT in order to realise the dream of AIDS free next generation by bringing HIV infections through vertical transmission ideally to 0 , 0/7 programme is launched. This would be possible if all the pregnant women have access to the services & support needed to protect their children from becoming infected with HIV.



Steps By Step

-  Information of the ANCs from the DM&HO
-  Tie-up with ANMs ,AWWs, AASHA Mithras
-  Referral to the nearest BE BOLD - ANC CAMP at Sub centre level
-  All the women groups need to be told about PPTCT (ASHA mithra/DWCRA, SHGs)
-  Get the data of positive pregnant women from the ICTCs
-  Focus upon the positive pregnant women.
-  Talk about the safe measures



Strengthening ground level linkages for 0/7

Main objective of the 0/7 campaign is to cover 100% of pregnant mothers who are infected with HIV and need PPTCT services. To make this happen APSACS realized the importance of 36,000 health workers who are working in the rural areas of AP. Involving them is critical to motivate all the pregnant women to get tested for HIV and utilize the PPTCT services by all the infected pregnant women.

To make this happen in an acceptable manner it is proposed to train all these field functionaries on HIV/AIDS and PPTCT I

Training module was developed containing basics about health, disease, infection, epidemics, HIV basics, NACO protocols on testing and treatment, PPTCT program and 0/7 initiative. This module also has information on counseling centers, ART centers, PLHA networks and estimations of positive pregnant mothers of each district.

State level trainings

As the timelines were demanding and there is an urgency to conduct these programs, a state level training team was oriented on the module. From each district two district health officials were taken as state level trainers. One ADMHO (Leprosy & AIDS) and other is either DMHO/PO DTT or any other senior medical officer. These two were responsible to train the all PHC medical officers in their respective districts.

District level trainings

At district level State Level trainers trained all the medical officers of PHCs in the district. ADMHO and DMHO/Senior medical officer acted as coordinator and co-coordinator for these trainings.

Trainings at PHC level

All the trained medical officers of PHC will impart training to the health workers working under the PHC area. 1587 PHC will be covered under this program.

Strengthening the PPTCT services

With the rapid up scaling the number of PPTCT centers providing services have gone up to 580. State level PPTCT trainings were conducted with the objective of filling the perceived gaps in PPTCT service delivery, accomplish the trainings up to the sub district level through cascading method and enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the care providers regarding the various aspects of the program and program monitoring This was also in line with the zero by seven program of the state government which has as its goal of universal coverage of pregnant women by neverapine by the end of 2007 and that no HIV positive child be born in AP by end of 2007



For the quick and effective roll out of the trainings, a state level TOT was conducted at Hyderabad for master trainers, identified for the 5 zonal trainings.

UNICEF and LEPRASociety along with AP SACS conducted state level training. The training was for the purpose of creating a critical mass of trainers for zonal level trainings in a cascading manner. The training was conducted using the NACO/CDC/UNICEF modules. There was also an added emphasis on the recent advances in Pediatric HIV in view of the number of pediatricians in the audience and on the ART care in pregnant women. The other main topics included epidemiology of HIV, the 0/7 strategy, specific interventions, counseling and testing, infant feeding choices and program monitoring. In addition the trainees were updated on the adult training methodologies and the plan of action for the future trainings were presented to them.

Subsequently the zonal trainings were initiated in the 5 selected zones in the state. They included the obstetricians and other medical officers in the PPTCT. Some of these members were previously involved in the trainings and the initial establishment of the PPTCT program

These Zonal meetings were conducted at Hyderabad, Warangal, Tirupati and Visakhapatnam

Linkages with PPTCT Outreach

The concept of outreach work in AP was taken up with the view of increasing the coverage of ANC mothers, general population, reproductive age groups, positive people and people with high risk behavior and improve follow-up of positive ANCs and their families



PPTCT Out Reach Concept

PPTCT out reach programme was initiated with two objectives:

32 PPTCT Out Reach teams have been identified to carry out the PPTCT Out Reach Programmes in Andhra Pradesh in the year 2005 & 06 which are also implementing the care & support programme of the APSACS. In 2007-08 it was scaled up to 70 teams to cover the entire State. Among these, 11 Community based organizations (PLHA Networks) are exclusively implementing this programme in through out the state. The main objectives are

1. Primary prevention
2. Care & Support

In order to motivate the +Ve ANCS for the institutional deliveries, the innovative activities are being implemented like well baby shows, positive mother committees etc...

The babies are followed up to 18 months until the baby get tested , if the baby is positive then it will be referred to ART center in case the baby requires ART treatment.

Coordination between the PPTCT Centers and the PPTCT Out reach programme has been increased for the effective implementation of the 0/7 strategy.





“Well baby shows”

To encourage HIV+ve mothers to take proper care of babies born to them, *Well Baby Shows* of these children are being organized in all the districts. In these shows, babies are judged on their general health, feeding habits, nutritional status and their HIV status. APSACS has revived Seemantham a traditional practice existed in rural areas of honoring mother-to-be in her 7th month of pregnancy- to bestow confidence and a feeling of being wanted among the HIV +ve pregnant mothers with the help Out Reach NGOs.

Aims

To educate the parents about proper health, immunization and nutrition habits for their children and strengthening mothers' forum
Objectives

To establish proper habits starting in early childhood this can lead to living a healthy lifestyle during later stages.

To motivate the mothers for mother forums and sensitize new ANCs cases

To encourage the mothers for institutional deliveries and NVP Administration and bring zero sero positivity in new born infant

To promote top infant feeding and family planning among the mothers

To achieve Be Bold and 0/07 concepts

Bold mothers and Children Get-together: After conducting four shows the project is planning to take all the mothers and children and Doctors of respective hospital for picnic on 8th September 07.. This Day is meant for sharing experiences, enjoying and to bring all the beneficiaries and service providers on one platform where we can motivate ANC mothers for institutional deliveries and NVP administration and sensitize the Doctors in dealing the positives in a “be bold manners”.



ART centers in all Districts

APSACS has scaled up the ART program by starting seven more ART centers in addition to the existing 17 centers since September 2006. With this scale up now each district has one ART center .On 15th August 2007 Ms.Geetha Reddy, Hon'ble Minister inaugurated the ART center at Sanagareddy district hospital. This center will serve the PLHAs in Medak district. With this facility district hospital has comprehensive HIV related clinical services package that includes ART, VCCTC, PPTCT, Care& Support.



Be Bold Emboldens People



The effect of the month long campaign has lingered on for over 9 months now! The number of HIV tests done in the state in the 9 months from the start of the campaign is 11.34 lakhs as against 5.9 lakhs in 12 months of 2005-06!

The “Be-Bold Campaign” was launched in Andhra Pradesh by the AP State AIDS Control Society (APSACS) on December 1st, 2006, covering all areas- villages and cities- and involving all sections of people- from the Chief Minister to a poor commercial sex worker in Vijayawada. The campaign, urging people to be bold to come out and test to know their HIV status and to fight against the stigma and discrimination against AIDS patients has taken the state by storm, if the number of people who have come forward to get tested is an indicator. Over 1.25 lakh people- including Dr Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy, the Chief Minister; K. Suresh Reddy, speaker of AP Legislative Assembly; K.Rosiah, Minister for Finance and Health, 6 other cabinet ministers, floor leaders of all political parties in the house and 75 MLAs- got tested in the first month itself to know their HIV status.

The effect of the month long campaign has lingered on for over 9 months now! The number of HIV tests done in the state in the 9 months from the start of the campaign is 11.34 lakhs as against 5.9 lakhs in 12 months of 2005-06! The number of people on ART has increased from 3075 to 18,333 during this period. The number of calls to our help-line has increased to 45,058 up from 21315 in 2005-6 and 13824 in 2004-05

Over the years, many campaigns have been taken to generate awareness about HIV/AIDS among the people. Though the awareness level about the routes of the transmission of HIV etc is very high among the people, these campaigns could not bring about any major change in the behavior pattern of the people. The “Be-Bold” campaign is aimed to “**translate the awareness into action**”

The Be-Bold campaign is a complete package addressing all these issues and has general as well as targeted messages, which are non-judgmental and are positive in nature.

“Be Bold” tests on World AIDS Day:

As an exemplary act to kick-start the Be Bold Campaign, Sri K. Rosaiah, the Hon'ble Minister for Finance and HM&FW, Sri Swarajeet Sen, IPS, Director General of Police and Sri P.K.Agarwal, IAS, Principal Secretary, HM&FW took HIV test on 1st December 2006. In the same function, distribution of Anti Retroviral Treatment (ART) medicines for children and “Poshaka Aharam packets” for HIV/AIDS patients who are on ART was also launched. Asha Poshakaharm is a multi-nutrient supplement specially prepared by APSACS with the help of experts from National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad to improve the nutritional status of people on ART.

The testing part of the BeBold campaign was pre-tested on 31st October 2006 at the AP State AIDS Control Society, where 178 people including Sri G.Asok Kumar IAS, the Project Director of AP State AIDS Control Society, officials and members of partners of the AP State AIDS Control Society, Hyderabad got themselves tested to know their HIV Status.



Police Take Guard



The Police department was actively involved in the campaign. It has encouraged their personnel to test to know their HIV status during the campaign period in the 56 camps across the state. Leading from the front the DGP got tested in the state level function on December 1st, 2006. All Superintendents of Police organized these testing programs in their districts and also issued identity cards to the peer educators of sex workers, who are fanned out in the state to encourage healthy behaviors and improve condom usage among the commercial sex workers.

Mega event with People living with HIV/AIDS on 7th December and “Hyderabad Declaration”:

On 7th December, 2006 an event with 3800 people infected with HIV/AIDS was organized at “Shilparamam” in Hyderabad to express solidarity to the people living with HIV/AIDS. *This is considered as one of the largest gatherings of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHAs) organized so far in the world.* During this meet, a “**Hyderabad Declaration**” was signed by the President of Telugu Network of people living with HIV/AIDS (TNP+) and Mr.G.Asok Kumar, PD, AP State AIDS Control Society and other partners reiterating commitment towards, prevention, control, treatment, care and support for the HIV/AIDS. The positive network persons have pledged to ensure that they would NOT spread the virus and would behave responsibly. PLHAs gathered from all the 23 districts of the state expressed solidarity in their fight against HIV/AIDS and spent a whole day happily singing and dancing. Part games and competitions were organized for them. After the event, Ms Rema, one PLWHA from Guntur said “We went back from the meeting adding 5 more years to our sinking life, because of the tremendous psychological boost we got in the meeting.”



February 14, 2007 Valentine's Day Program

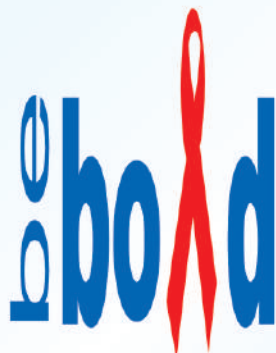
When the world was celebrating the Valentine's day on 14th February, 2007; APSACS organized get-togethers of HIV+ve couples-- some of them discordant couples (couples in which only one is HIV +ve) -- in Hyderabad, Guntur, Vijayawada and Vizakhapatnam. They were appreciated by celebrity couples --like Rajasekhar and Jeevita the film star couple and Mrs and Mr Pullele Gopichand the badminton couple -for being bold to stay together and supporting each other at the time of crisis. They felt that the laser show organized at the Lumbini Laserium exclusively for the HIV+ve kids and the moon-light dinner for these couples on the "Bhageerathi" boat at Hussain Sagar lake on that day were very touching. The message was bold and clear true love is not just exchanging flowers and rides on bike... true love is to be bold to be with the spouse in distress, when one needs the other most.

Bold Steps



to talk about HIV/AIDS
to know your HIV status
to get tested & accept the result
to change lifestyle accordingly
to call 1097 for more information

Families
Doctors
Teachers
Students
Youth



to take care of HIV +ve members
to treat HIV +ve people
to admit HIV +ve children in schools/colleges
to accept HIV +ve peers as friends
to say no to -ve peer pressures



\Bold doctors club:

As a part of this initiative, "BOLD DOCTORS Clubs" are formed in all districts. These clubs have as members, those bold doctors who are willing to treat and care for HIV+ve people. These doctors are given training to handle HIV +ve patients, to conduct deliveries and surgeries etc; and all necessary protective gadgets required for their treatment. The Project Director has conducted extensive meetings with officials of IMA, APNA(AP Private Nursing Homes Association), FOGSI etc in this regard.

Blood Revolution



Andhra Pradesh is one of the six high prevalent states of HIV/AIDS in the country. In the absence of a medical preventive vaccine, prevention is the only solution to safeguard the large section of uninfected population. One of the key prevention strategies is to ensure availability of sufficient quantity of safe blood in order to prevent transmission through unsafe blood transfusion. The Project Director is designated as the nodal officer for the State Blood Transfusion Council vide the Go RT No1243 dated 9-09-07 to monitor the functioning of all the Blood Banks in the State. New guidelines have been formulated for renewing the licence of blood banks and the data is made available in the website www.apsacs.org.

New guidelines

- ◆ The trust should submit the last 5 years audit report certified by the CA.
- ◆ The trust should submit documentary proof that they are financially sound enough to run the blood bank.
- ◆ Self declaration by the trust members (president and secretary) stating that there are no pending trial cases in the court of law against them. They should not be convicted earlier under any criminal laws.
- ◆ All the blood banks should have computer with internet connectivity to upload the blood status to APSACS website.
- ◆ Should be registered with Charity Commissioner and Register of Cooperative societies under the Co-op. Societies Act. for at least last five years
- ◆ The trust should not be a family trust
- ◆ The trust deed and the activities undertaken by the trust should showcase social accountability
- ◆ The aims and objectives of the trust or NGO must be furnished
- ◆ The institution must be run on no profit and no loss basis.

Preparing 'em for tomorrow

Adolescence Education Programme

India today stands at the crossroads in its battle against HIV. Risk of HIV infection is one of the major problems facing young people today. HIV/AIDS affect young people disproportionately. Despite evidence that nearly half of new infections are occurring among young people, there is still a belief that young people are not at risk to acquire HIV infection. Young People's vulnerability is closely connected to their experience of growing up, lack of knowledge and ever increasing influence of mass media on them. Risk factors are increased due to lack of information on how to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS. It is necessary that young people are motivated to adopt Healthy life styles. Data shows that every year 2 million young people (20 lakh) students pass out of the school Education system. In view of this a National Action plan for HIV prevention education was developed, of which a key element is to cover 100% of all secondary and senior secondary schools under Adolescence Education Programme (AEP).

AEP aims at preventing new HIV infections, reducing vulnerability to the infection and influencing positive behavior development. AEP in the state is implemented by Dept of Education in close collaboration with APSACS. The Programme ensures that the students in classes 9 to 12th have adequate and accurate knowledge about HIV/ AIDS and are equipped with suitable life skills to lead a responsible & healthy life style.

Red Ribbon Clubs

As part of the programme an initiative taken up to establish Red Ribbon Clubs (RRCs) in every school & college was a major success. Presently there are 15000 RRCs formed in schools/colleges (11000 in schools and 4000 in colleges). In every educational institute 20-25 students are enrolled as members of RRC (no restriction about the membership) and this year 10 members from each RRC would be trained as Peer Educators using the modules developed by NACO/MHRD/UNICEF. These Peer Educators from RRCs inturn will take up intensive awareness activities among their peers in schools and in the immediate community on the issues related HIV/AIDS and Healthy Life Styles. Similarly, focus would also be on formation of RRCs in schools/colleges where they are not formed especially in the Private Institutions.



Shri G. Asok Kumar, I.A.S. Project Director, AP State AIDS Control Society has received the award as best cooperative organisation in spreading the critical awareness pertaining to HIV/AIDS for the year 2006-07 from Hon'ble Minister for Labour, Shri G. Vinod. Sensitization on HIV/AIDS is considered as one of the important programmes of the Central Board of Worker's Education,

- The refresher training programmes for the nodal teachers is scheduled from 24th 28th Oct in each district across the state. It is estimated to cover nearly 32,320 nodal teachers from 16194 high schools in the state.
- The 16 hour AEP session schedule to be conducted in the class rooms by the nodal teachers is planned from 12-17th Nov 07 in the state. Prior to this PTA meetings and sensitization meetings for the other teachers is schedule on 2nd and 3rd Nov at School level under the leadership of Nodal teachers and the RRC members.
- The Peer Education training for the RRC members by the nodal teachers is scheduled for 5-7th Nov in all schools.

Major Events

The 13th Governing Body Meeting of the Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society, Hyderabad was held on 18th July 2007, at 10.30 A.M. in the Conference hall of Dept. of Health, Medical and Family Welfare.

- Principal Secy & President, Governing Body, APSACS appreciated the efforts made in providing services for prevention and control of HIV/AIDS in the state.
- Resolved to encourage Bold Doctors who become members of the Be Bold Doctor's Club and also Health care institutions as "Be Bold Institutions" and provide incentives to the best performing doctors.
- Resolved to start care and support centres in 23 district hospitals converting 50% of the Leprosy wards into HIV/AIDS care and support wards during 2007.
- Principal Secy, HM & FW, advised to workout what is required to be done district wise to make the STD clinics functional otherwise commission an agency and they can go to each centre and assess what to be done to make the STD clinics function and active in Government sector. (Action- APSACS)
- Resolved to start 7 more new ART Centres on 15th August 2007. Principal Secretary, HM & FW, advised to invite Chief Justice of AP High Court, to inaugurate the centres.



Supporting Industry Response to HIV/AIDS

The worldwide fight against HIV/AIDS has been most effective in countries that have confronted the epidemic as a challenge to society as a whole, rather than treating it as the problem of small, marginalized populations. With substantial resources and extensive reach, Indian industry can play a significant role in addressing HIV/AIDS. Some corporations in India have begun to understand this and respond by initiating programs for the prevention and care of

HIV/AIDS affected populations. Still more needs to be done to fight the disease in India.

Population Services International (PSI), an NGO with considerable experience in harnessing the potential of the private sector to address health issues, with financial support from United States Agency for International Development (USAID), launched 'CONNECT' a project aimed at mobilizing public-private partnerships (PPP) to address HIV/AIDS in coastal Andhra Pradesh. Other prominent partners implementing the project include the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Y. R. Gaitonde Center for AIDS Research and Education (YRGCARE) and the Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT). The International Labour Organization (ILO) is technical support partner on the project. The project also enjoys considerable support from Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society (APSACS).

A key focus of the project is to mobilize and support companies to implement HIV/AIDS training programs for their own staff as well as to develop a HIV/AIDS work-place policy for their workforce.



Major Events



The Global Fund's South and West Asia Cluster in Geneva organized a regional meeting on “ Partnerships, Performance Based Funding” held from 28th to 31st August 2007 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The focus of the meeting was to equip the Country Coordinating Mechanism(CCM) leadership, key Principal Recipient Managers and stakeholders to increase the effectiveness of the CCM, and their conformity to The Global Fund requirements. It was also aimed to discuss implementation of partnerships, harmonization and Performance Based Funding. It was a training workshop which helped participants develop better understanding of Global Fund Processes, requirements and principles. It provided an opportunity to discuss issues relating to CCM, performance based grant management, procurement quality assurance, M&E and disbursements. Shri G.Asok Kumar, I.A.S. Project Director, APSACS attended this training workshop representing India.



'Test Drive'

Unique Motorcycle Rally to promote HIV/AIDS Testing

Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society (APSACS) in association with Heroes Project, the largest nongovernmental public service campaign on HIV/AIDS in India, and TVS Motors, India's third largest two-wheeler manufacturer, organised a unique Motor Cycle Rally to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS in the city on the 9th of September, 2007. Inaugurated by Ms. P. Lakshmi - Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, the event witnessed the presence of well-known celebrities Jackie Shroff, Kamal Kamaraju, Subbaraju and sports persons.

The Honourable Minister welcomed this move by APSACS and encouraged those assembled to get tested. To further boost the drive, she took test herself tested on stage.

The event was held along the picturesque Tank Bund and Necklace Road. Festooned with balloons and banners, the 10 km stretch came alive and reverberated with the cheering of the crowds. The Honourable Minister flagged off the rally and the celebrities, including the APSACS PD, drove around the lake encouraging more and more people to participate in the initiative. +



The theme presented on the Independence Day Tableau on 15th August this year projected 0/7 and Be Bold campaign through live models on the float, who are the original beneficiaries of Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission (PPTCT) programme. The child born to HIV positive couple is protected from HIV transmission at birth through PPTCT programme.