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Research Alliance to Combat HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS prevention news stories

Expert Decries Nigeria’s HIV/Aids Rate from allafrica.com

Lagos — National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) has said Nigeria recorded more than 280,000 HIV and AIDS-related deaths in 2008. Director-General of NACA, Dr John Idoko, told newsmen in Lokoja, Kogi State, that more than 350,000 fresh cases were also recorded in the country during the period.

Idoko, who spoke during a courtesy call on Governor Ibrahim Idris, said the development had made the country to emerge as the second most burdened in the world after South Africa. He said the current HIV and AIDS prevalence rate of 5.1 per cent in Kogi had made the state very important to NACA, considering that the figure was higher than the 4.6 per cent national average. Idoko said the prevalence rate might have been influenced by the fact that Kogi shared boundaries with other high prevalence rate states, such as Benue and Nasarawa, as well as the Federal Capital Territory.

He noted that Kogi State had many junction towns, a position which might have contributed to the increasing number of HIV and AIDS cases in the state. He said Nigerians within the age bracket of 20 to 24 years remained the most vulnerable in respect of the condition and stressed the need for more funds for NACA and state agencies to curb the menace. Idoko said only 15 states and the FCT had converted their HIV and AIDS committees to full-fledged agencies and urged other states to follow suit in order to benefit from the special grants set aside by the World Bank to contain the situation. He also urged state governors to prevail on all the 774 local governments in the country to be part of the funding of NACA and SACA activities.

The director-general appealed to the governor to assist NACA in its desire to establish a youth-friendly centre within the campus of Kogi State University, Ayingba. He also called for adequate funding of the Kogi State Agency for the Control of HIV and AIDS (KOSACA) to help in the control of the spread of tuberculosis and malaria attacks. Responding, Idris said local governments had an important role to play in the funding and eradication of HIV and AIDS. He promised that the state government would soon build a youth-friendly centre and provide a new office and other facilities for the agency.

Uganda: HIV Testing, Counseling Goes to Bars from allafrica.com

Kampala — IT was not the usual Sunday for the patrons of Group Four malwa (millet beer) joint in Namate, Division B, Entebbe Municipality. They went through counselling and voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.

Speaking at the awareness campaign, Arthur Namara, the principal director of HealthNet, Uganda, said: "There is now a community HIV/AIDS testing kit that takes only 20 minutes and you get your results. This is the first screening which is followed by the statpack, a confirmatory test. And the final one is the tie-breaker in case of discrepancies which is done by unigold."

Eyebrows were raised when two grass-thatched drinking shades were converted into testing and counseling rooms. Namara said unlike women, men did not want to go to health centres for testing. He added that they had no choice but to go to the community. That evening, 44 people were tested. To crown the event, boxes of condoms were distributed to the members of the drinking joint.

HealthNet Uganda is a local NGO that collaborates with TASO, the Uganda Virus Research Institute and any other agency dealing with HIV/AIDS. The NGO also trains counsellors. Daniel Bakaki, the general chairman of Group Four malwa joint, thanked HealthNet for making them the pioneers of the campaign. "We now know facts about the disease which we did not know. Our 120 members, their families and friends are going to benefit from this knowledge we have got today." Bakaki advised other drinking groups to think of development, growth and their wellbeing.

Godfrey Agutoko the coordinator of Café Scientific, the project behind the campaign, said their association, in collaboration with members of a drinking joint, identify a topic and call professionals or a specialist to discuss it for the patrons of the bar free of charge.

To access the article online, go to http://allafrica.com/stories/200908240597.html

To access the article online, go to http://allafrica.com/stories/200908240294.html
Bd and PEPFAR Collaboration Will Improve Blood-Drawing Practices in Hospitals and Clinics in Sub-Saharan Africa from prnewswire.com

FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J., Aug. 11 /PRNewswire/ -- BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), a leading global medical technology company, and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) today announced a joint initiative to help protect health workers and patients in African countries by improving blood collection safety in clinics and hospitals.

In recent years, safer blood collection has become more critical than ever in sub-Saharan nations and other developing countries severely impacted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Access to HIV treatment in developing countries has significantly increased in recent years, which in turn has greatly expanded the quantity of blood drawing for HIV screening and monitoring tests. "Doctors, nurses and other health workers in countries with high infectious disease prevalence face a constant risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other diseases in their work environment. In particular, blood drawing and other procedures involving blood and sharp devices must be done as safely as possible to protect health workers," said Gary Cohen, Executive Vice President, BD. "Far too few clinicians are currently available to support health needs in sub-Saharan Africa, and all efforts to improve procedures and protect health workers will serve to strengthen fragile health systems in developing countries. BD is very pleased to collaborate with PEPFAR on this essential initiative."

The three-year initiative -- which may be extended up to two additional years -- is scheduled to begin in October in Kenya and expand to include up to four additional PEPFAR-supported countries. It will ultimately support in-service training for as many as 10,000 healthcare workers. When fully implemented, the monitoring component of the initiative aims to track as many as two million blood draws within each participating country.

"A critical role of international development partners such as PEPFAR is to develop and support national leadership," said Ambassador Eric Goosby, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator. "PEPFAR is proud to partner with BD in health systems strengthening and health worker capacity-building for safe blood collection. Efforts like these build the capacity of partner countries, support the scale up of proven HIV interventions, and ultimately help create a sustainable response to HIV/AIDS."

The program will help hospital and clinical personnel improve their blood-drawing procedures and specimen handling, processes that are critical to the proper management of HIV/AIDS patients. The initiative will also work to control exposure to the virus among health workers by providing post-exposure prophylaxis. In addition, the program will help prevent needlestick injuries by establishing or enhancing needle stick injury surveillance. These monitoring measures can identify practices that pose risks to health workers and patients.

According to the International Health Care Worker Safety Center at the University of Virginia, injuries from needles filled with blood present a far higher risk of spreading disease than needles used for injections.

Reflecting PEPFAR's focus on empowering developing nations in the battle against HIV/AIDS, Ministries of Health in participating countries will take the lead in developing individualized policies, guidelines and standard operating procedures for blood drawing and specimen handling. The safe blood collection initiative announced today will be implemented by PEPFAR through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As part of their collaboration, PEPFAR and BD will work on the ground with Ministries of Health, national reference laboratories and various implementing partners.

BD and PEPFAR are also collaborating on two other programs aimed at improving the healthcare systems of sub-Saharan Africa:

- In October 2007, BD and PEPFAR launched a five-year initiative to improve the quality of laboratories in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- In October 2008, BD, PEPFAR and the International Council of Nurses announced a three-year, public-private partnership to establish a new Wellness Centre for Healthcare Workers(R) in Kampala, Uganda.

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About PEPFAR
The U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was launched in 2003 to combat global HIV/AIDS, and is the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in history. Under PEPFAR, the U.S. Government has already committed more than $25 billion to the fight against global HIV/AIDS. As of September 30, 2008, PEPFAR supported life-saving antiretroviral treatment for more than 2.1 million men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS, compassionate care for more than 10 million people affected by HIV/AIDS, including more than 4 million orphans and vulnerable children, and prevention of mother-to-child transmission programs that allowed nearly 240,000 babies to be born HIV-free. For more information, please visit www.PEPFAR.gov.

About BD
BD is a leading global medical technology company that develops, manufactures and sells medical devices, instrument systems and reagents. The Company is dedicated to improving people’s health throughout the world. BD is focused on improving drug delivery, enhancing the quality and speed of diagnosing infectious diseases and cancers, and advancing research, discovery and production of new drugs and vaccines. BD’s capabilities are instrumental in combating many of the world’s most pressing diseases. Founded in 1897 and headquartered in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, BD employs approximately 28,000 people in approximately 50 countries throughout the world. The Company serves healthcare institutions, life science researchers, clinical laboratories, the pharmaceutical industry and the general public. For more information, please visit www.bd.com.


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REACH is a collaborative program of Northwestern University and the University of Ibadan with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. REACH aims to improve HIV/AIDS prevention strategies in Nigeria through social science and community-based research.