



PLAN URGENCE AMERICAIN

PEPtalk

News you can use
from PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire

No. 11, July 2010

Ambassador's Corner

How time flies! I will be leaving Abidjan at the end of July and will take with me many wonderful memories of my three years in Côte d'Ivoire. The smiles of the PEPFAR team members and images of the projects you implement will be among the most prominent. I vividly recall the first PEPFAR program I attended: World AIDS Day in Man, in 2007, and how impressed I was with the enthusiasm of the PEPFAR staff and our partners.



The PEPFAR program has faced – and overcome – numerous challenges, some related to working with a transitional government, others related to the shift from PEPFAR I to PEPFAR II, and still others related to frequent personnel changes. Despite the challenges, the PEPFAR program has been a huge success, and the statistics provide ample proof: We've educated hundreds of thousands about HIV/AIDS, found support for women and children who had nowhere to turn, and provided life-saving drugs to mothers and fathers who've been able to watch their children grow up because the PEPFAR program exists.

None of this would have happened without the generosity of the American people. We must never forget that it is their tax dollars that pay for the PEPFAR program. They want people around the world to know that *America cares* – and that is why it has been so important to me for the PEPFAR team to do its utmost to work as one team with one mission. This incredibly gifted team has already made history with its innovative approach to integrated management despite the difficulties and unusual challenges that involves. But the race is not yet won. Please don't give up. I know you can do it. But no matter what happens, I will always be proud to have had the opportunity to work with such a fabulous group. Best wishes to each and every one of you.

Wanda L. Nesbitt
U.S. Ambassador

More on the HIV/AIDS response:

www.mlsida.gouv.ci

<http://abidjan.usembassy.gov/pepfar.html>

Taking an interest In HIV care, caring attention can be missing link

Her grandmother did what she could to feed and clothe Stephanie, a double orphan by age 6. What the young girl missed, looking back, was the attentive discipline of a mother and father.

"I had the impression that my comings and goings didn't interest anyone," she recalls. "Whether I come home late or not, whether I have questionable associates or not, she never said a word. It was the same with the rest of the family. Nobody really paid me much attention."

Left to her own devices, Stephanie followed friends to bars and eventually started having sex for money. In January 2009, she met a sex-worker peer educator who talked to her about HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and invited her to the Bethesda Clinic in nearby Abengourou, eastern Côte d'Ivoire. The clinic, run by the local NGO GBH-CI, is one of 13 clinics providing HIV prevention and care ser-

Success Story

vices for highly vulnerable populations, with support from PEPFAR partner Family Health International. Last year, the clinics provided HIV services for 656 women and 43 men.

With counseling, 20-year-old Stephanie was tested for HIV and soon started antiretroviral treatment. Peer support, including home visits, helped her to survive her initial depression and begin living positively.

"Today I face life with a lot more optimism," she says. "I'm convinced that with the support and care I get from the clinic staff, things will be OK."

"In addition to care, the team listens to me, takes an interest in my little life, and gives me advice. I even received an impregnated bed net (for malaria prevention) and tablets to purify the water I drink. Just between you and me, it's one of the first times in my life that I've received gifts without having to give myself in return."



Stephanie is grateful for her bed net, clean water, ARV drugs, and the gift of caring attention.

COP, GHI, PHE, FP, etc.: News from PEPFAR HQ

The PEPFAR annual meeting in May, which this year did not include implementing partners, provided some updates and insights from Washington. Here are a few highlights:

* **COP 2011**: Due at headquarters Oct. 15. Stay tuned. ...

* **GHI**: The \$63 billion, six-year Global Health Initiative is an opportunity to be creative in addressing broader health issues by building on PEPFAR's achievements in HIV/AIDS. In Côte d'Ivoire, with little U.S. assistance beyond PEPFAR, the GHI does not mean new funding but rather a clear challenge: How can we program HIV/AIDS funds to strengthen systems that can also address maternal and child health, family planning and reproductive health, nutrition, TB, malaria, etc.? Put on your thinking caps. ...

* **PHEs**: PEPFAR is taking a long look at how it plans and approves public health evaluations. Changes will aim to support research that can move forward rapidly but is still coordinated to maximize resources and results.

* **Burning issues**:

- **Health systems strengthening, sustainability, country ownership**: These are the heart of PEPFAR 2 and its Partnership Frameworks. Country ownership must involve shared planning, budgeting, monitoring, and accountability. Civil society

must be part of the dialogue and can help hold authorities and donors accountable for the national response.

- **Treatment scale-up**: The era of rapidly growing PEPFAR budgets is over. How can countries continue to support additional ART patients? National plans and effective coordination of all donor efforts are needed to ensure that scale-up can continue. PEPFAR wants to be part of the solution.

- **Prevention**: Focus on high-impact interventions targeted to populations most likely to benefit from them. PMTCT is a priority. An essential ingredient for any intervention: evidence that it works. An unevaluated program is not worth implementing.

- **FP**: New guidance on family planning is forthcoming. Meanwhile, be creative in finding ways to integrate HIV and family-planning services.

- **Pediatric HIV**: Attack it head-on. We have tools – PMTCT, early infant diagnosis, Men as Partners, infant-feeding counseling, community mobilization. How do we make them work together more effectively?

* Overall, new **U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Eric Goosby's message** was clear: PEPFAR and GHI are the greatest opportunities we will have in our lifetimes to creatively search for solutions, to try new methodologies and strategies, to learn about what works, and to make a lasting impact on the health of entire countries.

Partner Profile

Who: Tulane University

Project Director: William E. Bertrand

What: With PEPFAR support, Tulane University will work with the National Institute for Statistics and Applied Economics (ENSEA) and other Ivoirian institutions to build national capacities in strategic information, management, and leadership. Activities designed to improve data use for planning will focus on training and on strengthening geographic information systems and data visualization capacities. Tulane will also help assess the feasibility of developing master's-level training in evaluation in Côte d'Ivoire and will deliver tools and training in leadership and management.

When: Started in April 2010

Where: ENSEA and other institutions

How to Contact: webertrand@gmail.com or Kady Weingart, (001) 504-865-5240, klamb@tulane.edu

TB course expands training for francophone lab staff

A French-language training course in laboratory diagnostic testing of TB was rolled out this year in Abidjan, the first developed by the American Society of Microbiology (ASM) in partnership with PEPFAR.

The course on culture, identification, and drug susceptibility testing is part of an effort by the ASM's International Laboratory Capacity Building Program (LabCap), with CDC support, to expand training opportunities for French- and Portuguese-speaking laboratory personnel.

Staff from the National TB Program (PNLT) and Abidjan labs CDC/Retro-CI, Institut Pasteur (IPCI), and CeDRes helped prepare and facilitate the course, which was presented at IPCI. As a result of this participatory process, Ivoirians will now be able to implement this type of training in Côte d'Ivoire and neighboring countries.

"The ASM approach to customizing and implementing training for microbiologists who work in Africa ensures country ownership and sustainability," says IPCI Director Mireille Dosso.

LabCap is working with the CDC to develop a French-language course focusing on acid-fast bacilli (AFB) microscopy external quality assurance (EQA), which will be rolled out in Dakar, Senegal, in August 2010.



Equipped for nutrition: Twenty-one social welfare centers throughout the country are better-equipped to detect, help correct, and prevent malnutrition as a result of equipment and materials donated by PEPFAR partner IYCN / PATH.

Via the National Nutrition Program and the National Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Program, social centers in May received scales, height gauges, tape measures, equipment for cooking demonstrations, refrigerators, gas stoves, and educational materials for social workers and parents. Government social centers are the hub of the national strategy for decentralized OVC care. PATH provides technical assistance in nutrition to national programs, including training to help social-center staff identify malnourished children and refer them for care.

The World Food Program is also using PEPFAR funds to buy anthropometric materials, which will be distributed to PMTCT and ART sites in conjunction with training of service providers.



PEPFAR 'Champions': Eight "future champions" (shown above) in the fight against HIV/AIDS are headed to the University of California at Berkeley in June as part of a PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire program to build capacity in strategic information.

The eight, selected by a panel that included the Ivoirian ministries of AIDS and of Health, will take summer courses in epidemi-

ology, statistics, monitoring and evaluation, and research methodologies tailored to developing countries. The four top performers will be offered a chance to study for a master's degree in public health. The program is administered by the National Institutes of Health Fogarty International Center.

Girls take the field: An all-female soccer-based campaign promoting HIV prevention.

Two posters feature girls in action urging their peers (ages 12-16) to choose abstinence to protect against HIV and unwanted pregnancy. The posters also feature Clementine Touré, coach of the national women's soccer team and of peer educators in CCP's Sports for Life program. In conjunction with the World Cup, CCP is conducting a series of mass media and community-based activities promoting HIV prevention and testing.

Life stories: *It's My Life (C'est Ca Ma Vie)*, JHU/CCP's radio diaries of two people living with HIV, is hitting the airwaves again, this time on nationwide Radio ONUCI FM. In 12 episodes, Mathurin Gué and Khady Tiao tell their life stories – this time in Dioula (for Khady) as well as French.

15 years: Centre Solidarité Action Social, a local NGO and PEPFAR sub-partner based in Bouake, recently celebrated its 15th anniversary. Launched in 1995 to provide psychosocial support to people living with HIV/AIDS, Centre SAS has grown to include a broad range of facility- and community-based HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment services, with a particular emphasis on pediatric HIV.

News in Brief

New resource: Want to learn about cervical cancer prevention? TB? Data quality? You'll find a great new source of free, up-to-date technical information at the online Global Health eLearning Center. The Web site, developed

by the USAID Bureau of Global Health, offers 41 easy-to-follow courses in English that can be completed in one to two hours and/or downloaded and printed. The site combines technical content with program principles, best practices, and case studies. Check it out at www.globalhealthlearning.org.

U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston visited the St. Therese de L'Enfant Jesus Health Center in Abidjan, which receives PEPFAR support to improve the health of women living with HIV and ensure that their babies have the best chance to begin life free of the virus.



Ivoirian Minister of Health Dr. Aka Aouele joined U.S. Ambassador Wanda Nesbitt and other notables to visit with volunteers donating blood during an International Blood Donor Day celebration in Abidjan led by the Centre National de la Transfusion Sanguine (CNTS) with PEPFAR support. Blood donor clubs braved heavy rain to begin the event with a parade, followed by music, speeches, and awards.

Comings & Stayings



Dr. Billy Doroux Aristide, new facilities-based activities coordinator



Diby Lucien, new driver



Amehou Georges Roland, new project manager



Yeo Gohoua, new lab technician



Zoukou Stephan, new project manager



Toyo Julien, new project manager



Koffi Thierry, new administrative assistant

Contribute to PEPtalk!

Do you have a news item, a story idea, a good photo? An insightful commentary on an important issue? Share it. Send it to us at peptalk@ci.cdc.gov.

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