

AHF *in* INDIA



FACTS (UNAIDS/WHO, 2008)

Country Population	1.2 billion
Persons living with HIV/AIDS	2.4 million
Persons receiving ART	158,000

1 AHF Site:

India Cares Center of Excellence, New Delhi

Patients on ART:	Total patients in care:
372	790

BACKGROUND

At 0.3%, the adult HIV prevalence rate in India is low but due to its large population, India is behind only South Africa and Nigeria in terms of the actual number of people living with HIV (UNAIDS, 2008). However, according to the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), the governmental body set up to handle India's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, large numbers of cases still go unreported.

The first cases of HIV in India were reported in 1987. Initially the epidemic spread rapidly among injecting drug users (IDU) but by the 1990s, it was apparent that HIV had spread to the general population of India. Most infections occur through heterosexual sex but 'high-risk groups' such as men who have sex with men (MSM), truck drivers, sex workers, and migrant workers are at higher risk of infection. The worst affected states in India are:

Andra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tamil Nadu.

In 1992, the government set up NACO, which adopted the National AIDS Prevention and Control Policy in 2001. Due to the vast number of languages and dialects spoken throughout India, HIV/AIDS education and prevention messages are most effective when carried out at the state and local levels. With guidance from NACO, each state carries out a local plan through its own AIDS Prevention and Control Society.

Recent HIV prevention efforts in India have focused on condom promotion and testing. According to NACO, by the end of 2005, there were 873 voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) centers in India. However, according to UNAIDS, in 2007 there were still only 137 reported sites

providing antiretroviral therapy (ART). Less than 15% of those in need are receiving antiretroviral drugs (ARVs). In the same year, 64,000 pregnant women living with HIV needed ARVs for prevention of mother-to-child prevention (PMTCT) but only 14% received it.



Client receives HIV testing during AHF's World AIDS Day 2008 Mass Testing Initiative

AHF's GLOBAL PROGRAM SINCE 2004

AHF India Cares was established in 2004 with a commitment to forming partnerships with local NGOs and government AIDS agencies and to providing lifesaving ART services for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA). In the past five years, AHF India Cares has emerged as a leading HIV/AIDS organization in India, known for its delivery of high quality treatment and support services, and for its successful leadership in advocacy efforts. As a result of AHF's campaigns calling for affordable ARVs and for the availability of government-funded second line treatment, Cipla, the world's largest generic AIDS drug producer, lowered its prices by 20%. The Indian government also recently announced that it is moving towards providing second line treatment.

AHF's ART Center of Excellence in New Delhi provides holistic services for HIV positive people, including HIV/AIDS treatment, counseling, testing, patient education, psychosocial support, and

pediatric treatment. AHF India Cares continues to strengthen existing linkages and build on community outreach activities.

In 2004, AHF developed the "HIV Medic" program, an innovative response to the shortage of healthcare workers in resource-constrained settings. Through this 12-week intensive program, laypeople are trained to become paraprofessional extenders of treatment who provide basic triage and intensive adherence support, and assist in the provision of ART. The HIV Medics are thus able to take on some of the clinical, counseling and administrative responsibilities from nurses and doctors so that the clinical team is able to care for and treat larger numbers of patients in less time. Piloted in Uganda, AHF brought this WHO-cited "best practice" task-shifting program to India in 2008 and will conduct a second HIV Medics training outside of New Delhi.



Clients wait to receive testing services from the AHF India Cares mobile testing van

AHF India Cares has also been a pioneer in testing and developed a model community HIV testing initiative with support from Boeing India. AHF's mobile unit provides HIV testing, treatment, care, and support services and establishes referral and follow-up mechanisms to scale-up ART delivery. For AHF's Mass Testing Initiative, which was launched to mobilize and bring together large numbers of people in order to provide HIV testing, AHF India Cares and its partners performed 30,246 HIV tests at events organized around World AIDS Day 2008, and provided treatment referrals to those who tested positive (3.33%).

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