



HIV/AIDS AND TUBERCULOSIS



As more funds and more medicines become available in the global fight against HIV/AIDS, a major gap remains in the number of skilled health care workers needed to mobilize prevention and treatment. Health worker shortages are especially dire in sub-Saharan Africa, where AIDS threatens to overwhelm national health systems. A

resurgence of tuberculosis, a common HIV co-infection, worsens the situation in developing countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland and Tanzania.

In these and other counties, IntraHealth collaborates with health sector leaders and communities to increase access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care services. We assist countries in long-term workforce planning and policy development to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic, as well as in strengthening the performance of health care providers in HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and related services. Our key approaches include:

Scaling-Up Access to Primary-Level HIV/AIDS Services

IntraHealth builds local capacity to deliver comprehensive HIV/AIDS services at the primary care level. These efforts include supporting community-based services for people living with HIV/AIDS; assisting ministries of health to develop and revise national HIV/AIDS policies and service guidelines; and offering standardized HIV/AIDS clinical training programs.

In Rwanda, IntraHealth leads a major initiative to provide HIV/AIDS clinical services in rural health centers. As part of this program we instituted an approach to provide antiretroviral therapy (ART) in remote areas through mobile physicians who travel to rural health centers. Since October 2005, these visiting doctors have reached almost 10,000 HIV-positive clients with ART and other HIV/AIDS services. When off-site, the physicians mentor ART nurses via mobile phone. In Ethiopia, IntraHealth is supporting the largest single roll-out of ART in Africa, a program that will reach 500 health facilities across the country. We have launched or strengthened HIV counseling and testing programs in several African countries, including Ethiopia, Namibia, Rwanda, Southern Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia.

Scaling-Up Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV Services

IntraHealth leads major initiatives in Ethiopia and Rwanda to prevent the mother-to-child transmission of HIV. These programs screen and counsel pregnant women and provide highly-active ART for HIV-positive clients; test and counsel couples; and, after delivery, follow HIV-exposed infants and offer healthy-baby support. We also strive to keep at-risk women and their families connected to ongoing HIV treatment services. In Rwanda, the program has substantially increased the involvement of male partners, with 78% now agreeing to HIV testing.

Designing Strategies to Rapidly Recruit and Deploy Health Workers

IntraHealth has worked with the governments of Kenya and Tanzania to fast-track the hiring of health workers to increase access to ART and

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The people and government of the United States have supported this health-promoting work via the funding and technical partnership of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

IntraHealth International mobilizes local talent to create sustainable and accessible health care in developing countries. A not-for-profit organization, IntraHealth has worked in more than 50 countries over the last three decades.

other HIV/AIDS services. Doubling the speed with which the Kenyan Ministry of Health could hire, the Emergency Hiring Plan quickly recruited and trained 830 health workers and deployed them to underserved rural areas. Early data show that the improved services are handling continuing increases in clients. In Tanzania, 176 health workers are being deployed to accelerate ART services in 19 districts that serve disadvantaged communities. This program will now work with district leaders to develop long-term solutions to recruitment and retention problems.

Expanding Groups of HIV/AIDS Health Workers

Where nurses and doctors are in short supply, IntraHealth assists countries to enable different kinds of providers to deliver HIV/AIDS services. In Lesotho, for example, we helped revive a training program for nursing assistants to provide a wide range of services with an emphasis on HIV. In Ethiopia, we trained community-based health extension workers to advocate for PMTCT services through community conversations, house-to-house message delivery and client referrals. In Southern Sudan, we are supporting the Sudan People's Liberation Army's HIV/AIDS Secretariat to train military personnel to be effective HIV/AIDS trainers, counselors and peer educators. The program distributed more than 400,000 male condoms during its first year of implementation.

Supporting People Living with HIV/AIDS

As an offshoot of its PMTCT work in Ethiopia, IntraHealth created a successful Mothers' Support Group program for mothers living with HIV. Led by HIV-positive mother mentors, these self-facilitated groups meet to discuss how to disclose

their HIV status to partners, adhere to ART and keep their babies healthy. Almost 800 women are enrolled in the groups, which are active at 34 health facilities. The groups have been especially powerful in helping women to regain hope after discovering their HIV status and to deal with the pain and isolation that can result from stigma related to AIDS. IntraHealth addresses issues of stigma and discrimination in all its HIV/AIDS activities. One project, in Central America, focuses on this issue by training the faculty of regional health professional schools on preventing HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination.

Facilitating TB Prevention, Treatment and Care

IntraHealth is training private-sector health care workers in Ethiopia to provide HIV and TB prevention and care services directly at worksites. The aim is to facilitate early diagnosis, continuity of care and higher prevention and treatment rates.

Strengthening National and Regional Organizations and Systems

IntraHealth mobilizes in-country organizations to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In Namibia, for example, we are strengthening the HR management of two faith-based organizations and an NGO that provide HIV/AIDS services. We helped form and support the Southern Africa Human Capacity Development Coalition, which is assisting three African organizations working in high HIV-prevalence countries to improve health worker training, share best practices and track human resource needs. These regional organizations will then build the capacity of small, indigenous organizations through sub-grants. In four other sub-Saharan African countries, we are strengthening HR information systems and local leaders' ability to use the data for effective HR planning and management decisions.