



January 2008 NEWSLETTER

# The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

A MONTHLY UPDATE ON THE U.S. COMMITMENT  
TO TURN THE TIDE AGAINST GLOBAL HIV/AIDS

## A Father and Son's Story of Antiretroviral Treatment and Love in Côte d'Ivoire



Kevin Kouassi, son of a canton chief in rural Côte d'Ivoire, was 32 and living in Abidjan when the fevers started, followed by diarrhea, typhoid, and anemia. Within months, his weight dropped to 114 pounds, and he moved back to his family's village.

His story might have ended there, but for a wise and caring father's advice: Get tested for HIV.

Kevin received HIV counseling and testing at the Centre NDA in Dimbokro, where the nurse providing post-test counseling asked Kevin to identify someone to whom he could disclose his HIV-positive status. With some trepidation, Kevin chose his father.

"I wondered how he would react. Would he reject me?" Kevin recalls. "When I told him, he said, 'You're my son, and I'm not going to reject you because of an illness.' ... From then on, I became more confident. My father accompanied me to all my appointments, he monitored that I took my medications, he paid for my prescriptions."

Kevin started antiretroviral treatment (ART) at Centre NDA, becoming one of 34,900 patients in Côte d'Ivoire receiving ART with direct support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/ PEPFAR) as of September 2007. After 15 months, Kevin is free of opportunistic infections, and his weight has rebounded to 140 pounds.

Eight months ago, when Centre NDA was looking for someone to provide support to newly identified HIV-positive clients and help find HIV/AIDS patients "lost to follow-up," Kevin volunteered. He now works full-time, with a monthly stipend, to find, counsel, and accompany HIV/AIDS patients, and he's helped establish an association of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Kevin's message, based on his own experience, is that being tested is the first step toward transforming HIV/AIDS from a death sentence into a positive life. Citing his father's life-saving role, he urges families to support those with HIV/AIDS to enable them to enjoy their right to a normal life, to work, to a family of their own, to hope for a better tomorrow. "My wish," he says, "is that everyone's parents be like my father."



Photo by Côte d'Ivoire PEPFAR Team

Counselor Kevin Kouassi, right, says antiretroviral treatment and his father's support saved his life.

### *Inside This Edition:*

Journalist Training Workshop Conducted  
in Botswana **P. 2**

Tourism Public-Private Partnership Hosts  
Benefit Concert in Zambia **P. 3**

New Guidelines Released to Address Health  
Worker Shortage **P. 3**

## Journalist Training Workshop Conducted In Botswana



With support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/ PEPFAR), a workshop for newspaper and broadcast journalists was conducted in Botswana in conjunction with World AIDS Day, December 1, 2007. The goals of the workshop were to enhance the quality of HIV/AIDS reporting and to create opportunities for journalists to engage with HIV/AIDS stakeholders in Botswana.

Botswana President Festus Mogae gave the keynote address at the workshop. During his remarks, President Mogae spoke of the need for Botswana to consider all prevention options in order to stage a comprehensive response against new HIV infections.

During the workshop, presentations were given by government and non-government stakeholders, as well as people living with HIV/AIDS.

Journalists also took part in a live video conference on the power of global partnerships with Dr. Tom Kenyon, PEPFAR's Principal Deputy Coordinator and Chief Medical Officer, and Dr. Luke Nkinsi, African Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Partnerships (ACHAP) Board Chairman. The video conference took place at the U.S. Embassy in Gaborone with Dr. Kenyon participating from Washington, D.C., and Dr. Nkinsi calling from Seattle, Washington.

One objective of the workshop was to produce an



Photo by Botswana PEPFAR Team

In a keynote address to journalists, President Festus Mogae spoke of the need for Botswana to consider all prevention options in order to stage a comprehensive response against new infections.

eight-page newspaper supplement with stories written by the journalists from themes gathered at the two-day workshop.

More than 100,000 copies of the supplement were printed and distributed for readers in all major Botswana newspapers on World AIDS Day and over the following week.

## Ambassador Canavan Discusses World AIDS Day



Recently, U.S. Ambassador to Botswana Katherine H. Canavan participated in "Ask the Ambassador" -- an online interactive forum in which you can submit questions to U.S. Ambassadors around the world. Ambassador Canavan discussed World AIDS Day and U.S.-Botswana bilateral relations.

A transcript of this discussion is available online at: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/ask/96235.htm>.



Photo by Botswana PEPFAR Team

Journalists gather at the U.S. Embassy in Gaborone for an interactive video conference with Dr. Tom Kenyon, PEPFAR's Principal Deputy Coordinator and Chief Medical Officer, on the power of global partnerships. Also on the line was ACHAP Board Chairman Dr. Luke Nkinsi.

## Zambia Tourism Public-Private Partnership Hosts Benefit Concert



Vice President of Zambia, Honorable Rupiah Banda, and U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission, Michael Koplowsky, recently kicked off an HIV/AIDS benefit concert at Maramba Stadium, featuring a line-up of dynamic artists and music fused with HIV/AIDS-related messages. Concert-goers were encouraged to learn their HIV status by taking advantage of voluntary HIV counseling and testing services.

The concert, supported by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR), was a novel initiative in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Livingstone, a world-famous tourist attraction with one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in Zambia. The concert was the second in a series of high-profile events organized through the Tourism HIV/AIDS Public-Private Partnership. A concert at the Sun Hotels International in June 2007 drew over 3,000 people. Concert-goers at both events had access to mobile counseling and testing services, HIV information booths, and educational materials.

In the weeks leading up to the Maramba concert, talent shows were conducted to identify and promote local musicians. Winners from throughout Zambia competed for slots in an international competition on the morning of the concert, which featured well-known artists Amayenge, Rare Roses, Winston, Haamoba, and Matthew Ngosa. Organizers also conducted a series of events to raise community awareness



Photo by Zambia PEPFAR Team

Musicians perform at a benefit concert hosted by the Zambia Tourism HIV/AIDS Public-Private Partnership in Livingstone, Zambia. Concert-goers were encouraged to learn their HIV status by taking advantage of voluntary HIV counseling and testing services.

about HIV/AIDS through radio, drama, and mobile video shows.

Additional information regarding the Zambia Tourism HIV/AIDS Public-Private Partnership is available online at: <http://www.pepfar.gov/c23652.htm>.

## New Guidelines Released to Address Health Worker Shortage



Recently, national health ministers, public health leaders and HIV/AIDS experts convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for the first-ever international conference on task shifting to scale up access to HIV/AIDS treatment and, at the same time, expand the global health workforce.

Task shifting is a process whereby tasks are assigned to less specialized health workers to free up the time of doctors and nurses, rapidly expanding the number of health workers and making more efficient use of current human resources in the face of severe shortages.

The conference opened with the presentation of new World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines to assist countries to implement task shifting. These new guidelines have been developed through a collaboration among WHO, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR) and UNAIDS, and are based on evidence from experience and detailed program evaluations in countries where

task shifting is already being implemented.

At least 57 countries – most of them in Africa – are facing crippling health worker shortages. WHO estimates that more than four million additional health workers are needed to fill the gap globally. Over the past few years, a number of countries, including Ethiopia, Haiti, Malawi and Uganda, have made progress implementing the task shifting approach. Ethiopia, for example, created new health worker cadres and accelerated pre-service training of a number of cadres.

During the three-day conference, more than 350 participants, including Ministers of Health, people living with HIV/AIDS, representatives of UN agencies, health professional associations, non-governmental organizations and international partners discussed what is needed to implement the new guidelines, as well as share experience and data.

The guidelines are available at: [http://www.who.int/healthsystems/task\\_shifting/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/healthsystems/task_shifting/en/index.html).