

# Global Strategies for HIV Prevention *Newsletter*



Number 1

January 2000

## **Second International Conference on Global Strategies for the Prevention of HIV Transmission from Mothers to Infants**

**Montreal, September 1-6, 1999**

- Our hopes for true international participation at our conference were realized. The majority of speakers presenting important advances in HIV prevention were from developing countries. Over 700 health care workers representing 42 different countries attended. Scholarships were granted to more than 200 individuals from around the world .

- We were pleased to provide special recognition awards to the research team that led the Ugandan nevirapine study demonstrating a 50% reduction in HIV transmission to infants; to Dr. Kenneth Bridbord, from the Fogarty International Center for his leadership in HIV education and training; to Dr. John Sullivan for his advocacy in pursuing economic and effective preventive treatments; and to Countess Albina du Boisrouvray, who has established homes for HIV orphans in India, Africa and South America. At the conclusion of the conference there was a true sense of working together and a spirit of encouragement that progress could be made in HIV prevention throughout the world.

- We held nine workshops on such topics as: Breast Feeding and Nutrition, HIV/AIDS Orphans, Economics of Prevention Strategies, HIV Counseling and Testing.

- We would like to thank the many sponsors and co-sponsors who contributed to the conference: The International AIDS Society, AmfAR, Centers for Disease Control, National Institutes of Health, Fogarty International Center, Francois Xavier Bagnoud Foundation, Harvard AIDS Institute, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, Josiah Macy Foundation, March of Dimes, New York Academy of Sciences, UNAIDS and our corporate sponsor, Glaxo Wellcome. The NIH Office of AIDS Research was an essential collaborator in sponsoring both our 1997 and 1999 conferences.

### ***Call To Action***

The exciting news that a drug called nevirapine decreased HIV transmission by 50% and is affordable for developing countries led to a Call to Action by Global Strategies for HIV Prevention. We were joined by the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation and the International AIDS Society in raising the initial sum of more than a million dollars to prevent mother to child transmission worldwide.

This Call to Action announcement was made at the opening session of the Second International Conference on Global Strategies for the Prevention of Transmission from Mothers to Infants. Incredibly, the drug is given as a single dose to the mother at labor and delivery and to the infant at birth. The cost for both doses is less than \$4 making the cost of prevention within the reach of most developing countries. For the first time there is an affordable treatment which could save as many as 300,000 infant lives each year. For other countries a full course of treatment with AZT, coupled with formula feeding for those who can afford it, may further reduce HIV transmission. Global Strategies for HIV Prevention will facilitate programs to implement all forms of HIV prevention. The financial response from our friends and donors has been encouraging. \$4 to save the life of an infant has caught the attention of many.

## ***East Africa Education and Training Workshop Held in Kenya***

**Nairobi, June 1-6, 1999**

- We have just completed an exciting follow-up visit to 84 of the 130 participants who attended our education and training workshop for community-based health care workers. Participants represented all the provinces of Kenya and some areas of Tanzania and Uganda.
- During 39 site visits, workshop participants reported on their progress in the implementation of action plans developed during the workshop sessions.

### **East African Education and Training Workshop (continued)**

- Many workshop participants have already started training community members in the management of programs for the prevention of HIV transmission. Networks are being formed among community groups and HIV/AIDS orphans are receiving education.
- Our thanks to the NIH Office of AIDS Research and the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation for their generosity in funding this workshop.
- Unsolicited donations to Global Strategies for HIV Prevention from individuals, inspired by news of this project, are being used to help HIV orphans and widows learn income generating skills. Among these have been funds to buy sewing machines to teach orphans how to make and sell clothing and the gift of a cow for milk to provide nourishment and support of local orphan children. Donors also support the local training workshops by providing participant meals, transportation and writing materials.

*Donors participating in this spontaneous, grass-roots effort receive photographs and will be kept informed about the progress of "their own" projects.*

### **China: Congressional Briefing**

After 18 years of research on HIV transmission, we know how to prevent HIV infection. If prevention programs were rapidly established, China could be the first developing country to avert a major HIV epidemic. It would be tragic if we did not apply this knowledge to avert a major new epidemic in a country as large as China with a population of 1.4 billion people.

- Global Strategies for HIV Prevention joined with Congressman James McDermott, Chairman of the House International Committee on HIV/AIDS, to focus attention on the need to assist China in their prevention efforts.
- We brought three scientists from the Chinese National Academy to present the current status of HIV/AIDS in China to a Congressional briefing and arranged with the scientists to meet with key directors of the National Institutes of Health, and the Fogarty International Center.
- Over the months that followed the briefing, significant progress has been observed between Chinese and US scientists as well as the beginning of increased availability of funding for research.
- We funded a technician in an HIV laboratory at the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine to help advance critical research in China.

### **India 2000**

With a population that now equals 1 billion, India has become the nation with the largest total number of HIV infections. We provided financial support for the India 2000 Conference in Chennai (Madras) to develop programs to prevent HIV transmission from mothers to infants. Chennai is in the State of Tamil Nadu in Southern India where most HIV infections occur.

## Future Plans

Over the next 12 months additional emphasis will be placed on:

•**Developing Model Programs for HIV Prevention:** Evaluate and refine programs for the prevention of HIV transmission to infants so that they can be used to train health care workers in HIV counseling, testing and primary HIV prevention.

•**HIV/AIDS Orphans:** Ninety five percent of the 11.2 million AIDS orphans are in sub-Saharan Africa. Children under 12 are forced into the roles of parents and deprived of educational opportunities. They are also at serious risk of economic exploitation and HIV infection, often by having to resort to survival prostitution in the absence of any support.

*Our special thanks to our donors. Your generosity has been overwhelming. With your financial support we have been able to respond quickly to these urgent needs. Our overhead costs are less than 5%.. (No funding is used for salaries or travel for officers or directors.)*

Arthur J. Ammann MD President

Natasha L Martin FIMLS Research Program Director



## Donations

Tax exempt donations may be sent to :

Global Strategies for HIV Prevention

104 Dominican Drive

San Rafael, California 94901

## Mission

Global Strategies for HIV Prevention is a new 501 (c) (3) organization whose mission is to implement international strategies to prevent HIV infection by means of strategic alliances with individuals and groups who share in a compassion for alleviating the suffering of children.