

## .Calendar.

### XXXVIII<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Council on AIDS (ACA)

2:30pm 14 December 2001

### VIII<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AIDS Prevention and Care Committee (APCC)

6pm 24 January 2002

### XXIV<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific Committee on AIDS (SCA)

2:30pm 17 January 2002

### VII<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CPA)

2:30pm 7 February 2002

## World AIDS Campaign 2001


MEMBERS should have received a calendar listing all major World AIDS Campaign 2001 activities of government and non-governmental organisations in Hong Kong. As in the previous years, the Council's *AIDS Prevention and Care Committee* has been coordinating the events organised in commemoration of the yearly World AIDS Campaign. The leaflet is produced by Red Ribbon Centre.

On 1 December (World AIDS Day), the CCTV would be broadcasting the Red Ribbon Concert recorded on the first day

of the First China AIDS and STD Conference (see page 56), featuring artists from Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In Hong Kong, the Council Chairman shall be officiating at the launching of 27802211.com (see page 54 for details) in Tseung

Kwan O on World AIDS Day. Other activities range from fund raising events, concert, quilt exhibition, drama, safer sex campaign.... to name a few.

And, let's not forget the theme of the year's World AIDS Campaign - *I care, do you?* If there are friends, relatives and colleagues who have not yet been sensitised to the issue of AIDS, may be this is the right opportunity to ensure that they *care*. 

## Highlights of this issue:


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Dr Homer Tso, the Council Chairman, at the Opening Ceremony of the First China AIDS and STD Conference in Beijing on 13 November. On his left was Dr CW Chan from the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE) of the University of Hong Kong. Full report on page 56.

**Advisory Council on AIDS website**  
**www.aca-hk.com**


## HKCASO Dinner

AT the invitation of the Hong Kong Coalition of AIDS Service Organisations (HKCASO), the Chairman (Dr Homer Tso) and two members of the Advisory Council on AIDS (Dr Patrick Li and Dr Richard Tan) joined the HKCASO's dinner on 21 November 2001. 

## Launching New Website

DR Homer Tso, the Council

chairman, and Ms Christine Fang, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, will be officiating at the launching of a new website on World AIDS Day to promote HIV awareness in young people, especially the surfers (remember the website address, which is identical to the AIDS Hotline number- www.27802211.com)

Young people is one of the priority areas for HIV prevention activities, as suggested in the consultancy report commissioned by the Advisory Council on AIDS in 1998. 



# Strategy Development - what next


THE current term of office of the Advisory Council on AIDS (1999 - 2002) is drawing to a close in the middle of the year 2002. One of the remaining tasks of the Council is the recommendations of new strategies for the coming years. The Council Chairman, in association with the three committee chairmen, are working closely on a draft paper for the discussion of the Council at its coming meeting in December.

Members would remember that the process of strategy development has undergone changes in the last decade. In 1990, the Council produced a technical medium term plan in a format proposed by the World Health Organisation. In 1994, the *Strategies for AIDS Prevention, Care and Control in Hong Kong* was published, which still serves as the blueprint of policy principles as advised by the Council to this day. In 1998, the Council commissioned a review conducted by an internal group (people in the programme) and an external consultancy group comprising four overseas experts. This led to the publication of the current strategies for 1999 to 2001.

The development of the new strategies has been a continuous process since the beginning of the current term of office of the Council. In the last two years, the AIDS Prevention and Care Committee has been formulating its recommended strategies for different communities and settings. The Committee for Promoting Acceptance of People living with HIV/AIDS has, likewise, published its recommended strategies to counter discrimination and promote acceptance. Finally, the Scientific committee on AIDS has continued to develop technical guidelines on HIV prevention and clinical management. We shall not forget also the report produced by the Community Planning Committee, which had recommended a list of prioritised activities on HIV prevention and care.

The development of the new strategies is therefore a natural extension of the work that has already been taking place in the last couple of years. To carry forward, the Council and committee chairmen are analysing the current strategies developed by the different fora, and considering how

these could be consolidated to support a common direction for the AIDS programmes for the next (say, five) years. They are also taking reference of the local and global HIV situation, the progress with the previous strategies, gaps and accomplishments in the current programmes, international development, as well as scientific advances in the last years.

What would be the impact of the new strategies? Members are aware that this is not an official government policy but a set of recommendations which could favourably guide the development of the HIV programmes in Hong Kong. As stressed during the review in 1998, the HIV/AIDS programmes in Hong Kong is taken to mean the collective efforts of the Government, the community and the academic on all aspects of HIV prevention, care and control. The efforts of the Council, through the three committees, the task forces, and the interaction with the community would help develop a common vision for the collective HIV programmes in Hong Kong. 



## New Quarterly statistics on HIV/AIDS

ON 24 November 2001, the Department of Health released its updated statistics on reported HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong. In the third


quarter of the year (July to September 2001), 57 cases of HIV infections were reported, bringing the cumulative total to 1693, of which 544 have progressed to AIDS.

A majority of the newly reported infections were transmitted through sexual contacts - 33 heterosexual and 13 homo or bisexual. Three were related to injection drug use and one was the result of perinatal infection. The male-to-female ratio of the new infections was 2.2 to 1.

Twenty AIDS cases were reported in the same quarter. The commonest AIDS-defining illness was *Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia*, followed by tuberculosis.

HIV/AIDS reporting is a voluntary system maintained by the

Department of Health. The HIV/AIDS surveillance mechanism is operated by the Department's Special Preventive Programme, comprising the following four components - voluntary HIV/AIDS reporting, seroprevalence studies, STD surveillance and behavioural surveillance.

HIV/AIDS reports are released by the Department of Health every three months. For the third quarter of the year, Dr KH Wong, Senior Medical Officer of the Special Preventive Programme, presented the results to the media at a press meeting at the Red Ribbon Centre. The data can also be viewed at the AIDS website (Virtual AIDS Office) [www.aids.gov.hk](http://www.aids.gov.hk), and is published in the Quarterly STD/AIDS Update bulletin. 

### Reported HIV/AIDS Statistics updated 30 September 2001

		HIV		AIDS	
		total	last quarter	total	last quarter
<b>Gender</b>	male	1386	39	476	16
	female	307	18	68	4
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Chinese	1167	36	422	18
	non-Chinese	526	21	122	2
<b>Transmission</b>	heterosexual	966	33	358	18
	homosexual	326	11	94	0
	bisexual	80	1	28	1
	injecting drug use	43	3	9	0
	blood/b products	68	0	19	0
	perinatal	14	1	6	0
	undetermined	196	8	30	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1693</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>20</b>

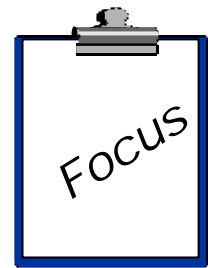
**NOTE:**

The "total" refers to the cumulative total number reported since 1984, under the voluntary HIV/AIDS Reporting System. "Last quarter" refers to the period July to September 2001. The "AIDS" number is a subset of the "HIV numbers" and the two should not be added.

**SOURCE:**

Special Preventive Programme, Department of Health, Hong Kong SAR Government

# BACK FROM BEIJING.....



**Dr Homer Tso, Council Chairman and Dr SS Lee, Secretary, were at the First China AIDS and STD Conference in Beijing between 13 and 16 November 2001. The following report is provided by our anonymous ACA Newsfile Reporter, which of course does not reflect the official views of the Council.**

AIDS conferences are often unique events different from scientific meetings or medical symposia. The first national AIDS conference in Beijing is no exception. While the 600-plus-page abstract book (very much like the yellow pages) reminds us of the calibre of scientific research and epidemiological studies conducted in the Mainland, the audience was perhaps more impressed by the atmosphere of the Conference and the attitude of participants towards HIV/AIDS.

The size of the audience was unexpected. The Organisers were initially planning to receive a few hundred participants. It turned out that over 1800 had registered. The media subsequently estimated that there were over 2500. The Hall (at the Beijing International Conference Centre) was full at least 15 minutes before the Plenary started each morning. Participants were serious and attentive. Presentations given in Putonghua were particularly popular though simultaneous interpretation was available. There was active discussion, and in some cases, heated debates. At one Satellite Meeting on clinical management, clinicians raised that they're seeing more and more patients falling sick. They were willing to offer

treatment but there was the limitation because of the high cost incurred, the lack of capacity, and the unwillingness of some health professionals to take care of people living with HIV/AIDS. All these sounded too familiar to somebody from Hong Kong - our painful experience of convincing the health profession and the public to accept people living with HIV/AIDS, even today.

The openness of the atmosphere was remarkable. More people talked about "how" and "when", more than "why". There seemed to be no hesitation in acknowledging the rising magnitude



of the AIDS problem in the country. This was perhaps not surprising as a substantial proportion of the participants had come from the disease control sector (anti-epidemic stations) where health professionals were managing new diagnosis of HIV infections on a regular basis. Quite a number of sessions were devoted to discussion on interventions. Condom promotion was no longer a taboo. A huge dummy condom was actually in the Conference Hall during the Opening Ceremony, which was attended by high-ranking officials from the health and other sectors. People talked about harm reduction and the use of methadone for HIV prevention. The question is

really when that would become a main part of the HIV prevention programmes in the Mainland.

Participants and speakers repeatedly referred the audience to the strategic plan proposed by the Ministry of Health for the next five years. The long-awaited political commitment did seem to have finally arrived, though there's still a grain of uncertainty as the highest ranking officials have not yet openly expressed their concern about the infections. This atmosphere of political commitment and openness was already enviable (or admirable) in the eyes of the people working on AIDS in Hong Kong!

The Conference has given a good opportunity for the Council chairman and secretary to network old friends and establish new contacts. They were at the concert in the evening of the first day, which featured Miriam Yeung, the UNAIDS Hong Kong Ambassador and another Hong Kong artist 古巨基, the latter being appointed by the Ministry of Health as a 宣傳員. The fostering of loving care for people living with HIV/AIDS has become a main theme for the country's publicity campaign. At a special feedback seminar, the work of the caring health professionals at the Beijing You An Hospital was openly commended by Government officials, and is becoming a key learning point for the capital city!

What next? Would the Conference become a regular event. It seems so and there're rumours that the next National Conference would be held in 2003. Would you be there? 