

## . Calendar .

**XXXIXth Meeting of the Advisory Council on AIDS (ACA)**

2:30pm 22 March 2002

**IXth Meeting of the AIDS Prevention and Care Committee (APCC)**

6pm 6 June 2002

**XXVth Meeting of the Scientific Committee on AIDS (SCA)**

to be advised

**VIIIth Meeting of the Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CPA)**

to be advised

## Highlights of this issue:

- \* Council News on page 11 and 12
- \* HIV situation updates on page 13
- \* **Youth Action on AIDS Funding Scheme** on page 14

## What next?

THE months of January and February 2002 were busy time for the Secretariat of the Advisory Council on AIDS. To stimulate discussions on the draft HIV strategies (refer to previous issues of *ACA Newsfile*), four meetings had provided the forum to exchange views on the document - respective meetings of the three committees of the Advisory Council on AIDS, and an Open Forum. Over ten written responses have been received from individuals and agencies working on or are interested in HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong. These inputs were collated by the Secretariat for the synthesis of the chairmen of the Council and the committees, who met after the Chinese New Year holidays.

What is the next step? The views collected in the last two months are being translated into revisions in the strategy document, which would be examined by the full Council again at its upcoming meeting on 22 March 2002. The confirmed version would then serve as the blue print of the collective approach of Hong Kong's AIDS programmes for the coming five years. ⌘

## World TB Day

ARE you aware that **World TB Day** falls on the 24 March each year. The dual epidemic of TB (tuberculosis) and HIV is one of the priority health problem confronted by the human race.

The theme of this year's World TB Day is "Stop TB, Fight Poverty". Members may want to visit the Home Page of World TB Day for facts and figures, and what is happening this year on World TB Day. ⌘

[www.stoptb.org/world.tb.day/WTBD\\_2002](http://www.stoptb.org/world.tb.day/WTBD_2002)



Mrs Diana Wong, chairperson of the ACA's AIDS Prevention and Care Committee, with one of the three winners of the Best Project Award at the Prize Presentation Ceremony of Youth Action on AIDS Funding Scheme for year 2001.

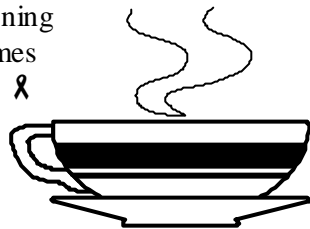
## Council News

# Implications of a legal case

At the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the *Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People Living with HIV/AIDS* (CPA) held on the 7 February 2002, selected social and legal issues relating to HIV/AIDS were raised and discussed. One of the subjects was criminalisation and HIV testing. Its importance was illustrated by a recent case conviction in Scotland, involving the use of molecular biology technique to prove the linkage of one person to another whom he had had sex with. Members had active discussions on this case and how it might be relevant to our situation. The implications on confidentiality, HIV counselling, and molecular biology research were debated. At the same meeting, members were updated on the survey of health insurance industry and the development of health insurance policy. Last but not the least, members concluded the Richland Garden's case that had attracted considerable media attention recently. ⌘

## Task Force Meeting

THE *Task Force on Drug Users* of the AIDS Prevention and Care Committee met on 18 February 2002. There was active discussion on the development of Advisory Council on AIDS' recommended strategies for the next five years, progress of activities coordinated by the Task Force, and the positioning of harm reduction in programmes on drug abuse in Hong Kong. ⌘



Visit ACA @  
[www.aca-hk.com](http://www.aca-hk.com)

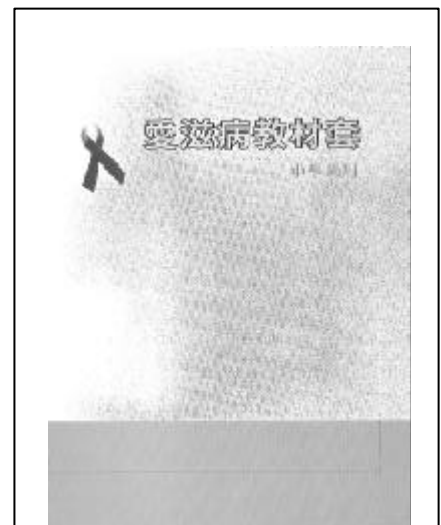
## Have you visited ACA's website?

MEMBERS must already be aware of the internet Home Address of the Advisory Council of AIDS ([www.aca-hk.com](http://www.aca-hk.com)). Apart from a description of the work and composition of the Council, this is also a portal linking visitors to a central resource pool maintained by the Special Preventive Programmes of the Department of Health. Over the years, this pool has also been referred as the *Virtual AIDS Office* (VAO) of Hong Kong. Here is where members could easily access guidelines and reports published by the Council and its committees

What's new at the VAO? For those of us working on AIDS, you probably cannot afford to miss the following new features of VAO:

- (a) The **HIV Manual 2001** - this is the medical manual written by the HIV medicine team of the Integrated Treatment Centre, based on the management protocols established over the last years. It should also be a useful reference for those working on HIV treatment and care.
- (b) **iCE** - a continuing education programme for professionals working on AIDS. Why not register for a test?
- (c) Linkage to **27802211.com**, an interactive website for young people.
- (d) HIV situation update reports from the **Hong Kong STD/AIDS Update** the quarterly surveillance report. Since a year ago, annual reports are published on a quarterly basis to cover the results of the four surveillance systems - reporting, prevalence studies, behavioural surveillance, and STD surveillance.

The cumulative hit rate of VAO has already reached a quarter of a million since the Page's launching over four years ago. Are you a regular visitor? ⌘



## NEW KIT

AT the last meeting of the Advisory Council on AIDS, it was announced that the Education Department would be releasing a new teaching kit on AIDS for secondary school students. A set of the kit was subsequently distributed to members of the Council in February.

The production of the kit was sponsored by the AIDS Trust Fund. ⌘

## Year End Review

On 7 February 2002, The Department of Health released its new statistics on reported HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong, which has been brought updated to the end of the year 2001. It was announced that a total of 213 cases of HIV infections and 60 AIDS have been reported. Sexual transmission remained the most important route of HIV spread, accounting for 78.4% of all reported infections. The male-to-female ratio has also narrowed down to 2.9:1, reflecting an increasing number of women infected with the virus.

The most common opportunistic infection is *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, followed by tuberculosis. As of the end of the year 2001, the

cumulative total number of HIV infections and AIDS was 1755 and 560 respectively.

HIV/AIDS reporting is one component of the surveillance mechanism maintained by the Special Preventive Programmes (SPP) of the Department of Health. The other systems are: prevalence studies, behavioural surveillance and STD (sexually transmitted disease) surveillance. Information of the reported statistics are released quarterly and are posted on the web (Virtual AIDS Office www.aids.gov.hk). More detailed analysis is published in the *Hong Kong STD/AIDS Update*, a quarterly report of SPP and Social Hygiene Service. ♂

(Council members may wish to note that because of technical problems, distribution of the hard copy of STD/AIDS Update has been delayed recently.)

## MTCT Progress

Following the recommendations of the Advisory Council on AIDS, universal antenatal HIV testing has been introduced in Hong Kong since September 2001. Dr KM Ho of the Department of Health evaluated the programme at the quarterly press meeting on 7 February 2002.

In the first three months of the programme, 10283 tests have been performed in the public service. Six expectant mothers were tested positive. The programme has so far been well supported. The opt-out rate was 4%. ♂



### Reported HIV/AIDS Statistics (updated 31 December 2001)

		HIV		AIDS	
		total / Q4 2001		total / Q4 2001	
<b>Gender</b>	male	1435	49	491	15
	female	320	13	69	1
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Chinese	1214	48	436	14
	non-Chinese	541	14	124	2
<b>Transmission</b>	heterosexual	1001	34	369	11
	homosexual	336	10	97	3
	bisexual	84	3	28	0
	injecting drug use	44	1	9	0
	blood/b products	68	0	19	0
	perinatal	14	0	6	0
	undetermined	208	14	32	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1755</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>16</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 Programmes, Department of Health, Hong Kong SAR Government

# Youth Action on AIDS

## the 2002 highlight to conclude activities in 2001

ON 23 February 2002, the *Youth Action on AIDS* Funding Scheme held its annual Prize Presentation Ceremony cum Project Exhibition to conclude the activities for the year 2001. The Funding Scheme is one of the longest-lasting programmes coordinated by the Task Force on Youth of the AIDS Prevention and Care Committee (previously Committee on Education and Publicity on AIDS) of the Advisory Council on AIDS.

Each year about 20 projects (see box below) are supported under the Scheme with the objectives of firstly, promoting awareness of young people on HIV/AIDS, and secondly, encouraging and mobilising young people to plan and implement publicity or education activities on HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong.

Applications have come from youth groups, students or other agencies working with young people. The maximum funding received by one project is normally HK\$8000. In 1996, an album was published that

governmental organisations.

The Prize Presentation Ceremony (for year 2001) was officiated by Mrs Diana Wong, chairperson of the AIDS Prevention and Care Committee, and young

### Award Winners

#### Best Project

- Buddhist Wong Fung Ling College
- Hong Kong Children & Youth Services – Fong Shu Chuen Children & Youth Centre cum Study/ Reading Room
- Buddhist Chi Hong Chi Lam Memorial College

#### Best Design in Project Exhibition

- Cheung Ching Lutheran Centre For The Disabled. HKLSS

#### Best Project Presentation

- Precious Blood Children's Village
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong- North District Outreaching Social Work Team (I)
- The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association
- Caritas Integrated Service For Young People – Tuen Mun



### How many projects have been supported?

BETWEEN 1991 and 2001, a total of 195 projects have been supported under the Youth Action on AIDS Funding Scheme. It means an average of about 20 projects per year in the last 11 years. The yearly breakdown is as follows:

1991	4
1992	12
1993	20
1994	17
1995	16
1996	15
1997	21
1998	24
1999	22
2000	24
2001	20

described projects conducted between 1991 and 1994. Projects ranged from exhibitions, small-scale studies, production of education materials, games to seminars and carnivals. The programme was also reported under "Community Responses on Parade" in the year 2000 Yearbook of Red Ribbon Centre.

It was estimated that so far over 2000 young people had joined in conducting projects under the Scheme. The total attendance of people at the approved projects approximated a quarter of a million. In 2001, twenty projects had been supported. The vetting of the projects is undertaken by the Task Force, which is a group of youth workers and technical experts on HIV/AIDS from government agencies, universities and non-

artist and TV celebrity Mr Choy Tsz Kin. Participating youth groups gathered at Red Ribbon Centre in the morning of the Ceremony Day to set up exhibits on their work and to share experience with one another through a series of project presentations. The Best Project Award, Best Design in Project Exhibition Award and Best Presentation Award were presented by the officiating guests. Choy Tsz Kin took the opportunity to discuss with the participating young people about their feeling in joining the Scheme. 

