

.Calendar.

XLIII Meeting of the Advisory Council on AIDS (ACA)

2:30pm 4 April 2003
(Postponed)

XXVIII Meeting of the Scientific Committee on AIDS (SCA)

2:30pm 24 June 2003

XII Meeting of the AIDS Prevention and Care Committee (APCC)

6pm 13 June 2003

X Meeting of Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People living with HIV/AIDS (CPA)

2:30pm 28 May 2003

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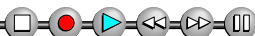
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Postponement of the MTP Workshop

THE co-conveners of the UN Regional Task Force on Drug Use and HIV Vulnerability have decided to indefinitely postpone the MTP workshop because of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) that has been affecting many countries, with Hong Kong being hardest hit in the recent week.

The Training Workshop on Methadone Treatment for HIV Prevention was originally scheduled to last for three days between 2 and 4 April, at the Lam Woo International Conference Centre, featuring state-of-art presentation and visits to methadone clinics and Red Ribbon Centre.

Other information about the workshop are available from the website www.harmreduction-hk.com &

HIV, Insurance and Equal Opportunities

IN response to the discussion paper issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Chairman of the Committee on Promoting Acceptance of people living with HIV/AIDS (CPA) has highlighted four main issues in his reply letter on behalf of the Committee.

Firstly, the letter called for the availability of insurance plan for HIV positive individuals based on actuarial data. Secondly, the pre-requirement of an HIV test should be reviewed and treated cautiously, in view of the confidentiality issues involved. Thirdly, the "Blanket Exclusion" raised in the consultation paper is a matter of concern, which is further complicated by the subtle differences between existed and

diagnosed condition as they relate to HIV/AIDS. Finally, it's important that access to insurance against HIV infection in health care setting as a workplace must be ensured.

The *Discussion Paper on Insurance Issues under the Anti-Discrimination Legislation* was issued earlier this year. The document can also be downloaded from the web www.eoc.org.hk &



SCA in action

THE 27th meeting of the Scientific Committee on AIDS was held on 12 March 2003. It was a busy meeting with active discussion on a number of important issues.

A paper titled "HIV/STI risk behaviours in STD clinic attendees" was discussed, in context of the the role of behavioural surveillance as it relates to HIV epidemiology in Hong Kong. The integration of STI surveillance and behavioural surveillance was considered an important strategy in HIV/STI control and prevention. Gaps were



addressed, notably the suboptimal understanding of STI situation in adolescents, and the research needs in behavioural monitoring.

A report on the implementation of the universal antenatal HIV testing in the first year was presented. Evaluation was made by determining if the programme had achieved its original objectives according to the established principles. Members commended the efforts of professionals and agencies involved in the development of the programme. It's proposed that the programme should be continued with regular monitoring, and that efforts must be made to further consolidate the programme.

The meeting also examined the steps in updating established technical guidelines, and resolved to prepare for the development of a research agenda for Hong Kong. ⌘

Council News

Stock-taking by APCC

THE AIDS Prevention and Care Committee (APCC) met formally for the first time this term on 14 March. The Committee discussed the plan of taking stock of HIV prevention and care activities in Hong Kong. This would serve the purpose of identifying service gaps, and of monitoring the progress of Hong Kong in realising the vision portrayed in the recommended strategies developed by ACA in the last years.

The Hong Kong Red Cross was invited to share their experience with the Committee at the same meeting (see FOCUS on the last page). ⌘

Reported HIV/AIDS Statistics (updated 31 December 2002)

		HIV		AIDS	
		total / Q4 2002		total / Q4 2002	
Gender	male	1637	55	532	5
	female	378	19	81	5
Ethnicity	Chinese	1399	48	478	4
	non-Chinese	616	26	135	6
Transmission	heterosexual	1149	39	406	6
	homosexual	382	12	105	2
	bisexual	94	3	30	1
	injecting drug use	54	2	10	1
	blood/bl products	68	0	19	0
	perinatal	15	0	6	0
	undetermined	253	18	37	0
TOTAL		2015	74	613	10

NOTE:

The "total" refers to the cumulative total number reported since 1984, under the voluntary HIV/AIDS Reporting System. Q4 refers to the period October to December 2002. 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

in & around
Hong Kong

SECOND NATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE

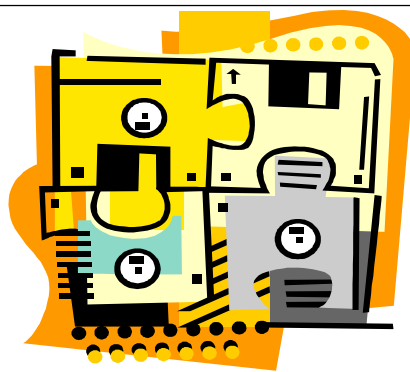
THE Second National AIDS/STD Conference would be held in Nanjing between 9 and 12 November 2003. The announcement can be found in the February issue of the Chinese Journal for STD/AIDS Prevention and Control (published in Chinese only).

The first national conference was held two years ago between 13 and 16 November 2001 in Beijing. (please refer to *ACA Newsfile* issue 96, December 2001) &



AN art exhibition featuring drawings of children from Central China orphaned by AIDS took place from March 18th to 20th at the City Hall.

This exhibition, organised by the **Chi Heng Foundation**, was titled "Living Dreams in a Dying Village," as the drawings portrayed these children's hopes and aspirations amid the despair that surrounded them. An opening reception was held at 6:00 p.m. on March 18th, which included an opening speech by Dr Homer Tso, Chairman of the Advisory Council on AIDS, as well as a brief talk about the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Central China. The event was open to the public, with free admission. &



ESCAP MEETING

IN April 2003, Governments of the UNESCAP (Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific) membership will come together to consider ways of making a difference in saving millions of lives in the Asian and Pacific region, home to two-thirds

of the world's population.

The representatives of the 61 governments of the UNESCAP membership will focus attention on HIV/AIDS, one of the most serious threats to development that the Asia-Pacific region has ever faced.

"Integrating economic and social concerns, especially HIV/AIDS, in meeting the needs of the region" is the theme topic that the Governments have agreed on for their deliberations at the 59th annual Commission session.

Combating the spread of HIV/AIDS in the region is a key mandate of the Health and Development Section of the Emerging Social Issues Division. Thus, the Health and Development Section serves as focal point for theme topic preparations within the secretariat. The Health and Development Section is working closely with an inter-agency steering group composed of representatives of the United Nations Sub-regional Group on HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS, WHO and other agencies in order to ensure UN system contributions to this important task.

AusAID has generously provided funding support for a series of preparatory activities and special features to highlight coverage of the theme topic by the 59th Commission session.

For further updates on the UNESCAP 59th Commission Session, please visit www.unescap.org &

[from the UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) website]

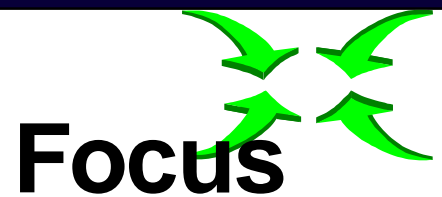


LIVING DREAMS

ICAAP-7

THE Seventh International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific will be held in Kobe, Japan from 27 November to 1 December 2003. April 1 is the deadline for submitting abstracts to this regional meeting. If you are submitting your abstract via email, the deadline is 15 April. Further information about the Conference is available from the official website at <http://www.icaap7.jp> &

Integrating HIV activities in Mainstream Service Organisations - the case of Hong Kong Red Cross



THE first APCC (AIDS Prevention and Care Committee) meeting of the term featured the presentation of Mr Percy Chan and Mr Louis Chow of the Hong Kong Red Cross on their experiences in the development of AIDS awareness activities in young people.

As a “mainstream organisation”, the involvement of the Red Cross in HIV activities falls in line with the proposed strategies of the Advisory Council on AIDS. Members would remember that one of the strategy objectives for 2002 to 2006 is the development of an integrative approach to attain sustainable response. The Council called for “the involvement of mainstream NGOs” that “offers a unique opportunity to extend HIV prevention and care activities to cover clientele accesses by the conventional network of service organisations”. More specifically, the sixth target for the coming years would be that “the participation of mainstream service organisations in HIV/AIDS activities will be increased”. (*ACA recommended HIV/AIDS strategies for Hong Kong 2002 to 2006*, published 2002)

With a network of over 12000 youths, the Hong Kong Red Cross is uniquely positioned for promoting AIDS awareness in young people and the fostering of a supportive attitude towards those living with the infection. The organization is part of the 170-country-strong International Federation of Red Cross, which has been active in AIDS prevention and

care in many countries, including Mainland China.

Members noted that the history of Hong Kong Red Cross’s programmes for youth has been a relatively young one, which has had its beginning only a few years back in 1998. Some characteristics of the Red Cross’s initiatives are however important learning points for all of us. Firstly, like other activities, volunteer-leaders form an important cadre in working with young people. Using a train-the-trainer approach, peer educators have been trained to enhance the effectiveness of targeting young people. Secondly, meaningful collaboration has been forged between the Red Cross and AIDS agencies, for example, Society for AIDS Care, TeenAIDS, Red Ribbon Centre, to build capacity of volunteers, and to quality-assure the pilot programmes. In this

connection, a manual has been produced with the support of AIDS organisations.

Mr Chow and Mr Chan made it clear that it’s desirable to integrate AIDS in the work profile of the Red Cross, rather than making “AIDS” a special project subject of their organisation. Understandably expertise development and resource support are crucial. It’s gratifying to know that an Asia Pacific network has been set up to promote sharing of national Red Cross on AIDS initiatives. Furthermore the support of the Hong Kong Red Cross in the AIDS programmes in Yunnan has offered another unique opportunity to strengthen the network and to promote learning in the process of achieving HIV prevention and care, alongside AIDS organisations in each country. **✂**

The Red Cross / Red Crescent has been involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS since the mid-1980s. On World AIDS Day 2002, the Federation placed particular emphasis on condemning stigma and discrimination against orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS as well as calling for the reduction of infection rates among young people.



The Federation has forged an alliance with six other global organisations representing the world's youth, to focus attention on the plight of young people affected by HIV/AIDS. (from the webpage of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies www.ifrc.org)