

**Editorial Board**

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~ Calendar ~

The 16th CFA Meeting on

14 December 2009

The 69th ACA Meeting on

15 January 2010

**A Summary of the Fifteenth CFA Meeting held on 22 September 2009**

**(I) Mid-term Review of the Eight Targets of the Recommended HIV/AIDS Strategies for Hong Kong 2007-2011**

The Forum was pleased to note the progress on achieving the eight targets in the “Recommended HIV/AIDS Strategies for Hong Kong 2007/2011”. It was suggested that the perspective of the community should also be incorporated into the mid-term review. With regard to Target 4 about reviewing AIDS Trust Fund’s funding mechanism, members ex-

pressed appreciation that the ATF had taken active steps to improve its funding allocation mechanism, and recommended that the effectiveness of the projects funded by ATF could be shared among stakeholders. With regard to Target 7 to sustain quality HIV care of Interaction standards to people living with HIV/AIDS, members were concerned about the rise in patient default rate at the Integrated Treatment Centre and agreed that a review of the “Consensus Statement on Principles of Antiretroviral Therapy for HIV Infection in Hong Kong” developed by the Scientific Committee on AIDS in 2005 may be needed.

**(II) Report Back of 9<sup>th</sup> International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) Meeting in Bali, Indonesia, 9-13 August 2009**

The Forum received a detailed powerpoint presentation of the 9<sup>th</sup> ICAAP whose theme was “Empowering People, Strengthening Networks”. The Hong Kong delegation comprised representatives from government de-

partments, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations. The Red Ribbon Centre ran a booth to share with participants on Hong Kong’s response to HIV in MSM, as an exemplar of what can be done with limited resources. A report back seminar was held on 17 September 2009 at the Argyle Street Jockey Club School Dental Clinic for delegates to share with other interested parties the experiences and insights they learned from the conference.

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## (III) Report Back of the “Regional Consensus Meeting on Developing a Comprehensive Package of Services to Reduce HIV among MSM” 29 June – 1 July 2009

The Forum was briefed about the background leading to the Regional Consensus Meeting and noted that issuance of comprehensive packages of interventions for the prevention, treatment, care and support of HIV/AIDS among MSM, transgender and their partners was in the pipeline. The packages would serve as a reference point only and would not imply that one-size fitted all.

It was confirmed that the following interventions were generally covered in the Hong Kong context:

- HIV treatment and care, including client and provider initiated ap-

proaches, use of rapid tests for same day result

- Maximize prevention efforts, condom & lube promotion, counseling
- Detection and management of STI, use of treponemal rapid tests for syphilis
- Prevention and treatment of viral hepatitis
- Prevention of HIV transmission through drug use
- HIV treatment and care, including ART
- Bio-behavioural surveillance
- Size estimates and projections
- Routine HIV and STI surveillance
- Monitoring health sector’s response
- Biomedical interventions
- Members commented that the quality and coverage of the packages would be key to their success, and there was still room for improvement in behavioural change interventions.

*Continued ....*

*Continued ... Summary*

## (IV) HIV Surveillance Statistics and PRiSM Findings

- Members were updated on the HIV Surveillance and comparison of the 2 PRiSM surveys results 2006 and 2008, which showed that HIV seroprevalence in MSM had risen from 4.05% to 4.3%. Members pointed out that apart from its inability to reach MSM who were sourcing partners through internet, the survey might also not be able to capture young MSM and low income MSM who could

not afford to frequent bars and saunas. Because of the anonymous nature of the survey methodology, participants of the survey were not informed of the HIV status. It was suggested that participants in future PRiSM surveys could be given the choice of being informed. Members were concerned at the low condom usage rate among regular partners (45% in 2008) and highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach and follow-up after testing.

## More about the 9th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific

The theme of the 9<sup>th</sup> ICAAP is “Empowering People, Strengthening Networks”. This is enshrined with the ever-increasing demand for prevention, care and treatment in the Region, with which making the involved people and networks stronger become so indispensable. The Congress provided a

forum for people working on HIV/AIDS from different places to come together to share and exchange.

For the first time over ten years, the Red

Ribbon Centre ran a booth at this ICAAP to share with participants from all over the Region on the local HIV MSM response. It featured a recap of the concerted efforts of the local AIDS workers and stakeholders over the last years, covering from surveillance & epidemiology, community actions, government response, strategy development, to international collaborations.



In comparison with many places in the Region, Hong Kong had been having low HIV prevalence for years. Looking back at the experiences of the Region, Hong Kong has been in the right direction for its response.

Many issues raised and discussed seemed

to be non-issue and been taken for granted in Hong Kong. With its early implementation of programmes for targeted populations,

notably drug users and male clients and female sex workers, HIV prevalence of these at-risk populations had stayed <1%. Nevertheless, it is prudent to take advantage of the past success, remain vigilant, regularly monitor and review the situations, and respond accordingly. Sustainability of policy environment, resource commitment, technical expertise and human capacity is necessary for a sustained AIDS response in Hong Kong.

# ACA NEWSFILE



Booth



At ICAAP

