

## . Calendar.

### XXIXth Meeting of the Advisory Council on AIDS (ACA)

2:30pm 16 July 1999

### XXXIIIrd Meeting of the Committee on Education and Publicity on AIDS (CEPAIDS)

6:00pm 8 July 1999

### XVIIth Meeting of AIDS Services Development Committee (ASDC)

to be announced

### XVIth Scientific Committee on AIDS (SCA)

9:30am 25 June 1999

## Hong Kong AIDS Conference 1999

THE HIV Research Project of the City University of Hong Kong has suddenly, on 22 March 1999, withdrawn its wish of organising the 1999 Hong Kong AIDS Conference, saying that time constraint will not allow them to organise a conference this year. The CityU Group has expressed interest for the organisation, and been closely liaising with the ACA in the past two months. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ACA and the CityU Group for the Group to organise the Conference was drafted by the Council, agreed upon by the Group and subsequently endorsed by ACA members at the XXVIIIth ACA meeting.

Before withdrawal, the two parties have already agreed to sign the MOU and a signing ceremony was scheduled on 29 March. As a result of the unexpected last-minute change of the CityU Group, the MOU signing ceremony originally scheduled on 29 March has to be cancelled. While members and all interested people might be disappointed by the news, the Council will try exploring other options for the Conference, in accordance with the principles discussed in the last two ACA meetings. ☒

## First-ever Putonghua API

THE Task Force on Media and Publicity of the Committee on Education and Publicity on AIDS had launched the first-ever Putonghua API (Announcement of Public Interest) in the local television

channels since 15 March 1999. The English and Cantonese versions of this API, titled "Be a Responsible Man, Use a Condom" had been broadcasted in air since December 1998. The API was featured with Mr. Yuen

Wah, a popular local artist. Extension of media publicity to using Putonghua is aimed to reach a wider target audience.

API was an important tool employed in Hong Kong for raising public awareness on AIDS Prevention. Since the production of the first API in 1987, a total of 29 APIs were launched thus far by the Task Force. ❁

## ACA and DH AIDS Unit

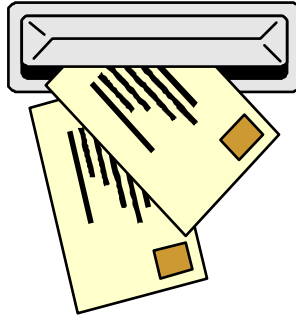
<http://www.info.gov.hk/aids>

## Charter Seminar

ON 5 March, the Hong Kong Community Charter on AIDS commenced its recruitment drive of the year with a seminar on AIDS at the headquarters of Lions Clubs International in Wanchai. The seminar was attended by not only Lions but members of the Hong Kong Junior Chamber and Rotary Club.

Lion Richard Tan who was also founder chairman of the Charter explained why prevention effort against AIDS allowed no room for laxity in Hong Kong. Dr Kenny Chan of the AIDS Unit of the Department of Health followed on to give a talk on the epidemic of HIV, with a local perspective of its cause and impacts.

This year, the Charter introduced the scheme of ambassadors whereby individuals could contribute to the fight against AIDS. Previously only employers could join as signatories. The Charter was founded in 1994, in an effort to bring AIDS dimension to the workplace for a better prevention and care. ☞



## APOLOGY

The numbering of the pages in February and March issues of the ACA Newsfile had mistakenly not been labelled continuously, as announced in the Newsfile. The Editors apologise for the error and continuous numbering has been rectified in this issue. ☞

## Joint HKU & DH Education Course

OVER the past few years, Department of Health has been collaborating with the SPACE (School of Professional and Continuing Education) of the University of Hong Kong in organising training course on HIV/AIDS. The 1999 "Update course on HIV Prevention and Care for Health Professionals" will be conducted from April to July, on a weekly basis. The course, supplemented by visits and workshops, comprises mainly lectures and assignments. This annual initiative is already the seventh one for this year. Its predecessor was intended more for nurses. Nevertheless, significant modifications in the content, format, and categories of targeted participants have been made in response to the rapidly evolving HIV/AIDS field locally and internationally.

In addition, the Department of Health and the University of Hong Kong will also hold an update course on communicable diseases from May to June 1999. HIV/AIDS is one topic of the course. Other topics will cover important and new infections in Hong Kong, including influenza, E coli 0157 and EV71. Health professionals, e.g. nurses, allied health workers, health educators, medical social workers, and other interested people are most welcome to join the courses. Application forms for the above two courses can be obtained from the SPACE offices and Red Ribbon Centre. Besides, information on the above courses is ready at AIDS website <http://www.info.gov.hk/aids>. ☞

**AIDS Hotline 2780 2211**

*Messages, Counselling  
HIV Testing*

## WAC Theme

THE Chinese translation of the theme for World AIDS Campaign (WAC) 1999 is "2âÅ¥jB ¾Ç²BjB-7j|b`LÄY". The name was proposed by some youth who have participated in the Youth Funding Scheme last year. "Youth" has been included as the targeted people of the theme for three consecutive years till now. ✪

## Update on Community Planning

THE HKCASO has been working for community planning in the last months, through its Working Group for the Community Planning Process (CPP). Several activities, including collection of material, drafting of task list, organisation of forums/ focus groups, and liaison

with members of the vulnerable community groups, were undertaken. The working group is going to submit a proposal to the AIDS Trust Fund for applying funding to go on with the community planning process.

**Dr Sex Hotline**  
**2337 2121**

## The Node

THE Red Ribbon Centre, which is also the UNAIDS Collaborating Centre for Technical Support, has

recently produced a new publication titled "The Node". This bilingual publication is dedicated to global HIV/AIDS issues. The name "The Node" was derived from the wish of stimulating action through dissemination of useful information. ✪



(Continued from Page 16)  
in whatever network the drug users fall into. At the same time, close monitoring of HIV situation in the drug-taking community needs to be continued through the surveillance programmes. Voluntary testing of drug users shall also be encouraged for secondary prevention of HIV spread and providing care to those infected. ✪

### Cumulative HIV/AIDS Statistics in Hong Kong updated 31 December 1998

		total	(AIDS)
<b>Gender</b>	male	971	(331)
	female	175	(41)
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Chinese	790	(280)
	non-Chinese	356	(92)
<b>Transmission</b>	heterosexual	635	(221)
	homosexual	244	(83)
	bisexual	62	(24)
	Injecting drug use	17	(5)
	blood/bl products	67	(16)
	perinatal	6	(3)
	undetermined	115	(20)

**TOTAL** 1146 (372)

Department of Health, Hong Kong

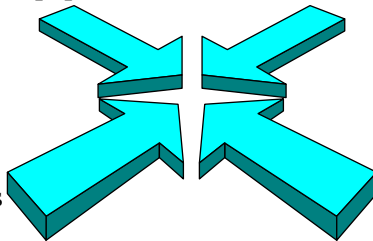
## Rising HIV Positivity in Drug Users - Cause for Concern



AT the last meetings of the Advisory Council on AIDS and its Scientific Committee, members have discussed on the findings of rising HIV prevalence among drug users in Hong Kong. Though injecting drug use had remained a small contributor (<2%) to the reported HIV/AIDS statistics thus far, recent data collected from the other surveillance activities suggested a rising trend among the drug-taking community.

Unlinked anonymous screening (UAS) at the methadone clinics found a HIV prevalence rate of 0.3% in 1998. Although such rate is

still not high, it represented a 16-fold increase compared with that of 1992-1997. A new UAS exercise conducted in the second half of 1998, at the Inpatient Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre, also found a HIV positivity of 0.13%. Albeit the possibility that the HIV-infected drug users picked up from the UAS might not have been infected via injecting drug use, their potential for spreading the virus in the drug-taking population cannot be



overemphasized. This worry is not unsubstantiated as indicated by the behavioural pattern of drug users surveyed in the past few years. Against the fact that drug-users are a heterogeneous group, needle-sharing and unhygienic use of needles are not uncommon practices as observed in the behavioural surveillance.

Obviously we need to be vigilant about the warning signal. Painful experience has happened in our neighbouring countries in terms of a sudden explosion of HIV infection in drug users. Concerted efforts from the local AIDS workers as well as mainstream drug workers are indispensable for minimising the spread of HIV in the drug users.

Commitment from both the policy and operational levels is necessary. In this regard, support from the Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) and Hong Kong Council of Social Services is indispensable. Preventive education on HIV/AIDS needs to be strengthened and harm reduction approaches escalated for the drug users, (Continued on Page 15)

### Speakers and Reviewers Needed for 5th ICAAP

THE International Advisory Committee (IAC) of the International Conference on AIDS in Asia Pacific (5th ICAAP) are inviting nominations for speakers and reviewers for abstracts of the Congress. Details of the nominations are to be submitted to Congrex Malaysia Sdn Bhd, Level 11 Menara IMC 8, Jalan Sultan Ismail, 50250, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Fax : 603 201 1828, E-mail: icaap99@congrex.com.my. Reviewers are particularly needed for Track C: Epidemiology, Prevention, and Public Health as well as Track D: Social and Behavioural Science. AIDS workers in Hong Kong who are interested to submit abstracts to the Congress are reminded of the deadline of 15 May 1999. ☒