

United States Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Global AIDS Program Vietnam

“Building partnerships to fight HIV/AIDS
in Vietnam and around the world”



HHS/CDC Global AIDS Program



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Global AIDS Program of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is part of a collaborative U.S. Government initiative to address the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. When it began in 1999, HHS/CDC's Global AIDS Program (GAP) supported 17 sub-Saharan African countries and India. It has now grown to include programs in 25 countries in Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America. HHS/CDC GAP is one part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and works closely with other U.S. agencies including the Department of State Global AIDS Coordinator's Office, the U.S.

Agency for International Development, and the Department of Labor in this initiative. HHS/CDC GAP also works in partnership with communities, host-country governments, and national and international entities in the fight against global AIDS.

HHS/CDC GAP Worldwide

The mission of HHS/CDC GAP is to help resource-constrained countries prevent HIV infection, improve treatment, care, and support for persons living with HIV/AIDS, and build capacity and infrastructure to address the global AIDS pandemic.

HIV/AIDS healthcare workers at Bach Mai Hospital in Hanoi.

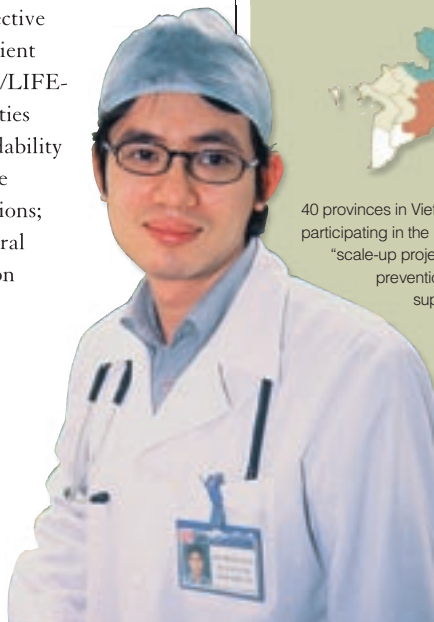


HHS/CDC GAP Vietnam

In 1998, the Vietnam Ministry of Health (MOH) and HHS/CDC GAP began working together to identify needed support for the national HIV/AIDS prevention and care program. In response to the rapidly rising number of new HIV infections, Vietnam was invited to be the 24th partner country in HHS/CDC's Global AIDS Program. A five-year cooperative agreement between HHS/CDC GAP and Vietnam MOH was established on October 23, 2001 to provide support to implement prevention and care activities in up to 40 of Vietnam's 64 provinces. The agreement established the MOH/LIFE-GAP Program Office for coordination, management, and monitoring of the overall project with technical assistance from 10 central institutes.

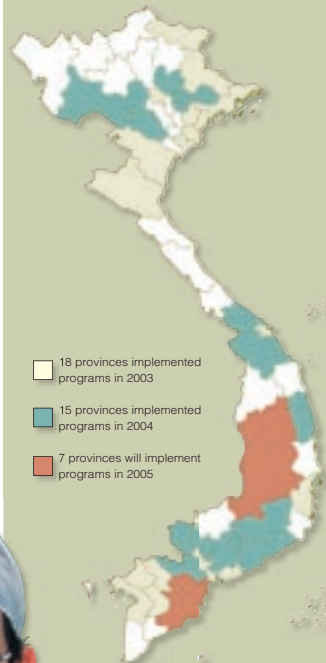
Commitment to Principles and Priorities

Today, Vietnam faces many challenges in controlling and reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS. Some of these are a lack of information and education about HIV/AIDS and how it is transmitted, coping with the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS, and lack of access to effective antiretroviral (ARV) therapies. To address these challenges, MOH/LIFE-GAP encourages activities using guiding principles such as support for confidential and voluntary services, promoting respect for all clients regardless of their circumstances, and commitment to effective infection control practices to ensure staff and client safety. To promote program impact, the MOH/LIFE-GAP Program Office strives to maintain priorities including: accessibility, acceptability, and affordability of services; scaling up to provide adequate scope and coverage of services for vulnerable populations; integration of programs through effective referral systems; and ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure high quality, sustainable programs.



HHS/CDC GAP Vietnam

The mission of HHS/CDC GAP Vietnam is to support the Government of Vietnam in strengthening capacity for an effective, sustainable and appropriately responsive national HIV/AIDS prevention and care program to prevent new HIV infections and reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS in Vietnam.



40 provinces in Vietnam are participating in the MOH/LIFE-GAP "scale-up project" on HIV/AIDS prevention and care supported by HHS/CDC GAP.

Program focus:

Voluntary Counseling and Testing Services

Community Outreach Programs for Vulnerable Populations

HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment Programs

Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV

Strengthening Program Infrastructure



Counselor informs client about free and anonymous, voluntary counseling, testing and referral services.



Laboratory technician safely collects a blood sample for an HIV test.



Client receives information on preventing drug-related HIV transmission

Voluntary Counseling and Testing Services (VCT)

A central component of the MOH/LIFE-GAP Program is to promote HIV testing, which is a critical first step for both effective HIV/AIDS prevention and care. Through provision of free and anonymous, voluntary counseling and testing for vulnerable populations, the VCT program supports provinces in reducing new HIV infections. Using a version of HHS/CDC's client-centered "HIV prevention counseling" model, trained counselors provide high quality services tailored to their clients' own personal situations. Clients are offered counseling and HIV testing, and based on their test results are counseled on reducing the risk of HIV acquisition or transmission to others and also provided referrals to other prevention and care services in their community.

Since the first MOH/LIFE-GAP supported VCT program opened in Hai Phong in November 2002, VCT programs have started in 18 provinces and will be expanded to a total of 40 provinces by 2005.

Community Outreach Programs for Vulnerable Populations

An estimated 88% of HIV infections in Vietnam thus far are directly related either to intravenous drug use or to sexual transmission from a sex partner who uses drugs. MOH/LIFE-GAP's Community Outreach programs are important in helping communities reduce new HIV infections among injecting drug users. Using an adapted version of the World Health Organization's "Training Guide for HIV Prevention Outreach to Injecting Drug Users," former drug users in 20 provinces are trained to be peer educators that reach out to their communities about HIV/AIDS prevention. Peer educators provide information about drug-related HIV transmission and how to prevent it, make referrals to VCT and clinical care services, and use a referral network to other prevention services that enable drug users to reduce their risk for HIV infection.



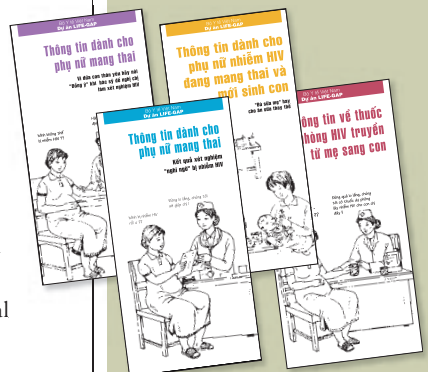
Community outreach workers are enthusiastic after completing a training course on effective peer education strategies.

Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT)

Of an estimated two million births per year in Vietnam, about 8,000 infants are exposed to HIV. To address this, the MOH/LIFE-GAP Program Office has developed a comprehensive demonstration project to reduce HIV transmission from mother to newborn by promoting early identification of HIV and early antiretroviral drugs to HIV-infected pregnant women and their newborns. Through the existing maternal and child health network, women attending community health centers for prenatal care are offered voluntary counseling and affordable HIV testing and, if HIV-positive, are referred to provincial obstetric hospitals for delivery. Women are also counseled on antiretroviral therapies and breast-feeding alternatives to prevent transmission to the infant, and receive routine follow-up care before and after delivery with community healthworkers.

The demonstration project is currently being carried out in three provinces (Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, and Ho Chi Minh City), all provinces where HIV prevalence in pregnant women approaches or exceeds 1%. One project objective is to provide MOH with reliable data to help build a comprehensive national PMTCT program that is feasible and practical for Vietnam.

Simple, easy-to-understand education materials promote HIV testing and inform pregnant women about how to reduce HIV transmission to their infants.





VCHAP

Vietnam-CDC-Harvard
Medical School AIDS
Partnership

Since September 30, 2002, an important part of the Care and Treatment program is the Vietnam-CDC-Harvard Medical School AIDS Partnership (VCHAP). The goal of VCHAP is to train and support Vietnamese clinicians to provide and teach HIV/AIDS care in both urban and provincial settings.

Experienced HIV/AIDS clinician-educators from Harvard Medical School and other U.S.-based institutions provide intensive, interactive, locally relevant training to Vietnamese clinicians who are directly involved in the care of HIV-infected patients. The VCHAP program also provides support to MOH in developing effective ARV treatment guidelines and program models.

HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment Programs

As the number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Vietnam grows larger, MOH/LIFE-GAP's Care and Treatment program collaborates with the National Institute of Clinical Research in Tropical Medicine-Bach Mai Hospital, regional hospitals, and provincial and district



hospitals in 40 provinces to provide routine, outpatient services to HIV-infected clients. In addition to providing basic clinical and laboratory services, the program strives to promote "healthy living" practices in patients living with HIV and AIDS and to reduce HIV infections to partners. The program components include preventing, screening, and treatment of opportunistic infections; counseling on

preventing transmission to others; encouraging partners to have HIV testing; counseling on healthy living and nutritional practices; referral to social support and other services in the community; and support for the infrastructure and capacity for routine follow-up care for HIV-infected patients that will support ARV therapies when available.

MOH/LIFE-GAP also collaborates with the National TB Program in promoting early identification, referral and treatment of HIV-TB co-infected patients using a variety of programs. Additional objectives of the Care and Treatment Program include raising awareness and monitoring infection control through ensuring safe injections and waste disposal, providing training and services for occupational exposure for healthcare workers, and promoting implementation of universal precautions for healthcare workers.



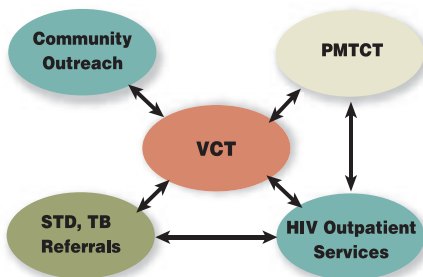
Healthcare workers provide care and treatment to HIV/AIDS patients at Bach Mai Hospital in Hanoi.



Timely data reporting and feedback are critical components for a strong national HIV/AIDS program.

Strengthening Program Infrastructure

To assist MOH in effectively planning, implementing, and evaluating program activities, HHS/CDC GAP incorporates a range of capacity building activities in all programs, including operational research; support for informatics and data retrieval and reporting; laboratory training and equipment; program procedures and quality assurance; public health and epidemiology training; and monitoring and evaluation. HHS/CDC GAP provides support to MOH in developing national policy and guidelines in areas such as HIV/AIDS laboratory testing and the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and opportunistic infections. Additionally, HHS/CDC supports the Sustainable Management Development Program (CDC PHPPPO) at the Hanoi School of Public Health. Through this program, HHS/CDC GAP strengthens management capacity for HIV/AIDS and public health professionals managing MOH/LIFE-GAP provincial HIV/AIDS prevention and care programs.



In each province, MOH/LIFE-GAP programs have a strong referral network with each other and with other programs in the community.



HIV and STD Surveillance

HIV and sexually transmitted disease (STD) surveillance is critical to strengthening the infrastructure of HIV/AIDS prevention and care programs. To assist MOH in this, the MOH/LIFE-GAP Program Office supports the national HIV surveillance system conducted by the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology. MOH/LIFE-GAP also supports the National Institute of Dermatology and Venereology in STD surveys linked to HIV surveillance to better understand how STDs may be fueling the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Vietnam.



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