



PLUS

February 2010

Network of Maharashtra People with HIV

INP+ - NMP+ dispute developments

In further developments in the ongoing dispute between NMP+ and INP+, INP+ has caused further confusion by sending a letter to NMP+ announcing that the affiliation of NMP+ has been terminated. NMP+ refuses to accept their power to take this action unilaterally. NMP+ together with a number of other states disturbed by the performance of INP+ have asked GFATM to investigate. A hearing on the dispute is expected to be held in March, with a ruling probably in April. Meanwhile, in an effort to get the 19th QPR carried out, all districts have invited INP+ to hold it in Maharashtra.

Closure of ACT

All districts need to supply all the documents, including Annual Reports, audit reports and programme reports, to NMP+ by the 10th April. These are being gathered by NMP+ as part of the closure of the ACT project. It is most important that all these documents are provided.

SupportNet

Every district needs to hold a meeting of its Peer Treatment Educators to inform them about SupportNet and the Routine Continuation Channel, which is taking over from Act from the 1st April.

Please ask NMP+ ACT staff if you need any help or advice about this meeting.

Some districts have held their meetings, but those who haven't yet need to do so as a matter of urgency.

Rajendra Shirke 1967-2010



The loss of much esteemed former colleague Rajendra Shirke (Romy) shocked positive networks in Maharashtra and beyond. He was one of the seven founder members of the Network of Maharashtra People with HIV in 1997. He served first as Vice President, then later as President. He was very influential in the early years, working hard to form district networks. It was a struggle to get the network started, there was even greater ignorance and stigma than is the case today.

He was an early believer in the virtues of a balanced diet, exercise and yoga.

In May 2005 he left Maharashtra and went to live in Delhi. He worked with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), so he continued to work hard for positive people up to his death. He was involved in the India Network of People with HIV (INP+), and served on the board. In December last year, on World AIDS Day, he represented INP+ and UN+ at a meeting of The Forum of Parliamentarians on AIDS, attended by over 50 Members of Parliament. Many people since his death have praised his strength, his calm demeanour and his lovely manners.

Positive children can Make-a-wish

Make-A-Wish Foundation of India will try to make the wishes come true for all positive children in Pune and Mumbai.

Prachi Lonkar, the Pune Divisional Co-ordinator, visited the NMP+ offices and told NMP+ that the Foundation is dedicated to granting the most cherished wish of children between the ages of 3 and 18 years, living with life-threatening illnesses, irrespective of their socio-economic status, caste, race or religion.

The foundation fulfills four types of wishes:

- Travel Wishes: 'I wish to go...' (Within India)
- Occupational Wishes: 'I wish to be...'
- Celebrity Wishes: 'I wish to meet...'
- Gift Wishes: 'I wish to have...'

In the last year alone the foundation helped more than 2600 children realise their wishes.

Children who wish to take part are visited by trained volunteers who help write the wish.

The foundation works in partnership with various hospitals, clinics and private practitioners who deal with children suffering from life-threatening illnesses. It also co-ordinates with organisations and orphanages involved with families and children living with HIV.

The foundation is visiting the CHAHA project in Pimpri on 6th March, where they will talk to 30 children about their wishes.

For more information, contact:

<http://www.makeawishindia.org/>

Mumbai: info@makeawishindia.org, 022 24461344.

Pune: Prachi Longar, pune_div@makeawishindia.org
020 20250566



Pune builds rapport with local MP

Pune Network President Sanjay Jadhav met with Prakash Javadekar, MP for Pune, to try and win his support for a number of issues facing positive people.

The discussion covered free 2nd line ART to be made available in Pune, and free bus travel for positive people seeking treatment (see also 'Advocacy' on next page). Mr Javadekar promised he would give his support.



HRLN advise state, districts on law

The Nagpur branch of the longtime NMP+ collaborators Human Rights Law Network welcomed Presidents or board members of all districts, with NMP+ staff, to Nagpur for a 2 day conference. The theme was HIV and the Law. The networks joined with advocates and representatives from other NGOs working in the field to hear about human rights of positive people. A number of doctors started things with a summary of the current treatment of HIV.

There were sessions from advocates on how to file a Public Interest Litigation case, then advice on more specialised topics such as Children and HIV, Food Security, and Property Rights.

MDACS helps with defaulter tracing

Medical officers, counsellors from ART centres and Project Coordinators from CCC met at a Coordination meeting recently to discuss defaulter tracing. Rohini Gorey from PFI described the role of staff under the ACT project. Bharati Sonawane from Mumbai district advised them how a district network can help them.

State hearing on Child Rights

A Public Hearing on Child Rights and Entitlements of Orphans and Vulnerable Children Affected and Infected by HIV was held in Mumbai on the 30th January. The conference was organised by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and Action Aid. In response to a question from NMP+, Dr Rekha Jain, from NACO, said that free 2nd line would be rolled out to all, including children, from March. It would only be available from JJ Hospital in Mumbai initially. She also reported that an ART Link Centre will open in Kolhapur rural area in March.

Representatives of NMP+ listened to the presentations by positive children and their carers from different parts of Maharashtra.

Afterwards NMP+ raised 2 other issues.

1. Need for free bus travel for children and carer when attending for treatment
2. Need more places for orphans in children's homes and hostels. Also the need for better funding for each orphan child in care to allow adequate nutrition.

Other problems raised were stigma in schools, and use of government schemes.

Attending were representatives of Maharashtra State Govt. Education Department, Women and Child Welfare Department, and NGOs.

The chair of the panel (**Pictured right**) said that teachers and other pupils that repeatedly discriminated against positive children must be disciplined. Government servants that discriminated must lose their jobs. All children need supplementary nutrition.

Advocacy

Seventeen districts have so far responded to our Free Bus Pass advocacy. NMP+ has written to O. P. Gupta, Secretary of Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) with copies to the Chief Minister and Transport Minister. We are asking him to follow the lead of Gujarat and some other states by allowing free bus travel for positive people (and a carer to travel with children). Dhule District had a meeting with their MLA, Anil Gote, and he wrote an official letter of support to the Transport Minister Radha Vikhe-Patil. Pune network also raised the issue with the Pune MP (see previous page).

NMP+ staff also raised the matter before government representatives at the state Public Hearing reported on the left.

If any districts haven't yet written letters, please do so and send copies to NMP+. This is a campaign we can definitely win if we keep up the pressure.

Below; the State Public Hearing in Mumbai.



Stars of the month ☆ The following districts who reported Income Generation activity in February: Akola, Aurangabad, Nashik, Ratnagiri, Sangli, Solapur, and Thane. Among the initiatives listed were chalk making, mushroom growing, poultry keeping, phenyl, candle, office file and chikki making. Also selling detergent, gifts, shikaki powder and face packs, goat breeding, mat shelling and running a fast food stall. This is valuable work for our beneficiaries.

Please send pictures and contributions for the newsletter to Vincent McDonald: vjmcd@hotmail.co.uk, or to NMP+: nmpplus@gmail.com, phone: 020 – 26336084/87