



PLUS

September 2009

Network of Maharashtra People with HIV

2nd line: court order defied

People in Maharashtra in need of 2nd line treatment are still being denied the free drugs by JJ Hospital. This is despite an undertaking made by NACO to Chief Justice A. M. Khanwilkar, a judge at the Bombay High Court, as reported last month.

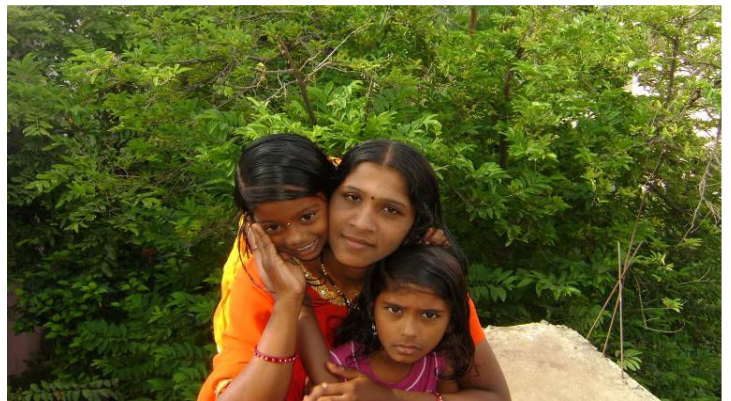
Earlier this month, Rekha Jain, the Regional Coordinator for NACO, told a meeting in Thane district that:

- the client should be Registered at a Government ART centre for at least 2 years before being referred to JJ Hospital for 2nd line treatment
- The ART centre Senior Medical Officer has to send the medical history of the client to JJ Hospital
- The referred client if female should be a widow with no one to support her.
- The client if taking 2nd line ART from a private source should be living below the poverty line to get free treatment from JJ Hospital.

When told that this facility was of no use to clients who are already taking 2nd line drugs from private she said that the Network is thinking only for its own community but NACO has to think of all PLHIVs in the nation. She said that we must give the government time to make these drugs available.

These statements seem to be in direct contravention of what the NACO lawyers have told the judge.

NMP+ is currently collecting statements from those clients who have been refused 2nd line since the court order. This evidence will be supplied to the Human Rights Law Network lawyers who are helping us with this campaign. They intend to go back to the Chief Justice and ask him for further help with this cause.



Above: Surekha and daughters from Parbhani. Read Surekha's story in this month's Case Study supplement.

Support the HIV/AIDS Bill

NMP+ and all districts are helping The Lawyers Collective in its campaign to bring the Bill into law. We are collecting signatures for a nationwide petition urging the government to table the Bill before parliament soon. The Bill was first drafted after extensive consultations with people with HIV, doctors, lawyers, NGOs and other interested bodies. A draft was presented by NACO to the government in 2006. When a version emerged in 2008 it was changed in substantial ways that were not acceptable to the HIV community. Protests followed. In January this year, the law ministry came out with the second draft, which removed all the controversial points. But NACO again had problems with some of the clauses. After seven months of intense deliberations, the law ministry is believed to have at last approved the bill.

“Now the talks are finally over. We hope that the law ministry sends it for cabinet approval and the bill sees the light of day,” Raman Chawla, an advocacy officer with the Lawyers' Collective, has said.

http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/health1/finally-indias-hiv-patients-can-hope-against-discrimination_100249992.html#ixzz0STua1ggB

CHAHA moves house!

The CHAHA project team led by Dipti Ghone which has been based at the NMP+ offices for the past 2 years has moved to Pimpri Chinchwad. CHAHA were anxious to be nearer to their clients who come from that area. CHAHA has 3 staff and 10 Outreach workers working for infected and affected children. They are currently helping over 550 children.

The move does not affect the CHAHA Sub-recipient management team of Vinod Jambhale, Balaji Ubarhande and Salim Shaikh, who are still based in the NMP+ offices in Nana Peth.

Below: CHAHA staff moving out. In the picture, from left, Smita Sonar, Meera Trymbake, Dipti Ghone, Ashwini Bamsode, Surekha Mahamuni, Shobha Narkhade and Sanjay Kuldharne



News

A new **Taal Pharmacy** is being planned for **Ahmednagar**. It is hoped that the new pharmacy will open in October or November. We will report on the opening when it happens.

Yuvraj Shinde attended a national consultation on **Greater involvement of People with HIV/AIDS (GIPA)** in Delhi in September, with representatives from the 6 high prevalence states. Many suggestions came forward. NACO has promised to make them into a GIPA Strategic Plan.

An **INP+** organised governance workshop in Mumbai was attended by Vaishali Naik, Satish Rangari, Rajesab Pendhari and Pravin Salunke from NMP+, as well as delegates from four other states.

Needlework training for Beed women



Beed district network has organised a sewing and needlework training programme for women with HIV in poor families. The programme has the support of the Jan Shikshan Santha in Beed. Fifteen positive women are participating in order to stand independently and support their families.

Above, the inauguration of the programme by Mr Shere, a project coordinator from MAVIM.

Jobs created at Nashik

Mahindra & Mahindra have sponsored a course in making office files at Nashik district. Eleven women from the Phoenix Mahila Group took the course, with another 20 to follow. The course is intended to give them an alternative source of income. Mahindra will now provide them space, materials and machinery to make files, and an assured market to sell them.

It was jointly organised by the Nashik district network and Mahindra AAS.

Below: The file making course in progress



HIV vaccine?

A medical trial in Thailand has raised hopes of a major breakthrough in the fight against HIV after scientists found an experimental vaccine had reduced the risk of infection by a third. This is the first time any vaccine has been found to be successful, giving researchers cautious optimism. A combination of two vaccines was tested on HIV-negative Thai men and women aged 18 to 30 at average risk of becoming infected. A relatively small number of people became infected with HIV but the difference was statistically significant. It worked out at a 31% lower risk of infection for the vaccine group.

Media stars

NMP+'s **Vijay and Sangeeta Bhende** (pictured below) and **Yuvraj and Jyoti Shinde** were featured in an **Indian Express** article on positive marriages. The article also featured the matchmaking efforts of the **Satara** network.



PLC has a poster exhibition

Beed PLC organised a poster exhibition at the holy site of Ambjogai during Shravan Mas. Many pilgrims visit the temple at this time. The staff found that a lot of people do not have much knowledge of HIV. They gave out over 1000 brochures as well as other information and educational materials from NMP+ **Below**; The exhibition being opened by Dr. S.P Gite, Senior Medical Officer, SRT Medical College, Ambjogai



NMP+ AGM

President Shivaji Barge has announced that the AGM of the Network of Maharashtra People with HIV is set for the **14th November 2009**. Details on times and location will be announced later.

Stars of the month ☆

Two stars this month. Firstly, Akola district network for some high quality Peer Treatment Educator training, which attracted a good number of participants. This will greatly improve their ability to reach out to people with HIV.

Our second star is the Nashik network for the excellent liaison with Mahindra, which has lead to training and work for women in their Phoenix Mahila Group (see previous page).

Please send pictures, contributions or suggestions for the newsletter to Vincent McDonald, Communications Adviser, at vjmcd@hotmail.co.uk, or to NMP+, 401-403 Ganga Prestige Arcade, Nana Peth, Laxmi Road, Pune 411002, e mail: nmpplus@gmail.com, phone: 020 – 26336084/87