

Adherence Clubs — The Best Way to Care for People Living with HIV

Good news for people suffering from HIV is that there is lifesaving treatment available which helps them stay well and not die from HIV.

However, treatment has enormous challenges. People must take the pills lifelong; they cannot miss any doses, or the medicines may stop working.

They have to make frequent visits to the clinic for checkups and to pick up their medicines. These visits take a lot of time away from work, home, and family. Travel is difficult and costly.

A great solution

I believe the best way to care for people living with HIV and help them with the challenges of treatment is for churches and Christian ministries to set up Adherence Clubs in their communities.

The club model was pioneered by Doctors Without Borders. You can view a nice video about the clubs called *Join the Club* on YouTube.

The clubs meet in the communities where members live, close to home. The clubs are led by a trained church volunteer. Members receive



A woman advocating for an adherence club. She's weary of walking the long distance to the clinic to get her ARVs (HIV medicines).

holistic care — physical, emotional, social, and spiritual care.

Promoting the clubs strategy

To help Christians run effective clubs, I've developed guidelines entitled, *Adherence Clubs: An Essential Strategy to Care for People Living with HIV, Guidelines for Churches and Christian Ministries*. I've been sending out the guidelines to missionaries and ministries engaged in HIV/AIDS.

LifeRise is giving small grants to ministries that want to start the clubs, such as Tenwek Hospital in Kenya (see page 2).

Most important tasks

The guidelines I wrote show clubs how to operate according to the **4 A's**: **A**ttendance; **A**ssessment; **A**dherence; and **A**RT (ART is the name of the HIV treatment medicines).

♦ Attendance

Members attend monthly meetings. Those who miss meetings are followed up.

♦ Assessment

Members are screened with a basic medical checklist. If problems are found, they are sent to the clinic.

♦ Adherence

Members report on how they are taking their medicines. They need to take every pill every day.

♦ ART

Pills pre-packed by the clinic are delivered to members in the club meetings.

Good outcomes

The clubs are improving the health and well-being of people living with HIV. Ministries are showing the Lord's compassion and bringing his healing.

New *LifeRise* Grant Starts Adherence Clubs

LifeRise has given a new grant to Tenwek Hospital, Kenya, to start Adherence Clubs for people living with HIV using the guidelines I wrote (see page 1).

Tenwek is one of the premier mission hospitals in the world. We are delighted that their community health and HIV programs have caught the vision and will work together to start the clubs. A successful program at Tenwek will serve as a model for other ministries.

Medical care

The project is running five adherence clubs serving 100 people living with HIV. HIV treatment medicines from Tenwek Hospital are being sent out to members in the community groups. A Tenwek nurse visits each group quarterly to do medical assessment. Members receive teaching about general health and HIV.

Spiritual care

Bible studies are offered for interested members. In all project activities, members are given an opportunity to hear about Jesus, to

accept him, to be discipled, and to connect with local pastors and churches.

Additional holistic care

Members can share their feelings and struggles of everyday life in special emotional support sessions.

They receive training to on how to generate income, such as raising chickens or vegetable farming.

Prevention

In addition to adherence clubs, the Tenwek project is doing HIV prevention outreaches targeting 18- to 29-year olds, who are at high risk of getting HIV.

Training

The project is training facilitators to lead the groups.

Please pray

Pray for the success of this Tenwek project.



Tenwek Hospital sign — "We Treat, Jesus Heals"

Benefits of HIV Testing for Two Children

Testing people for HIV is beneficial in several ways. Those who test positive (infected) can start on lifesaving HIV treatment as soon as possible. Those who test negative (not infected) have their fears relieved. This is the case in our grant project with Assemblies of God Care (AGCare), a ministry in Nigeria to people living with deafness and other disabilities. Rev. Georgian Ughah is the director of AGCare.

With funds from *LifeRise*, the project is doing HIV education outreaches and HIV testing. One outreach was done at AGCare's school for children with special needs. A student had been sick, and Georgian and the teachers feared that she had HIV. When she tested negative, all were relieved and other causes of her illness could be investigated.

On a village outreach, Georgian met a teenage boy living with deafness. Both his parents died from HIV. Grieving and orphaned, he had dropped out of school. He was scared to be tested but was overjoyed when he tested negative. With new hope, he desires to return to school.

MINISTRY NEWS



LifeRise AIDS Resources brings the compassion, healing, and transformation of Christ in ministry to people suffering because of HIV/AIDS in poor communities worldwide.

In this newsletter, we are pleased to share what God is doing through *LifeRise*. Thank you for joining with us to meet the desperate need through your gifts and prayers.

Dr. Cynthia Calla
Executive Director

www.liferise.org