

## A fantastic feat: Partnership for sustained care, support and treatment



The much-awaited 'Test and Treat' policy was recently launched on April 28, 2017, in New Delhi, by Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda, Honorable Union Minister, Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. This historical event, which saw participation of various representatives from development partners, civil society organizations and community members, was organized by National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) with support from the World Health Organization (WHO). Dr. Arun Kumar Panda, Additional Secretary, NACO gave the opening remark by re-affirming the government's commitment in achieving the UNAIDS 90-90-90 target. At the event, it was heartwarming to hear the testimonials of Ms. Mona Balani and Mr. Chinmay Modi from NCPI+ (National Coalition of PLHIV in India); both of whom shared reminiscence of those days of suffering when ART was not provided as a free service by the Government of India. While profoundly thanking the government for ensuring free treatment services for the PLHIV community, they both also highlighted the tremendous work done by community leaders to provide necessary care and support services for PLHIV, thus enabling treatment adherence and supporting

them to live with dignity and respect. Furthermore, they requested the Government for sustained support and investment in the community strengthening.

At the event, felicitation of eminent personnel was done to acknowledge the enormous contributions made by the medical fraternity and community representatives in strengthening the country's HIV response. Dr. Raman Gangakhedkar, Scientist & Director-in-Charge, National AIDS Research Institute, Pune, Dr. Rajshekhar G., Senior Rheumatologist, Tambaram Hospital, Chennai, and Dr. B. B. Rewari, Scientist, HIV/AIDS WHO SEARO (South East Asia Regional Office), and five community members were felicitated at the event. It was a great honor to see the

felicitation of Ms. Amruta Soni, a Transgender PLHIV activist, Program Manager of the Bihar Vihaan program, NCPI+, Mr. Arafat, a member of the MSM community, an Outreach Worker (ORW) in the Assam Care and Support Center (CSC) ANP+, Ms. Rekha, ORW in the North Delhi DNP+ CSC, Mr. Ravinder, ORW in the Jammu SPYM CSC, and Ms. Hansaben Koli, ORW from Kutch GSNP+ Gujarat. It is noteworthy that this salutation of community workers is a symbol of recognition for all of us who are working hard and fighting against all odds and bottlenecks to provide necessary services and support to the PLHIV community.

Using the opportunity of this landmark event, NCPI+ representatives also presented a pledge to the Union Health Minister as a token of the community's commitment to support the government. "You take care of treatment and we promise to take responsibility of adherence and support to our community" – as Mona put it in her speech.



## *TB harega, hum jitenge*

Here is the story of a 21 year old girl from Kendrapada district, Orissa, who is living with HIV, a survivor of TB, and all in all, leading a happy life with her family. A few years back, however, it was a difficult time for her. She was diagnosed with TB and admitted in the TB ward of SCB Medical College, Cuttack. At this time, she also found out that she was HIV positive. On knowing this, the second year graduation student went through mental trauma. She dropped out of her TB treatment and later on it was found that she had MDR-TB. This is when the CSC intervened. Outreach workers followed up with her till she completed her TB treatment. When she faced difficulties in taking ART without interruption as her residence was far from the ART centre, the outreach workers convinced her caretakers on the importance of ART and need for treatment adherence. The counsellors also encouraged her to have a positive outlook towards life. She attended support group meetings, which helped her understand the situation, get peer support and ultimately look at life in a hopeful manner. These efforts proved to be fruitful; today, she is an active member at the CSC and encourages others to lead a healthy life.

# CCM Oversight Committee visits Bharatpur



CCM oversight committee members interact with GF partners



Visit at the ART centre, Bharatpur

The members of the oversight committee of Global Fund's Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) visited the CSC in Bharatpur, Rajasthan on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2017. The Committee consisted of experts from Civil Society organisations working in the field of HIV, TB and Malaria, and representatives from key communities. The members interacted with the staff at the centre and had queries about the functioning of the centre, services provided to the community and challenges faced. They were also keen to learn about linkages of PLHIV with various social welfare schemes and entitlements.

The committee appreciated the strong and effective coordination between the CSC and ART centre, and highlighted the need for a larger coordination among all the Global Fund supported programme implementing partners, at the district and state levels.

## Vihaan Updates

- 11,46,977** PLHIV received care & support services
- 5,07,848** PLHIV and family members linked with social protection schemes
- 1,14,455** Family members and partners of registered clients linked to ICTC
- 3,11,142** Lost-to-Follow-Up PLHIV tracked and returned to ART services
- 9,10,633** PLHIV screened for TB

(Through April 2017)

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