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Learning about HIV/AIDS: our schools, our future, our responsibility

HIV/AIDS & Our Secondary School & College



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of the Secretary

Date: 19/06/07

File: CM2-4-2

SECRETARY'S CIRCULAR NO. 49/2007

SUBJECT: ON THE NEW HIV/AIDS/STI IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND ABC APPROACH

The HIV/AIDS/STI Implementation Plan for the National Education System 2007-2012 was launched at the Senior Education Officers' Conference, Lae, on Wednesday 23rd May 2007. This was a major achievement for the Department and will guide us all in the response to the HIV and STI epidemic. We are all at risk of HIV and we must all work together to prevent the spread of the virus and care for and support those affected and infected.

All Provincial Education Advisers, Inspectors, Primary, Secondary and tertiary institutions will be sent a copy of the Plan. On the reverse of this Circular are guidelines for all schools to help you implement the HIV/AIDS Policy in your school.

ABC – Abstain from sex, both be faithful and both be tested, use a condom

ABC is essential to protect young people and teachers from risk. This is the national response to the HIV epidemic and Department of Education Policy. Vital life skills include saying "no" to sex, resisting pressure to take risks, critical thinking, strong values, negotiating safer sex, being assertive and the correct use of male and female condoms.

Schools are expected to begin teaching life skills for HIV/AIDS from Grade 5 in Health and within Personal Development in Grade 6-10. This includes teaching about male and female condoms and should be in consultation with your local community.

Male and female condoms should be available to all staff and all boarding students as stated in the HIV/AIDS Implementation Plan (1.5.2 ii page 11 and 3.1.3 ii page 18). Condoms and life skills are proven and effective strategies for saving lives.

I encourage all teachers and officers to have an HIV blood test. They are free, fast and confidential. Your nearest testing centre can be found through your Provincial AIDS Committee or your Church agency.

I remind all staff that no student or teacher or officer must be discriminated against because of their HIV status. Stigma and discrimination are against the law and against Christian principles of love and care.

Our challenge

The HIV/AIDS/STI Implementation Plan 2007-2012 is challenging and ambitious. It is also practical and based on the needs of our students and our teachers. Please take the time to read and discuss the Plan and the Policy. You should develop your own HIV/AIDS plan for your school. Many of you are writing School Learning Improvement Plans and HIV/AIDS activities should be part of these.

The HIV epidemic is a major challenge for all Papua New Guineans but we can make a difference if we work together. Education is the key to protecting our country.

God bless your work.

DR. JOSEPH PAGELIO
Secretary of Education

Who can help?

Your cluster primary and secondary schools

Recent graduates from Teachers Colleges, UOG, PAU or PNGEI

Teachers College HIV/AIDS trainers

Your Standards & Guidance officers and other DoE officers

Your local church and health services

Your Provincial AIDS Committee

UNFPA Population Education, VSO, UNICEF, Anglicare, Save the Children, PNG Family Health Association, Hope Worldwide and others

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