

MID YEAR Newsletter

2022 Quarter 2

WAAF-IHCC HOSTS DR. ATUL GAWANDE AND THE USAID TEAM



A nurse from the WAAF clinic leading the USAID team during a tour of the facility

Based on WAAF and IHCC's impressive work on donor-supported projects such as the Meeting Targets and Maintaining Epidemic Control (EpiC project) and Differentiated Service Delivery (DSD) options being offered, WAAF and its clinic the International Health Care Centre (IHCC) had the privilege of hosting a high-powered delegation from USAID and the FHI 360 team. The team was led by Dr. Atul Gawande, the Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. The brief visit started with a national scope of HIV Self-Test (HIVST) and Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) uptake in Ghana by the Program Manager of the National AIDS Control Program, Dr. Stephen Ayisi Addo. The team was also interested in learning more about WAAF and its onsite clinic, the International Health Care Centre's history, and its work on past and present projects. They also sought to learn more about HIVST and PrEP uptake among key populations serviced by WAAF and IHCC's projects. PrEP Champions from WAAF's implementing partners Worldwide International Youth Organization (WIYO) and Priority on Rights and Sexual Health (PORSH) were present to testify to the benefits of Pre-exposure prophylaxis PrEP Nurses from IHCC shared their experiences on the project and demonstrated how services are rendered from the mobile clinic during community service delivery. The WAAF and IHCC team remain grateful to PEPFAR, USAID, FHI 360, and NACP for their generous support to WAAF, IHCC and the various projects.

JSI HOLDS A PRESS SOIREE IN HONOUR OF PRESIDENT

John Snow Incorporated- Ghana in April 2022, held a press soiree in honor of its new president and Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Margaret Crotty at the Labadi Beach Hotel in Accra. This followed the loosening of the COVID-19 restrictions in Ghana. JSI-Ghana seized the opportunity to bring all its stakeholders in Ghana together to physically meet after two years of virtual meetings. The Soiree was to have all partners meet the new president, share goodwill messages, and encourage all stakeholders to keep working hard as they have done over the years.

All stakeholders present were also informed of the opening of an Accra JSI office to smoothen the operations of the various projects. In addition to the WAAF staff, the occasion was also graced by stakeholders from the World Education Ghana, the Ghana AIDS Commission, World International Youth Organization, and the media across Ghana.



USAID CAST PAYS A WORKING VISIT TO WAAF- IHCC



USAID, FHI-360 & WAAF team in front of the mobile clinic van

A 10-member team from PEPFAR - USAID consisting of students and staff from the USA and some African Countries paid a working visit to WAAF and IHCC to learn about the Meeting Targets and Maintaining Epidemic Control (EpiC) project. With support from FHI 360 Ghana EpiC team, the visitors received an introduction and overview of the project. The WAAF team gave a brief background of WAAF and IHCC, its past and current projects, activities, as well as progress and results achieved so far on the EpiC project.

The WAAF team seized the opportunity to showcase the results of an innovative tool for enhanced booking of appointments for services by community members, namely the QuickRes platform. At the end of the presentations and interactions, the team did a walk-through of the IHCC facility and interacted with the staff. The meeting was crowned with a tour of the WAAF-IHCC mobile clinic van, which remains at the center of WAAF and IHCC's differentiated service delivery efforts.

CQUIN COUNTRY VISIT TO WAAF & IHCC

In May 2022, WAAF-IHCC hosted a team from the Coverage, Quality, and Impact Network (CQUIN), led by Dr. Peter Preko, the Project Director. The visit was coordinated by the National AIDS Control Program, NACP. CQUIN is a multi-country learning network dedicated to expanding and improving Differentiated Service Delivery (DSD) in HIV treatment and care. As part of their technical support and mentorship to network countries, the visit was meant for CQUIN to be introduced to WAAF-IHCC's M&E systems, its readiness to report on DSD indicators, lessons, and best practices recorded so far within WAAF and IHCC's DSD implementation. It was a highly successful visit.



Featured articles

WAAF joins 1st COP Meeting

WAAF was part of a New Community of Practice Inception (COP) Meeting organized by Star Ghana Foundation under the Giving for Change Project. A Community of Practice is a group of people who share a common concern, a set of problems, or an interest in a topic and come together to fulfill both individual and group goals. COPs are places of learning and sharing, testing new approaches and ways of working.

The purpose of the meeting was to convene and build a sense of community among Civil Society Actors to strengthen the demand side of the development system. It also strengthened the civic and civil society space through domestic resources mobilization, philanthropy, and community giving for social change and development. According to research, only 10% of these philanthropic funds are mobilized internally. The aims were to increase the capacity of CoPs for domestic resource mobilization and to use international donors to support community philanthropy as a strategy for increasing community ownership of development.

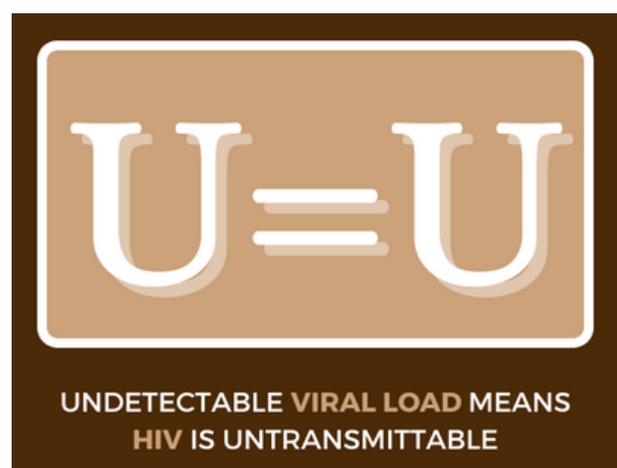
The initial steps taken in this first meeting were to elect a Convener and Co - Conveners of which WAAF's Director of Programmes; Dr. Paul Sowah won the Convener slot for the southern COP. WAAF looks forward to the success of this COP.



Participants seated in the STAR Ghana COP Meeting

More Clients attain U=U @ WAAF – IHCC

For over a year, IHCC, alongside most ART facilities in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, suffered delays in receiving HIV viral load results for clients. Ghana's Viral load testing operates within a Hub and spokes model where viral load samples from clients of ART facilities across a region are sent to a Hub where viral load analysis equipment is housed. Due to a breakdown of this equipment in the later part of 2020 at the Greater Accra regional Hub, viral load test results and subsequently collection of viral load samples came to a halt. In February of 2022, a new viral load equipment was operationalized and Viral load testing services for clients took off once again. Since then, thanks to the enhanced capacity of the current viral load equipment, results are received in a timely manner, and this is helping clients and service providers confirm the effectiveness of ARVs. Clients who are adhering to their treatment and are taking ARVs consistently are attaining viral load suppression. In other words, their viral load test results are at an Undetectable level. In May 2022 alone, IHCC received 89 viral load test results of which 81 (91%) were virally suppressed – (Undetectable).



Featured articles

EpiC LIVES Refresher Training



The battle against HIV can never be won if issues of Intimate partner violence (IPV) are left out of the care cascade. IPV continues to be one of the major bottlenecks to successfully completing the care cascade. The USAID FHI-360 EpiC project seeks to address all barriers to reaching all persons considered to be at a higher risk of contracting HIV, therefore, IPV is also addressed. A refresher training on GBV/IPV, brought together staff of WAAF, IHCC and its second tiers from PORSH and WIYO to train them on how to detect cases of Intimate Partner Violence as well as the best ways to give care while also getting to address the issue.

EpiC Refresher Training

In June, FHI360 organized a three-day refresher training for staff and volunteers of WAAF, IHCC, WIYO and PORSH to build capacity of staff and volunteers on the project with respect to reporting on finance and M&E tools on the project. The training took place on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th of June at Tomreik Hotel, East-Legon, Accra. The facilitators for the training were, the finance officer for FHI360 on EpiC and the M&E and Senior Technical Advisor EpiC FHI360. They took the staff through financial reporting, which included the requirements and proper use of funds from PEPFAR and USAID, progress reporting and quarterly report writing as well as marking requirements, and lastly, the monitoring and evaluation tools used on the EpiC project.

IMPAACT4C19 PCR TESTING TRAINING

WAAF-IHCC, in kick-starting the implementation of the IMPAACT4C19 project, carried out a 2-day training on COVID-19 Antigen Testing. This training was for Health workers from selected health facilities within the greater Accra region and was held at the Miklin Hotel in Accra on the 9th and 10th of June 2022.

The purpose of the training was to equip participants with knowledge and skills in COVID-19 Antigen Testing and to prepare them for conducting COVID-19 testing services at their various TB and ART Units. Four representatives from each of the 10 selected health facilities participated in the training, which consisted of the head of the ART unit, clinical staff from the ART unit, clinical staff from TB unit and one person from the laboratory of each facility.

The training was facilitated by a team from the national public health reference laboratory, the official national trainers for Covid-19 testing policies and guidelines in Ghana.

In summary, the project's objectives and goals are to ensure that persons living with HIV and/or TB get tested and vaccinated for COVID-19 to promote their overall well-being.



Featured articles

Reducing Human Rights and Related Barriers to HIV/TB Services



Addressing human rights related barriers and mitigating their effects on HIV service provision is key to increasing access to ART service among MSM. This intervention is to ensure free and easy access to HIV prevention and treatment services as well as to reduce stigma and discrimination across all the 8 project districts of the “Scaling up Quality HIV Care Cascade through Community Engagement and Addressing Human Rights Barriers” project managed by WAPCAS through funding from the Global Fund’s New Funding Module III and implemented by WAAF. WAAF continues to empower all 12 Peer Paral-

egals on the project to provide education on Human Rights, Gender Based-Violence, Stigma and Discrimination, the Patients Charter, the Criminal Offenses Act and the Ghana AIDS Commission Act 938 to its target audience and linking those who face abuse to law enforcement agencies and available legal services for the necessary support. The Peer Paralegals between April 2202 - June 2022 received and documented 7 cases of GBV and human rights abuse perpetrated against MSM in their operational districts. All the cases recorded were documented and followed up by the peer paralegals. There were 3 cases of Verbal Abuse which were reported in Komenda Edina Eguafo Abirem and later resolved by the peer paralegal and the field



officer in charge of the district. 1 suspected case of blackmail and theft, and 1 other case of Kidnap and Extortion were also recorded in the Cape Coast Metropolitan and have since been reported to the police and are being followed up to have the perpetrators arrested. 1 case of extortion was recorded and documented by the Peer Paralegal in the Effutu Municipal. The case involved an MSM community member whose phone was taken by a non-community member with a promise to engage him sexually. With the help of the Peer Paralegal and the Field Officer, the phone was retrieved, and the matter settled amicably. The team in the Agona West Municipal also reported 1 case of outing and labelling. An elderly woman who sells closer to one the hotspot located in the Agona West Municipal labelled the place as blood drawing point for ritual purposes.

She further outed the owner of the shop that was used for the outreach as an MSM. The case reported to CHRAJ by

Peer Paralegals but the case was dropped when the woman came to apologize to the shop owner and the Paralegal. The Field Officer and the Paralegals went ahead to educate the woman and she has now become an ally.

Featured articles

John Snow Incorporated Presents Motorbikes to support WAAF's Project in the Western Region

The Western Region of Ghana has a vast landscape and CSOs working in this region many a time face challenges with transportation. To help address this challenge, John Snow Incorporated, the managing entity of the USAID Strengthening the Care Continuum project, presented motorbikes to CSOs implementing the project. The motorbikes will enhance transportation for project staff so their efforts can reach more people at a faster pace which will enhance project outcomes.



PROSPECTIVE INTERNSHIP SITE VISIT

As the summer draws near, universities across the world explore possible internship sites for their students to have their practicum. WAAF has consistently hosted students from various universities in Ghana and abroad for internship opportunities where they acquire practical skills in various disciplines. In preparing towards applying for internship opportunities at WAAF and IHCC, professors and international program coordinators of universities abroad visited WAAF to learn more about WAAF and IHCC, what and how interns are engaged, how WAAF can help them achieve their internship goals to meet the requirements of their school. WAAF hosted groups from universities like UTICA, University of Georgia, St. Catherine University and many more.



Photo Gallery



COVID-19 PCR Testing Training under IMPAACT4C19



EpiC Refresher Training at Tomriek hotel

Featured articles

Marburg Virus Outbreak

On July 17, 2022, Ghana declared a Marburg virus disease (MVD) outbreak, with four cases reported in Adansi North District, Ashanti region, and Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District, Savannah Region. The World Health Organization (WHO) is working diligently with Ghanaian health authorities to locate MVD cases, identify transmission sources, and educate people about the risk and dangers of the virus.

The Marburg virus is a rare and life-threatening disease that regularly causes outbreaks in many regions throughout the African continent. MVD spreads through contact with an infected person's bodily fluids and contacts with infected animals, such as bats and nonhuman primates. To prevent MVD transmission, avoid contact with those showing symptoms of the virus, such as muscle pain, rash, fever, chills, vomiting, chest pain, sore throat, abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, and unexplained bleeding. It is also advised not to consume bushmeat during the current MVD outbreak.

Featured articles

Photo Gallery



Inspection of the mobile clinic van



Dr. Gawande by the mobile clinic van



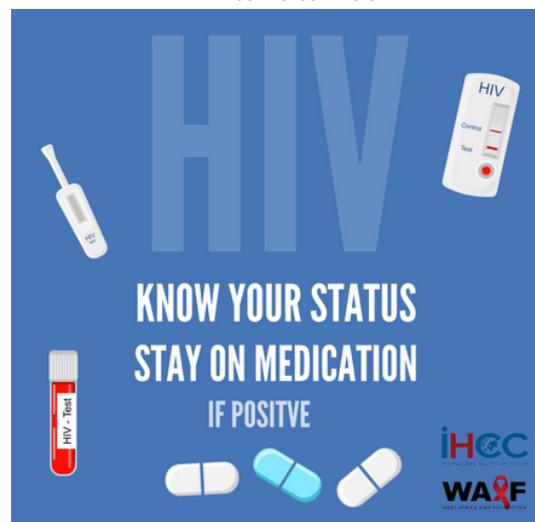
CQUINN reps reviewing how clinic data is stored



St. Catherine University donates clinical items to IHCC



CQUIN representatives on a tour of IHCC



GET INTOUCH WITH WAAF & IHCC

WAAF and IHCC enjoy servicing the people of Ghana; we continue to ensure our services are available to all and that absolutely no one is left behind. We also enjoy sharing our experiences as we continue our journey in the areas of health in Ghana focusing on HIV and TB. You can reach us and keep in touch with us via any of the under-listed contact details. We look forward to an exciting year in 2021 and you can follow our work on these same platforms.

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