

WEST AFRICA AIDS FOUNDATION & INTERNATIONAL HEALTHCARE CENTRE

Q1 2025 NEWSLETTER

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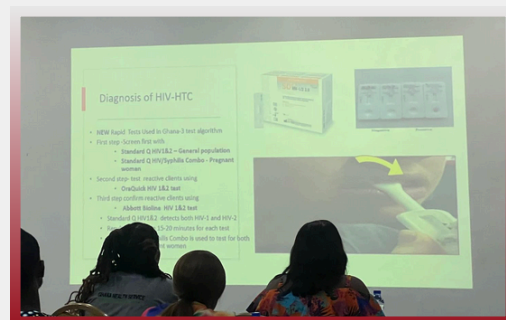
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PPAG Refresher Training of ‘Models of Hope’ in Greater Accra and Volta Regions

The Model of Hope Concept has continued to be a key intervention in HIV programming in Ghana. It has fostered a sense of optimism and positive expectations for the future among people living with HIV. In January 2025, to strengthen the capacity of these models, the National AIDS Control Program (NACP) and the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) conducted a two day refresher training for ‘Models of Hope’ within the Greater Accra and Volta regions of Ghana, aimed at making sure participants were equipped with up-to-date knowledge on HIV management and to provide enhanced practical tools for them to support People Living with HIV (PLHIV). If all these are in place, ultimate health outcomes would be assured. A ‘Model of Hope’ from WAAF participated in the refresher training.



The first session of the training focused on the overview of the HIV epidemic in Ghana, where participants learned about the patterns of transmission, the types of HIV prevalent in Africa and in Ghana, as well as key strategies to meet the 95-95-95 targets. Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) was emphasized, highlighting the need for all pregnant women and their partners to test for HIV as early as possible during pregnancy, for enhanced treatment success for mother and infant.

The second session focused on the importance of index testing. In this strategy, individuals newly diagnosed with HIV are encouraged to confidentially share information about their sexual partners with healthcare providers, who then offer HIV testing services to these contacts. Emphasis was also placed on using available data to guide efforts for HIV testing during outreaches in communities.



Positive living for PLHIV, which includes adhering to antiretroviral therapy (ART), maintaining a balanced nutrition, using condoms consistently, attending regular health check-ups, and avoiding substance abuse were also touched on. Finally, the connection between HIV and Tuberculosis (TB), a disease that poses a significant threat to PLHIV due to their compromised immune systems, was handled and the

need for regular screening of all PLHIV during routine healthcare visits was emphasized. In summary, this refresher training reinforced the key elements of living positively with HIV which are: adherence to medication, balanced nutrition, and regular TB screenings, with communication and counseling remaining vital in supporting PLHIV so they attain a healthy lifestyle, achieve viral suppression, with ultimate improved treatment outcomes.

Empowering Communities to Combat HIV: Highlights from PPAG's One-Day Workshop

On January 22nd 2025, the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) in collaboration with the Ghana Health Service (GHS) held a one-day workshop aimed at enhancing the skills of ART unit nurses, data officers, and midwives to enable them improve supervision of community cadres involved in the Global Fund funded Community Systems Strengthening (CSS) component of the Grant Cycle 7 HIV program. WAAF had 2 participants at this meeting. Ghana's new HIV testing algorithm was highlighted at the training alongside exploring the potential of HIV self-testing (HIVST), with the goal of improving testing rates. The 'triple elimination strategy', a comprehensive approach aimed at simultaneously eliminating mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) of HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis B virus (HBV) by integrating testing, treatment, and prevention interventions for all these three diseases within the same healthcare setting was also highlighted. Addressing Stigma and discrimination—major barriers to effective HIV care, provided the platform for participants to discuss strategies to combat both external and internal stigma, such as strengthening anti-discrimination laws, enhancing basic fact education on HIV, addressing misconceptions and training of healthcare workers in compassionate care.



The workshop also emphasized the critical role of community cadres, including peer supporters like Community Adolescent Treatment Supporters (CATS) and Mentor Mothers, who are essential in ensuring treatment adherence and who offer guidance to those affected by HIV. In conclusion, the training recommended stronger collaboration between healthcare providers and community cadres, continued efforts to reduce stigma, and a commitment to improving HIV services across Ghana.

Raising Awareness on Lymphatic Filariasis: A Training Session at IHCC



On the 12 of February 2025, a training session on Lymphatic Filariasis also known as Elephantiasis was held at the WAAF clinic, the International Health Care Centre (IHCC) located at Haatso in the Ga East District of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The training was an important way to fight this disease, which is one of the many tropical neglected diseases that, due to being neglected, continue to affect many, especially impoverished communities. The training provided valuable insights to staff, equipping them with knowledge on how to raise awareness and educating the community about this disease as well as preparing them to handle cases. Staff were taken through various clinical presentations, mode of transmission, preventive strategies and management of the disease and its complications as well as the vital role counselling of affected individuals plays in managing the condition. Lymphatic filariasis is caused by parasitic worms and spread through mosquito bites. While many infected individuals show no immediate symptoms, the disease can cause extensive damage to the lymphatic system, resulting in long-term complications, of which lymphedema, where fluid builds up in tissues, causing swelling, most often in the legs, but could also show up in the breasts, and genital areas is common.

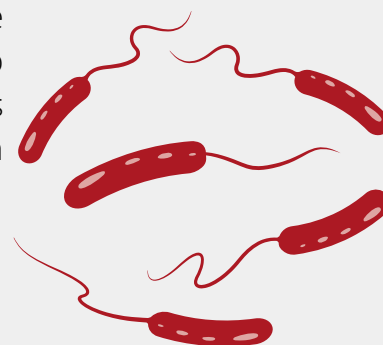


The impact of Lymphatic Filariasis extends beyond physical impairment, and often leads also to sexual dysfunction, social stigma, and a diminished quality of life. Affected individuals may face ostracism due to their appearance compounding the emotional and psychological toll of the disease. To combat Lymphatic Filariasis, several measures are needed, including mosquito control, mass drug administration, and integration of filariasis programs with other nematode and vector control efforts. These strategies not only aim to reduce transmission but also provide treatment and relief to those affected. Through continued education and collaboration, WAAF and IHCC are committed to playing their part in reducing the spread of Lymphatic Filariasis and supporting affected individuals in reclaiming their health and well-being

Strengthening Cholera Preparedness: Training Program for Health Staff



Each year, especially at the beginning of the rainy season in Ghana, cholera cases tend to be on the rise. As part of efforts to enhance prevention and adequately manage cases, health workers from various hospitals and clinics across Accra gathered at the Ga-East Hospital, which is the Infectious Disease Hospital of Ghana, for an intensive training on cholera case management and infection prevention control. The training aimed to strengthen the preparedness of healthcare workers in managing cholera outbreaks effectively. The focus of the training therefore, was on improving cholera diagnosis, treatment, and prevention, while emphasizing the critical importance of infection control measures in healthcare settings. Participants received up-to-date guidance on rehydration therapy, treatment and sanitation protocols, and community education strategies. IHCC was represented by two staff members in the training. A step-down training at the facility which included all staff of IHCC was done immediately after the initial training. This was to ensure that healthcare workers at the facility are adequately equipped with the latest protocols and best practices to manage cholera cases at the facility and community. Enhancing skills and reinforcing prevention is crucial in safeguarding public health against any anticipated cholera outbreaks.



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, TB and all associated conditions. 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 2025 and you can follow our work on these same platforms.

Physical Office Addresses

WAAF HEADQUARTERS, GREATER ACCRA

Address: Plot 650 Ecomog Road, Haatso, Greater Accra.
Opposite Benab Oil filling station. The closest station is Haatso Station.

Contact Numbers: +233 302 545 054 | +233 243 362 447

Please direct general inquiries to: info@waafweb.org

WAAF WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE

WAAF Takoradi Office GI18,
Adjoa Ghartey Street Near Mexico Hotel
GPS Address: WS-201-7442

Contact number: 0249354576/ 0245021821/ 0243362447

Email: info@waafweb.org

WAAF ESSIAMA OFFICE

Essiama on top of the Ecobank Building opposite Dukes filling Station

GPS Address: WE-0206-7313

Contact number: 0553964934/ 0249354576/ 0243362447

Email: info@waafweb.org

WAAF NORTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE

Address: Savelugu Municipal Health Directorate

Contact Number: 0243675303/ 0243362447

Email: info@waafweb.org

WAAF Ashanti, Bono and Bono East Offices

- **KMA/Atwima Kwamwoma** - Plot No. E7, Daban Pennii, Kumasi Daban

- **Techiman** - TF5564, Diasempa

- **Sunyani** - New Dormaa Extension Pastoral Road Plot No. 188 Ethiopia Junction

- **Obuasi Municipality** Community Nyameso 044 Manganese PTH House N0. Ac-
116-7735

- **Bonsu** - Beside Kpogas Furnitures- Tech Traffic Light