



PEPFAR Vietnam Quarterly Newsletter



January-March 2011

Launch of the Partnership Framework Steering Committee



The inter-governmental Partnership Framework Steering Committee met for the first time on March 9. The Steering Committee is comprised of senior representatives from different ministries of the Government of Vietnam and the U.S. Mission. The role of the Steering Committee is

to provide guidance over and monitor the implementation of the Partnership Framework for HIV/AIDS Control and Prevention between the U.S. Government and the Government of Vietnam.

The first meeting was co-chaired by Vice Minister of Health Trinh Quan Huan and Chargé d'Affaires Virginia Palmer, and attended by other members of the Steering Committee, and leads of joint technical working groups. The participants looked back at PEPFAR activities and accomplishments and discussed directions and priorities for the next phase and working principles between the two Governments as well as among

different ministries of Vietnam and other stakeholders.

In the spirit of the meeting, the Partnership Framework Implementation Plan will soon be finalized to better facilitate the implementation of all PEPFAR supported programs and services in Vietnam.



Symposium Brings Vietnamese and International Medical Laboratorians to Bangkok

From March 16 to 18, CDC/PEPFAR Vietnam hosted a symposium on *Quality Management for Medical Laboratories*. The symposium, which aimed to help the Government of Vietnam to recognize the importance of developing laboratory quality management systems (QMS) and establish national laboratory standards and regulations, was attended by Vice Minister of Health Nguyen Thi Xuyen (middle in photo), directors from Ministry of Health (MOH) branches and national institutes, and representatives from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh medical universities. Other participants included CDC Cambodia, Cambodia Ministry of Health, FHI Bangkok, AFRIMS Thailand, and Clinton Foundation Vietnam.

The lack of QMS in Vietnam has



impacted the standardization and improvement of the quality of laboratory diagnostic testing performed in laboratories at all levels and within different institutes of MOH. The concept of quality assurance (QA) and laboratory accreditation is also very new in Vietnam. The symposium kicked-off with a day-long site visit to the facilities of the Bureau of Laboratory Quality Standards (BLQS). BLQS is an institution within the Thai Ministry of Public Health responsible for implementing quality management

systems by providing proficiency testing for clinical laboratories, laboratory accreditation, and technical support for the development of quality assurance programs in Thailand and other countries. BLQS has demonstrated excellent QA and contributed to better quality of life of the Thai people.

After the visit, the participants learned about international experience and best practices from experts on laboratory services quality management from the United States, Thailand, and Vietnam, as well as WHO. The speakers presented a comprehensive vision of QMS including such as CLSI Quality Management Certificate Program and Strengthening Laboratory Management Towards Accreditation (SLMTA).

The symposium educated the senior management from all branches of MOH and national

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PEPFAR Vietnam Team Meets in Hoi An



From February 28 to March 2, the PEPFAR Vietnam inter-agency team had a retreat in the central region city of Hoi An. The main objectives of the retreat were to improve working relations, review PEPFAR team structures, and develop a plan for strengthening the technical assistance (TA) model. Over the three days of the retreat, the team discussed personal preferences and working styles, the roles of technical working groups, technical assistance model, and leadership in PEPFAR.



New MMT Clinic Opens in Ho Chi Minh City

Deputy Principal Officer Angela Dickey from the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City joined municipal authorities to open a new Methadone Maintenance Treatment Clinic supported by USAID/PEPFAR in District 8 on January 6. This raised the number of MMT clinics in the city to five, treating over 1,000 drug users. This clinic will also complement the other HIV related services available in the district.



DPO Angela Dickey (middle) tours the clinic.

To date, 20 MMT clinics, all of which receive PEPFAR support, are in operation in Dien Bien, Hanoi, Hai Phong, Hai Duong, Nam Dinh, Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City, and Can Tho.

World TB Day Highlights Public-Private Mix Activities



The Hai Phong Health Department celebrated the achievements and scale up of public-private mix (PPM) activities to support the Stop Tuberculosis Strategy in Vietnam on March 24, 2011. The event brought together public and private sector partners to discuss expansion of PPM activities for improving TB case detection and treatment in Hai Phong, as well as to celebrate the successful collaboration and progress so far.

Since the project began in 2007, case detection of TB infection has increased in the four project districts, with 1,506 TB-suspected clients referred from pharmacies in the first two years alone.

This year, USAID implementing partner, PATH, scaled up the Hai Phong PPM model to three additional provinces: Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho, and Nghe An. Also on the World TB Day, events were held in each of these provinces to kick off PPM activities for TB control.



Symposium Brings Vietnamese and International Medical Laboratorians to Bangkok

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institutes of Vietnam on what QMS is and how important QA programs are for laboratories. Several participants expressed interest in developing and implementing QMS in Vietnam. Vice Minister Xuyen was very supportive of developing plans for applying QMS in Vietnam, affirming in her closing remarks, that "Vietnam will hold a workshop to implement QMS." She informed that Quality Centers have been created to establish standards for laboratories and to

develop QA programs. She acknowledged the importance of training and educational programs for laboratorians and managers and showed her support for implementing SLMTA and the CLSI Quality Management Certificate Program in Vietnam.

Following the symposium, CDC/PEPFAR will work closely with Vietnam Authority on Medical Services to develop the proposed programs and continue to develop and implement programs for improving laboratory systems and services provided to patients.

Building Excellence in Public Health Management

SUCCESS STORY

The Vietnam Leadership and Management Program (VLMP) is a collaborative effort between the Hanoi School of Public Health (HSPH), CDC's Sustainable Management Development Program (SMDP), and the Vietnam Authority on AIDS Control (VAAC). VLMP is part of the project "Enhancing Public Health Capacity for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care in Vietnam" supported by CDC/PEPFAR, which aims to strengthen the training system, data management system, and management capacity in HIV/AIDS prevention and control programs in Vietnam. For the last six years, the program has built management capacity to improve the delivery and quality of HIV/AIDS services at the provincial and district levels in Vietnam.



VAAC and HSPH receive 2009 CDC Center of Global Health Medals from CDC Director Dr. Bruce Struminger for significant contributions to the field of global health.

conduct training-of-trainers management courses that were originally developed by HSPH and SMDP and to provide follow-up supervision of management projects undertaken by the trainees.

"VLMP has trained over 500 HIV managers at the provincial level," said Dr. Bruce Struminger, CDC Vietnam Director in a recent planning workshop with HSPH and VAAC. A key component of the training is a 4-6 month period to apply new management skills directly in their work settings. "Graduates have made important management improvements in key HIV prevention and treatment areas including in VCT, out-patient care, harm reduction and HIV education, leading to better quality service delivery and positive health outcomes," said Dr. Struminger.

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Together HSPH, SMDP and VAAC have established regional public health management training center in Hanoi (HSPH), Da Nang (the Preventive Medicine Center) and Ho Chi Minh City (Pasteur Institute) to serve the entire country. Vietnamese faculty at the three regional training centers are graduates of SMDP's Management for International Public Health course in Atlanta who, after returning home, developed and staffed the regional centers. They subsequently trained 28 people to

V	Quality Improvement QI/TQM (since 2005)
L	Project Management PM (since 2007)
M	Evidence-based Planning and Proposal Writing (since 2010)
P	Other management skills: leadership, teamwork, supportive supervision, organizational excellence, and evaluation

Arrivals this Quarter

Welcome to the team!



Nguyen Thi Hoai Thu
Sr. Program Management Specialist / CDC



Vu Huy Hoang
Public Health Specialist on Addiction / SAMHSA



Nguyen Thi Le Huong
Administrative Assistant / DoD

Addict Breaks Habit, Builds Coalition for Women Combating Drugs and HIV

SUCCESS STORY

Within two weeks of her release from a state drug rehabilitation center, Pham Thi Minh landed a health promotion job and was voted by self-help peers as their leader. In just two years, she has built up a network of more than 1,000 women who support each other to stay safe from disease and help generate income to support their families.

"My life is changing so fast," Minh said at her office in Hanoi. Recognized by local authorities and the police for her work through the support of USAID/PEPFAR, Minh is taking her world by storm. But she had to overcome a rocky start in life and defeat an 11-year heroin addiction to do it.

After her father died when she was nine months old, her mother had to provide for the family of five children by cooking fried breadsticks eaten with Vietnam's famous *pho* soup. Minh helped her mother with the business until she was 18, but increasingly she was attracted to the "fancy girls" and gang culture and followed the crowd down the road of drug use. Her mother tried everything to help her quit, using herbs and acupuncture, but to no avail.

"I did whatever I had to do to get money to feed my habit," she said. As a result, she spent time in jail and was sent to a state-run rehabilitation center three times, spending a total of three and a half years in the facility. While at the center the last time, she met an outreach worker who talked to her about self-help groups for women returning from rehabilitation centers and how they could support her when she was

released. She gave it little thought at the time, but remembered the woman who later helped her get on her feet again.



Pham Thi Minh (right) meets a loan recipient and member of a coalition of women's self-help groups supported by USAID and other donors in Hanoi.

On Liberation Day, April 30, 2008, the annual holiday marking the end of the war, Minh was released and wasted no time making a fresh start. She joined the self-help group three days later, displaying immediate leadership potential. Within days, the group chose her as leader. She declined, saying she needed to get to know the group's activities better, and assumed the leadership role six months later. Just after leaving the center, she also was hired as a peer educator in the USAID-supported Women's Health Project in Hanoi.

Since that time, there has been no holding her back. Minh was invited to the first annual review meeting of the Vietnam Civil Society Partnership Platform on AIDS (VCSPA), where she was promptly elected as a member of the VCSPA steering committee. Her group was praised as an effective model to help drug users to quit drugs and to prevent relapse.

"In the past, my only friends were drug users," she said with a smile. "Now I can meet with other people and be treated as an equal among local and international NGOs. I've become a completely different person."

Minh coordinates the Coming Home Coalition that includes a network of 400 sexual partners of drug users, 300 injecting drug users and 280 street-based sex workers. The coalition provides referrals to voluntary counseling and testing for sexually transmitted diseases, counseling and training on harm reduction, loans for women to generate income, and a drop-in center where women can meet others, take a shower, and receive support. Separately, she manages the "Bullet Point" self-help group for drug users.

In December 2010, Minh received a certificate of achievement from the Chairman of the People's Committee of Hanoi's Hai Ba Trung District in recognition of her "outstanding achievements and contributions" in drug control. It was the first organization for drug users to be officially recognized by the government for its contribution. Minh is pleased that her district has seen how the community can respond to drug addiction and help fight HIV. "If my district can do that, other districts can do the same."

Pregnant with her first child, Minh, 35, continues to think about how she can help others. "People should know that they can stop taking heroin and do so much more with their lives. Most important for women is that they are treated equally, and that they think and live positively."

R. Nyberg, USAID/Vietnam