



PEPFAR Vietnam Quarterly Newsletter



October - December 2009

PEPFAR Vietnam Celebrates World AIDS Day 2009

Art Performance and Exchange Program to commemorate World AIDS Day and Vietnam National Action Month for HIV/AIDS 2009, Youth Theater, Hanoi, December 1, 2009.



U.S. Ambassador Michael Michalak delivers World AIDS Day speech, recommitting U.S. support to address HIV/AIDS.



Vietnam Administration for AIDS Control Deputy Director-General, Dr. Bui Duc Duong, presents activities during the national action month for HIV/AIDS control.



Popular pop singer Duc Tuan, PEPFAR Vietnam Goodwill Friend, performs as part of the program.

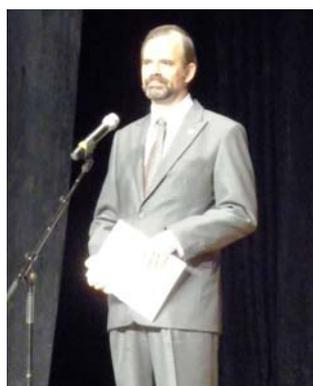


Vietnam Youth Theater actors and actresses perform the PEPFAR supported HIV/AIDS themed physical drama "Stereo Man and Destinations of Lives".

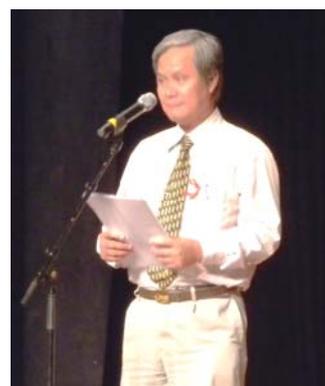
A similar program at Ho Chi Minh City Opera House on December 7, 2009.



The two events were attended by hundreds of participants from government ministries, Youth Union, international and local NGOs, universities and colleges.



U.S. Consul General Kenneth Fairfax stresses the PEPFAR theme for World AIDS Day 2009 - "Working together".



Ho Chi Minh City Provincial AIDS Committee Vice President, Dr. Le Truong Giang, acknowledges international community support for Vietnam.

Quarter's Highlights



From November 5-14, 2009, with support from PEPFAR, Deputy Prime Minister Truong Vinh Trong of Vietnam visited the United States to explore medication-assisted therapy (MAT) for heroin addiction, including the manufacturing of methadone. The visit concentrated on areas of policy development related to illegal narcotic supply and demand reduction, licensing of narcotic medications, and oversight and diversion control of methadone. He returned enthused about expanding MAT services and announced intentions to manufacture methadone in Vietnam.

On return to Hanoi, Deputy Prime Minister Truong hosted the annual end-of-year celebratory meeting and dinner for the Ambassadors Informal HIV Group. There was an impressive number and diversity of GVN officials represented. He repeatedly praised technical assistance and funding from the USG, with specific mention of his productive recent mission to the United States to study comprehensively policy issues for medication-assisted therapy. He also mentioned both during his speech and at dinner, Vietnam's plans to develop its own methadone manufacturing capacity, asking Ambassadors in attendance for their countries' help with building facilities and to sell them the raw materials at a reasonable price.



On December 1, 2009 the MOH's Minister of Health Nguyen Quoc Trieu officially opened Vietnam's seventh "methadone clinic," and the first one in Hanoi. This marks the expansion of the MAT program, using the approved integrated approach to prevention, care, and treatment. Integration and getting ministries to work together is a major challenge in Vietnam.

The clinic is located within the Tu Liem district's Preventive Medicine Center and integrates HIV care and treatment, primary care services, and methadone in one location. This integrated program is run according to current international standards of practice. Tu Liem methadone clinic is one of six clinics to be opened in Hanoi and will operate seven days a week, including holidays, for dispensing methadone. Counseling and integrated services will be available Monday through Friday.





With PEPFAR support beginning in October 2009, An Hoa AIDS Center (Ho Chi Minh City) now provides primary school education to 21 children living with HIV, who had earlier been refused access by local schools.



On December 18, 2009 with PEPFAR support, the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism held a music performance night to recognize grass-root level HIV implementers and collaborators, as part of the national action month for HIV/AIDS of Vietnam 2009 which ran from November 10 to December 10.



From December 7 to 11, 2009, PEPFAR sponsored a “Total Quality Management (TQM) workshop” at the Hanoi School of Public Health, attended by 26 military health officers from Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Can Tho.



On November 28, 2009 PEPFAR supported three simultaneous Dance4Life events, with famous artists contributing songs, dances, games, and quizzes together with HIV messages to high school students and public audiences, in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang.



The PEPFAR-supported physical drama, “Stereo Man and Destinations of Lives”, featuring different aspects of lives of PLWHA and developed by Vietnam Youth Theater, was performed for free to 20 universities and colleges in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in October and December 2009. The performance also led to discussion about HIV/AIDS related issues of most concern to youth between students, artists, and representatives of networks of PLWHA.



On November 27, 2009, PEPFAR supported workshop to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS related issues among future policy makers from different ministries and central agencies was held by the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences in Hanoi.



Putting Funeral Plans on Hold

SUCCESS STORY

Born into a poor family, and only completing elementary school before going to work to support his family, Nguyen Thanh Duong never expected much out of life. So when he married and had his first child they were the happiest moments of his young but difficult life. "This was my heaven on earth," he says, "I could not ask for more."

Duong and his wife were soon dealt a devastating blow. Not only did they both test positive for HIV but their newborn son soon died of AIDS-related complications. Duong himself was near death from untreated opportunistic infections. Wasting away, he knew it was time for his family to start preparing for his funeral.

But the funeral plans would have to be put on hold.

Duong began receiving treatment from a newly opened clinic in northern Vietnam's Quang Ninh Province. The clinic, supported by PEPFAR through the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF),

HIV Caregiver Now Helps Run an HIV Clinical Practice.



Nguyen Thanh Duong's work as an HIV medic in Quang Ninh Hospital frees up doctors and nurses so they can care for more patients.

offers free antiretroviral therapy, treatment of opportunistic infections and support services to the poor and vulnerable. After making a good recovery, clinic staff asked Duong if he would work as a counselor, identifying other people in need and bringing them in for treatment.

Today, Duong escorts people to HIV testing sites and helps enroll those who test positive into care and treatment. He is a compassionate presence to those

who are newly diagnosed and don't know where to turn to for help. After participating in AHF's 12-week intensive paraprofessional-nursing course -- an innovative solution to the shortage of HIV/AIDS health care workers -- Duong also became an "HIV Medic". Along with dozens of other PLHIV, Duong now takes on some of the clinical, counseling and administrative responsibilities of nurses and doctors, so that the medical staff can care for larger numbers of patients.

Arrivals in the Quarter

Welcome Janet Hayman, Interim PEPFAR Coordinator, Dr. Dang Vu Trung, USAID M&E Specialist (based in Ho Chi Minh City), and Dr. Hoang Nam Thai, CDC Vulnerable Populations Program Officer.



Janet Hayman



Dr. Dang Vu Trung



Dr. Hoang Nam Thai