

Oct. - Dec. 2009



FIND OUT NOW.
Ask for new, rapid HIV test
GET YOUR RESULTS TODAY.
TEL: 416 3700 - FAX: 416 3905 / www.aidsupportgroupsaba.org



World AIDS Day Activities 2009

This year's World AIDS Day activities kicked off on Friday November 27, with the traditional movie night at Tropic's Café. The movie "One Week" was well received and had very positive feedback. The World AIDS Day (WAD) schedule continued on Saturday morning at 8.30 am with the annual walkathon from Windwardside to The Bottom, followed by a ceremony at Saba Groove with speeches, snacks and refreshments.

The AIDS Support Group Saba was very pleased to

welcome Mr. Bruce Zagers, Commissioner of Health, at the ceremony supporting our "Know your Status - Get Tested!" Campaign.

The organization would like to give a big compliment to the Saba Drum Band, which supported our walk from St. John's to The Bottom with an incredible job!

A big "thanks" also goes to Saba Groove and staff for the delicious catering and the excellent organization of the ceremony. Last but not least the ASGS

would like to thank the Saba Red Cross for supporting and participating in the Aidswalk 2009.

For next year the AIDS Support Group Saba Foundation will schedule the annual walkathon in the evening hours to give everybody a chance to support our ongoing response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Caribbean.

The documentation presented at the workshop on Saturday November 28th, afternoon will be shown on Channel 7 for the public.

"CREATING AN EPIDEMIC OF HEALTH"

October - December 2009





The Black Coalition on AIDS (BCA) focuses on reducing disparities in the Black community, particularly the spread of HIV/AIDS. BCA strives to achieve this focus by providing health and wellness services including, but not limited to, housing, education, advocacy, health case management and other health-promoting activities. www.bcoa.org

Mission: The National Minority AIDS Council develops leadership in communities of color to address the challenges of HIV/AIDS. Since 1987, NMAC has advanced its mission through a variety of public policy education programs; national conferences; treatment and research programs and trainings; electronic and printed resource materials; and a website: www.nmac.org.



A service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services., offering information on HIV/AIDS treatment, prevention and research.

All too often, sexual health is overlooked or ignored in the health care system. The most common reasons for not providing sexual health care services include anxiety with regard to discussing sexuality with patients, inadequate training in the area of sexual health care, lack of appropriate curriculum, and the belief that it is someone else's responsibility. The Sexual Health Network is dedicated to providing easy access to sexuality information, education, mutual support, counseling, therapy, healthcare, products and other resources. www.sexualhealth.com

SexualHealth.com

HIV[e]ducation training a big success!

From December 4-6, the closing workshop in St. Maarten took place with 21 participants in attendance. Two were from Saba (Suzanna van den Elshout and Martina Lebinger). The aim of the training was to create a larger pool of healthcare workers who are able to work with people living with HIV/AIDS. For some of the participants this was their very first training on HIV/AIDS, and for almost all participants it was the first time they enrolled in an e-learning course.

The feedback that was given during the workshop was very encouraging, and it became clear that the training was much needed. Guido van den Berk, Infectious Disease Specialist from the

OLVG in Amsterdam, and Gonneke Hermanides, conducting her PhD post-graduate study in Curacao, joined the workshop panel to present a variety of subjects. A stimulating discussion followed about male circumcision as a preventative method, and ideas about the pros and cons were exchanged. There was also lively interaction regarding new ideas and skills on counseling and when to start Antiretroviral therapy (ART).

As a result of new initiatives made during the closing workshop, developments are already on the horizon for a continuation of our training collaboration in 2010 and for expanding training activities in the region.

Workshop Presentations:

- Case Scenario
- Epidemiology
- Family with HIV Case Study
- Health[e]Foundation Continues
- Male Circumcision
- Opportunistic Infections
- PITC (Provider Initiated Testing and Counseling)
- Regional Guidelines
- Reproductive Health and Gender
- Toxicity & Resistance
- When to Start HAART and Which Regimen

For more information visit:

www.healthfoundation.eu



Caribbean Men and Women Contracting HIV in Equal Numbers

After 28 years in the Caribbean, the HIV epidemic is now evenly distributed between males and females. This revealed in the UNAIDS-WHO (WHO= World Health Organization) AIDS Epidemic Update for 2009 which was released on November 27th, 2009.

With a total number of 240 000 People Living With HIV (PLHIV) in the Caribbean, this is an increase of 9% between 2001 and 2008, reported the Director of the UNAIDS Caribbean Regional Support Team, Mr. Arkadiusz (Arek) Majszyk.

What is now clear is that an epidemic which had started as a predominantly male one has now become a serious condition impacting negatively on women's health. In many instances, women are acquiring HIV from their only current sexual partner. According to the UNAIDS Director "What is now necessary is research into the sexual behaviors of these partners and the role and importance of bisexuality in the transmission of HIV to Caribbean women."

The UNAIDS-WHO report reveals that

the total number of People Living with HIV globally, is 33.4 million. Of these, adults comprise 31.3 million; women 15.7 million; and children under 15 years, 2.1 million.

In another recent WHO publication, it is reported that the growing numbers of HIV cases among women is now compromising the gains which women had made in life expectancy throughout the years. Traditionally, women were living longer and healthier than man, but because of HIV, this is no longer the case.

NIAID 2009 H1N1 Vaccine Study Now Enrolling HIV-Infected Adults

"HIV-infected adults currently are being recruited to participate in a clinical trial of the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine. The study, sponsored by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) of the National Institutes of Health, will enroll approximately 240 men and women between the ages of 18 and 64.

"People with suppressed immunity caused by conditions such as HIV infection are at increased risk of serious illness from the 2009 H1N1 influenza,

and should be vaccinated against the H1N1 virus", says NIAID Director Anthony S. Fauci, M.D.

"However, such immune suppression may hamper the response to influenza vaccines", Dr. Fauci adds. "While people with HIV infection are a high-priority group to receive the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine, the optimal dosage of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine for people with HIV infection has not been determined through clinical trials. This study will help address that gap in

knowledge."

"All study participants will receive two doses of an inactivated 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine administered approximately 21 days apart; the vaccine is manufactured by Novartis. Half of the volunteers will receive two 15-microgram doses and the other half two 30-microgram doses of the vaccine."

For more information visit:

aidsinfo.nih.gov

United States Conference on AIDS 2009 in San Francisco

For the first time the ASGS was given a scholarship from the Caribbean Equal Access Program to participate in the United States Conference on AIDS 2009 in San Francisco. The program coordinator (Martina Lebinger) was sent. The conference was held October 29-31 at the Hilton San Francisco. The conference was huge and the program endless. Sometimes it was hard to decide which workshop to attend be-



cause there were so many. Throughout the whole conference the spirit of the new administration was present and the US responds to HIV/AIDS is remarkable.

A lot of contacts were made, information collected and new ideas developed. For the AIDS Support Group Saba it was significant to see the approach of other countries where almost everything is possible and so much from experience

was already learned. For more information visit www.2009USCA.org.



Second Girl Power Workshop “Train the Trainers” on Saba

December 10-12, 2009: Girl Power St. Maarten came to Saba to facilitate the second Girl Power “Train the Trainers” workshop.

Due to the exam time at the high school mostly peer educators signed up. This was the last “Train the Trainers” workshop facilitated by St. Maarten. In the future the Program Coordinator of the AIDS Support Group Saba will train Sabas peer or health educators.

On Saturday December 12th a certifi-

cate ceremony at Tropic’s Café was held. For those who could not participate and didn’t get the chance to pick up their certificate the ASGS will send them out per mail.

If you are a strong woman and can commit some of your time towards a very important cause and you are interested in becoming a Girl Power Trainer, please contact the ASGS office: 416 3700 or email to info@aidssupportgroupsaba.org.

For the next year Girl Power Saba and Girl Power St. Maarten will bring a big dancing show to Saba. As it is the 20 year anniversary of the AIDS Support Group a lot of events are planned for 2010! The dance show is planned for May. Look out for further advertisement.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

Another RESPECT (Responsible Students Peer Education Curriculum & Training) program workshop was held at the SCS (Saba Comprehensive School) on November 11th and 12th.

The RESPECT program is presented by medical students every semester as part

of their epidemiology study.

This semester the main modules were safe sex practices, drug abuse, mental health and healthy lifestyles. The medical students reported back to the ASGS that among the girls who are a part of Girl Power were very well prepaid and in-

formed. The RESPECT program will come back to the SCS beginning of next year.

The Aids Support Group Saba Foundation would like to wish to all its members, friends, volunteers and Saban community

A Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!