

Special Edition

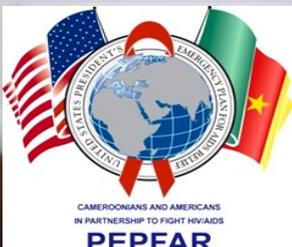
World AIDS Day 2018

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A Call to “Know Your HIV Status”



HIV FREE II *SHAP SHAP* MAGAZINE

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Website

www.cbchealthservices.org

Email

hivfnwdoc.team@gmail.com

Executive Editor

Prof. Tih Pius Muffih

Managing Editor

Kuni Esther

Dr. Nkome George

Editor in Chief

Abanda Alphonse

Deputy Managing Editor

Fri Delphine

Associate Editors

Ngange Divine Nfor

Fotabong Nyachu Syntia

Photo Editor/Design

Ngange Divine Nfor



WAD2018 Address

*Prof. Tih Pius Muffih
Project Principal Investigator*

Today, December 1, 2018 marks the 30th anniversary of the World AIDS Day; a day dedicated to commemorate those who have passed on. It is also a day to support and show solidarity to People Living with HIV (PLHIV) and to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS and the global spread of the virus. According to the UNAIDS Data 2018 report, an estimated 940,000 people worldwide died of AIDS-related illnesses in 2017. There were an estimated 36.9 million people with HIV around the world in 2017.

The AIDS response has made significant progress and today millions of people living with HIV are living healthy and productive lives. Yet, we still have miles to go! As the latest UNAIDS report shows, one of the challenges remaining is knowledge of HIV

status, especially among young people. As an effort to resolve this challenge, UNAIDS announced the theme for this years' World AIDS Day as “**Know Your Status**” with slogan “**Let us Protect Young Girls**”. Only an HIV test can determine one’s HIV status, which can either be negative or positive.

HIV testing is essential for expanding treatment and achieving the 90-90-90 UNAIDS targets by 2020. It also empowers people to make informed choices about HIV prevention and care, so that they can protect themselves and their loved ones.

It is estimated that 25% of HIV infected individuals in every population are unaware of their status. **UNAIDS estimates that more than 9.4 million People Living with HIV still do not know their status.** These efforts of

testing are therefore expected to reduce new infections by 30% per year. There are still some barriers to HIV testing such as: Stigma and discrimination, and access to confidential HIV testing etc. Many people get tested only after becoming ill and symptomatic. This leads to HIV treatment being initiated late, undermining its many benefits for both treatment and prevention. Many HIV testing strategies have been used such as the WHO recommended Provider Initiated HIV Testing and Counseling (PITC) for generalized epidemics with the shortcoming of its reliance on clients getting to a health facility. This may result in late diagnosis with increasing mortality and morbidity. If epidemic control must be reached, national programs need to adopt targeted community HIV testing strategies like Index Testing that will reach more people early in their infection, thus, limiting transmission as people get diagnosed early and start treatment early.

Clinical guidelines now recommend offering HIV treatment upon diagnosis to maximize long-term health and survival. With proper treatment and care, most people with HIV can stay healthy and live long, productive and happier lives.

In addition to the health benefits, successful treatment also means that people with HIV:

- ◆ Do not transmit the virus to their sexual partners.
- ◆ Can have healthy HIV-negative babies.
- ◆ Are less likely to transmit HIV if they share needles or other drug use equipment.

The only way to know for sure whether you have HIV is to have an HIV test. While making efforts for everyone to know his HIV status, let us not forget the youth. Our adolescents and young people ages 15 to 24 have a very poor access to HIV testing and prevention services and they are vulnerable. That is why contrary to global trend showing reduced new HIV infections and mortality in the general population; instead the trend shows increased new infections and high HIV mortality rate among adolescents and young people, especially young girls. Remember although our Theme for this year is ***“Know your HIV status”***, our slogan is ***“Let us Protect Young Girls”***.

Many places offer HIV testing. Depending on where you live, you may be able to get an HIV test at a health clinic, doctor’s office, hospital, community organization, a public health unit, or even in your house or your office. There will soon be possibilities of getting a self-testing kit and doing your HIV test at your convenience.

I recommend the elimination of requirements for written consent or extensive pre-test counseling which have acted as barriers to targeted testing. I wish to appreciate all the team members especially those whose job is directly related to screening clients for HIV. Within the CBCHS, we have been able to screen clients at the different entry points for HIV among pregnant women (ANC), blood donors and Provider Initiated Testing and Counselor (PTC).

Knowing your HIV status means you care about your health, you care about your partner; you care about your community.

Thank you!



out you?

Conducting Free HIV Screening Services Community settings on WAD 2018

The project used WAD 2018 commemoration to facilitate access to some critical HIV services for community members. Mass HIV screening was carried out in some strategic communities/localities during the WAD week. Project staff were moved in small groups to provide into identified churches and communities to offer free HIV screening. Some of

the settings included Nkwen Baptist Church, Saint John the Baptist, PC Mulang among others

The screening targeted mostly the Youths especially the young girls. In all, the mobile screening team screened 210, 4 of whom tested positive and were immediately linked for treatment.



Just a Prick to Ascertain your HIV Status

Free HIV Test in Conducted at Presbyterian Church Mulang

LET'S PROTECT
YOUNG KIDS



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Sensitization Activities at Mobile Nkwen

Sensitization on Key HIV and AIDS Topics

As has often been the case in previous WAD week and day, awareness around key HIV and AIDS topics was intensified. The project sent out a team of HIV and AIDS Experts to Nkwen Market and in the communities to carry out one-on-one sensitization and education of the masses.

On WAD day, commemorative activities also included march in the major streets of the town to

create awareness. Project staff and staff of other health facilities marched through the streets with placards bearing messages to encourage voluntary HIV testing, male participation, treatment initiation and adherence and to sensitize the public about available services such as Index Testing, Community Based ARV Dispensation and Early Infant Diagnosis.



AN HIV FREE
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IS
POSSIBLE

Treatment
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Treatment
along your
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Celebrating Accomplishments in the HIV Response

On WAD day, Saturday December 1, activities marking the commemoration started with a mobile Caravan aimed at strengthening community involvement and participation in the HIV response efforts. Under the coordination of the NW Regional Technical Group (RTG) for the Fight against HIV, various NGOs involved in the HIV response converged at the esplanade of the Regional Fund for Health Promotion to showcase their

contribution to the fight against HIV in the region. The event attracted hundreds of people – health care providers, HIV stakeholders, beneficiaries, local administrative personnel and other members of the community. This was the opportunity for health care providers to exhibit the latest technologies and HIV response strategies implemented in the region to prevent and to break the HIV transmission chain. The public used the opportunity to gather more information about HIV and AIDS.







Key Note Address

*Dr Tayong Fosah Gladys
NWR TG Coordinator*

The Coordinator of the North-West Regional Technical Group for the Fight against HIV

The North West Governor represented Regional Delegates and Chiefs of Service; all other protocols duly respected...

It is a great pleasure for me to address you today on this historic occasion of the celebration of the World AIDS Day 2018 in the NWR. We all know this is a traditional ceremony; we are actually celebrating achievements that we have had, fighting HIV and AIDS and at the same time we are actually commemorating the over one million lives that are lost every year to HIV. The theme for this year is ***“Know your HIV Status”*** and the slogan is ***“Let’s Protect the Young Girl”***.

In Cameroon, the month of November every year has been considered the month of the country against AIDS. During this month we usually intensify activities such as prevention, treatment and support to Persons Living with HIV (PLHIV).

Ladies and gentlemen, with this in mind let’s look at the current situation in the world, in Cameroon and in the North West Region. Globally in the world we have 36.9 million PLHIV; that is by the end of 2017. We have notice that there is a reduction in the number of new infections by about 16% between 2010 and 2017. It has also been observed that there is a reduction in the number of AIDS related deaths by over 51% from its peak in 2004. In 2017 we had 940,000 persons dying from AIDS related illnesses as compared to 1.9 million in 2004. So there has been a significant reduction in AIDS related deaths worldwide. Tuberculosis remains the leading cause of deaths in Persons Living with HIV (PLHIV); accounting for 1/3 of AIDS related deaths.

In Cameroon, the HIV prevalence has dropped from 4.3% in 2011 to 3.4% in 2017. In the North West Region the HIV prevalence has dropped from 8.7% in 2004 to 6.3% in 2011 and to 5.1% in 2017.



Exhibition Stand Visits by Dignitaries

In the region actually, the HIV prevalence in men is 2.9% and in females is 6.8%. But it remains disheartening that in the age group 15 to 24, we have 9 times more new infections in girls than in boys; and that is why the slogan for this year is **“Let’s protect the young girl”**. There is no reason why our young girls should be having 9 times more new infections than their male peers. It means that our young girls are particularly vulnerable.

With respect to the general population in the North West Region, from January to October we have offered HIV testing to 308,943 persons; and out of this number we had 6,257 persons positive for HIV, and out of the 6,257 positives, we had 4,984 persons on treatment; which gives us about 80% of those who were positive. It is good we placed over 4000 on treatment, but it is not enough because we were supposed to place all of the 6000 newly diagnosed on treatment. Now we have to ask ourselves this question, why were all those diagnosed positive not put on treatment? I think all of us seated here we can give answers to this

question. If we are not able to place all those who are newly diagnosed on treatment, then we cannot stop the transmission of HIV. So this is one of the reasons why we still have HIV transmission, because those who are HIV infected are not on treatment.

Before we look at other figures, let us review some of the three main routes of transmission. We are all here today as activists, at least we will be leaving this place with one message to go back to our families and our communities. There are three main routes of transmission of HIV;

- ◆ The sexual route; where by sexual secretions of an infected person gets into contact with the blood of a non-infected person.
- ◆ Getting a prick or a cut with a sharp object soiled with blood of an infected person.
- ◆ From an infected mother to her child during pregnancy, labour, delivery and even the breastfeeding period.

With this in mind, we understand that we should at least avoid having any direct contact with sexual secretions, with blood or blood product and we should prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to child. It is for this reason, that we recommend that all women within the reproductive age bracket, pregnant or not should visit our health facilities to have them screened for HIV.

We have treatment for HIV, so there is no reason test. Anti-Retroviral Therapy has been decentralized in Cameroon and in the North West Region. We have medicines in all the districts in the region; we have medicines in all the health units. So there is no reason why we shouldn't test. Let us remind ourselves of the objectives of the program.

- ◆ We want that 90% of persons who are living with HIV should know their status.
- ◆ We want to treat at least 90% of persons who are HIV infected.
- ◆ We want 90% of those who are on treatment to have viral suppression.

All of this is because; we have a very supportive health policy in regards to HIV. The government of Cameroon and its partners are providing HIV test at subsidized cost, they are providing HIV test free of charge to vulnerable population; and they are providing ART which is the treatment of HIV free of charge to all. It should be noted that it is not just sufficient, to have ART when you're HIV infected. Once you start treatment, you have to adhere to treatment. Adherence means taking the right quantities of medicines at the right time every day. We have about 8% of our population who are on first line treatment who are already developing resistance to Anti-Retroviral. When you develop resistance it means we have to change your treatment option to look for more expensive treatment options for you. And when there is resistance, there is not only cost but sometimes it is difficult to find another option that will work for

you.

As activists, because we are having evidence of HIV drug resistance, we should go home and to our communities today with a few messages. We should go home with this message, to cause people to do their test, know their status. We should go with this message to people who are already on treatment: that HIV drug resistance will occur if they don't take their medicines at the right time and the right quantity. That they should remember that all of us must put our hands on deck to say no to HIV.

Our partners, including NGOs and CBOs are outside showcasing their contributions in the HIV response. The mobile testing unit of the Regional Technical Group for the fight against HIV is also out today and they're offering free HIV testing services. So please visit the stands and see what they are doing, and if you're here that you have not done your HIV test, today is an opportunity for you to do it free of charge.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think your presence here today tells me that you're actually partners in the HIV response. I wish to appreciate all the efforts we have made so far, in the HIV response and in the celebration of this year.

I want to give special thanks to the governor who is here represented, who is the president of the Regional AIDS Control Committee for his usual collaboration and support.

Long live the Republic of Cameroon.



CIACP
COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
AIDS CARE & PREVENTION
PROGRAM

Inspector of Prefectural Services at the Governor's Office

I feel very privileged, to be addressing the population of the North West Region on the occasion of the World AIDS Day 2018. Permit me on this singular occasion and on behalf of H.E Governor Adolf Lele Lafrik to recognize in a special way recognize the presence of very distinguished personalities from both the public and private health institutions and many stakeholders whose turnout here today is a memorable registration of their constant attachment to issues pertaining to public health in general and most especially HIV and AIDS in particular. Most importantly, I appreciate the Regional Technical Group Coordinator – Dr. Mrs. Tayong Gladys for her warm welcome to all of us and for enlightening us on the general situation of HIV and AIDS in Cameroon.

Distinguish ladies and gentlemen, the commemoration of the 2018 World AIDS Day today, is taking place within a very unique and

unfortunate context which is the aftermath of a prolonged school boycott, some health deliverance and leading to a devastating HIV and AIDS toll on the general population and the school going age in particular.

This day is commemorated every 1st December and recognized internationally as a key opportunity to raise awareness, remember those who passed away and celebrate successes in treatment and prevention services. The RTG Coordinator already informed us that this commemoration is been done under the banner ***“Know Your Status”*** and the slogan, ***“Let’s Protect the Young Girls”***.

Within this framework, permit me inform you that the results of the “Cameroon based HIV Impact Assessment Survey” otherwise known as CAMPHIA reveals that the HIV Prevalence in the North West Region has significantly dropped from 6.3% in 2011 to 5.1% in 2017. This is good because it shows that our efforts in HIV response



*Mr. Tata Felix
Inspector of Prefectural Services
Governor's Office*

Speech from the NW Governor

are paying up. The overall goal of eliminating HIV and AIDS can be achieved by attaining the global objectives of 90-90-90 by 2020. This means carrying out screening to 90% of Persons Living with HIV (PLHIV) to know their status; offering Anti-Retroviral Treatment to 90% HIV infected persons; and obtaining Viral Load suppression in 90% of PLHIV on treatment.

Now more than ever before, is the time to intensify the fight against stigma in and discrimination of persons living with HIV and AIDS; which entails convincing many more people to do their test and know their status. I'm saying so because progression includes no stigma and discrimination.

The government, we should be once more reassured, has created an enabling environment for us all to stay healthy and to and obtain low cost and free services. As you earlier heard, the slogan is, ***“Let's Protect the Young Girl”***. This slogan is here because the CAMPHIA of 2017 reveals that the number of new HIV infections in females in the age group between 15 and 24 is nine times higher than in males of the same group. As you can see, the emphasis is on the vulnerability of young girls; this calls for our join responsibility in the protection of the young girl by:

1. Creating an enabling environment through legal reform and promoting gender equity.
2. Working at community level including developing youth friendly services, and preventing Gender Based Violence (GBV).
3. Teaching girls in secondary schools through education and if possible, education subsidies.
4. Promoting comprehensive sexual education.

The theme as you already know is ***“Know your HIV Status”***; and it's a command from the state, because HIV is indeed a challenge for us. I can only encourage everyone to go for an HIV test.

Distinguish ladies and gentlemen, from the

foregoing; we can affirm that to stay HIV free, we must choose an appropriate option systematically use a condom or abstain from sex. This will help us eliminate new infections and produce an AIDS Free Generation.

As a representative of the President of the Regional AIDS Control Commission in the person of the Governor of the North West Region – H.E Adolfe Lele Lafrik, I am happy with the progress we have made so far especially in the domain of preventing new infections in HIV exposed children.

I wish to thank all our partners including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations, religious organizations, private and public sectors which in their different ways to make sure that HIV and AIDS stay away from us. I wish to especially thank the International Medical Core for their great support and participation in this year's commemoration in our region. Let us all be encouraged because in view of our commitments, because sooner or later, HIV will cease to be a public health problem.

Once more on behalf of the Governor of the North West Region, I want to thank you all for coming and for your active participation.

Long live the partnership against HIV and AIDS,
Long live the North West Region, and
Long live the Republic of Cameroon.

Thank you very much for your kind attention!



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“Know your status”

About the Central Empowerment Project
 The Project is aimed at providing rural
 communities with the necessary skills, knowledge
 and access to a local market. The project
 covers 6 rural areas (Bilo, Bilo, Bilo, Bilo,
 Bilo, Bilo) and in the North West
 Region.

COMVED Local Empowerment
 Community Initiative
 Development (COMVID) is a
 responsive organisation
 dedicated to providing
 standards of good governance
 and sustainable development
 for rural communities.

Contact:
 Head office: Narinkon
 (Opposite Junction to Xi Iru Ad)
 P.O. Box 56 Mankon, Bimoba (NWK)
 Tel: (+237) 671 666 486
 Email: comvid.ngo@yahoo.com
 Website: www.comvid.org/pressroom

On the Road to the 90-90-90



CBC HEALTH BOARD

“HIV is just like any other disease; get tested and get treated”

Prof. Tih Pius Muffih, Project Principal Investigator.

Our Contacts

HIV Free Cameroon: (+237) 677 76 47 81

North West: (+237) 677 64 78 99

South West: (+237) 677 57 11 11

Center: (+237) 679 40 58 49

Littoral: (+237) 675 41 41 75

Others:

◆ (+237) 677 80 76 69 (NW/CE)

◆ (+237) 677 52 66 37 (SW/LIT)

◆ (+237) 677 00 23 95 (Com CA)

E-mail: hivfnwdoc.team@gmail.com

Website: www.cbchealthservices.org