

SECURING BETTER ACCESS TO EARLY TESTING AND TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN LIVING WITH HIV AND HIV/TB CO-INFECTION AND TO THE PREVENTION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV

A Conference in Rome (October 14-16, 2009) was organized by Caritas Internationalis and the United States Embassy to the Holy See: Co-sponsored by: UNAIDS, WHO, Stop TB Partnership, Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers, Health Commission of the Union of Superiors General and the Paediatric Hospital "Bambino Gesù".

The International Conference dealt with experts from WHO, UNAIDS, etc. and experiences from the field, in order to :

- Inform about the urgent need to expand access to testing and treatment for children with HIV and TB
- Encourage greater partnership among organizations in different parts of the world,
- Promote greater solidarity among faith-based organizations in order to deliver the needed care

There were theoretic and practical sessions in order to develop strategies to promote awareness in different fields: education, formation, health and social care, communication through web and press.



Prescription for Life: Medication for Children

Background:

- More than 800 children died daily in 2007 and many would still be alive today if they received the necessary treatment.
- Despite evidence that treatment is very successful in children living with HIV and TB, there remain significant obstacles to the pediatric care they need.
- Most of the children who die every year would not

have contracted HIV if their mothers would have been treated. (Caritas International HAART for Children Campaign)

Call for Response

Action: Contact the Pharmaceutical Companies by sending an online postcard through Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance at www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/hivaids/accessmeds/children

The post card action requests that you:

- 1) select at least one drug company: Abbot, Bhehringer Ingelheim, Bristol-Myers Squibb and/or GlaxoSmithKline,
- 2) Give your name and email address
- 3) Send a message to the pharmaceutical industry. Sample text:

After 25 years in the struggle with HIV and AIDS there continues to be a need to provide comprehensive, compassionate and inclusive care to people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. I am especially concerned that there is a lack of appropriate diagnostics and treatments for children. Therefore, I call on the pharmaceutical industry to provide equitable access to simple diagnostics and pediatric anti-retroviral formulations and make them affordable, comprehensive and sustainable.

Please write any additional comments that you may have considering the information below.

Abbot (USA) has said that it is developing a low-dose tablet form suitable for children, but does not have a timetable for this.

We appreciate the steps Abbott has already taken, and call on the company to develop a timetable that expedites development of heat stable tablets of lopinavir/ritonavir. We also call on Abbot to ensure their medicines are available in developing countries at an affordable price.

Boehringer Ingelheim (Germany) makes nevirapine which is important in preventing mother-to-child transmission. We appreciate the work of Boehringer Ingelheim and call on the company to produce a low-dose pill form of nevirapine that is widely available and affordable.

Bristo-Myers Squibb (USA) produces atazanavair which is a newer drug for HIV and does not have any formulation for children. We appreciated the steps of BMS and call on the company to produce a low-dose pill formulation of atazanavair that is widely available and affordable. We also call on BMS to make their existing products affordable.

GlaxoSmithKline (UK) makes numerous pediatric formulations of drugs for children which also includes a drug for the prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (MTCT). We appreciate the steps that GSK has already taken, and we call on the company to produce low-dose pill formulations and to study the effects on children of all their medicines. We also call on GSK to make its pediatric ARV's available and affordable in developing countries.

For more information and access to materials go visit <http://hivfreekids.wiki.zoho.com>

Caritas International at www.caritas.org and click on the link for HAART for children

Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance at www.e-alliance.ch