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ARV 1: The Challenges for Joint Negotiations

Pursuant to the resolution of the 42nd Directing Council, PAHO is searching for mechanisms to facilitate the purchase of antiretroviral drugs. The mechanism employed by PAHO for this purpose is the Regional Revolving Fund for Strategic Public Health Supplies. The Fund requires an estimate of the quantity of drugs to be purchased so that it can obtain a price quote. However, the countries want to know the price of the antiretrovirals in advance. This creates a vicious circle, since the Organization cannot negotiate a price without a specific order from the countries. Furthermore, there is evidence that the pharmaceutical companies are not interested in offering wholesale prices to the Organization, preferring instead to negotiate with each country and even with different institutions within a country (social security, ministry of health).

One of the most complex areas is estimating the number of people who will need treatment—a situation, moreover, that can vary considerably from country to country, depending on the development of their information systems and whether or not they have

begun to provide antiretroviral treatment.

The factors that must be taken into account in calculating the estimates are: a) The number of reported cases of AIDS; b) Delays in reporting cases and underreporting; c) Data from prevalence studies; d) Mortality; e) Patients in treatment; f) Criteria for beginning treatment, based on treatment.

ARV 2: How to Determine Whom to Treat and with What

Fifteen antiretroviral drugs belonging to different families are currently being marketed. If to these we add two formulations containing combinations, or cocktails, of these drugs, we have 17 drugs or drug cocktails on the market.

Within this context, the Regional Program on AIDS/STI considers it essential to select a limited but adequate number of drugs that will allow for several initial treatment cocktails, as well as the possibility of changes in regimen in the event of toxicity or ineffectiveness. This will also make it possible to rationalize the use of ARV, keeping drugs as a backup when therapies fail.

In order to reach a consensus on which drugs should be included in the initial list and in what quantities, specific treatment guidelines for the Region or sub region must be established in collaboration with country authorities and health care providers, in keeping with the reality of each country.

In addition, treatment protocols must be established for the different groups of people who are already infected (adolescents/adults and children) in order to prevent transmission in certain vulnerable groups with well-defined risks of infection (mother-to-child and occupational exposure).

ARV 3: Prices are Already on the PAHO Website

PAHO is facilitating price information for ARV in the Region--another proposal adopted by the 42nd Directing Council. To date, 14 countries have furnished information on the prices of the antiretrovirals procured by the authorities. This information has been posted on the Internet. The Regional Program is working to standardize the presentation of the information and to facilitate price comparisons. Address:

http://www.paho.org/spanish/hcp/hca/antiretrovirals_HP.htm.

New: "HIV and AIDS in the Americas: An Epidemic with Many Faces"

Published in English, this report was initially issued by PAHO and UNAIDS following a joint meeting of the epidemiological networks of Latin America and the Caribbean, HIV EpiREd, and MAP. It suggests that national programs adopt second-generation surveillance, stating that the virus' widely diverse forms of transmission in the Region and the need to

understand the biological, behavioral, and social factors involved in order to control the epidemic make it even more imperative for governments to improve their data collection systems. The report, also available on the Internet at (http://www.paho.org/English/HCP/HCA/faces_final.pdf), includes a review of the behavioral studies conducted in the Region for the prevention of HIV. PAHO has also issued a press release on this publication (<http://www.paho.org/English/DPI/p010621.htm>). Copies have been sent to all PAHO/WHO Representative Offices. Requests for additional copies should be sent to sida@paho.org. **The Spanish version will be available in August.**

Much Anticipated "Guidelines for Comprehensive Care" Now Available in Spanish

The summary report on the publication "Comprehensive Care Guidelines for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS in the Americas", from the "Building Blocks" series, is available in Spanish (and can also be found on the PAHO website). This publication is the product of numerous consultations on how health authorities can ensure better care and, especially, greater access to comprehensive care that includes treatment with antiretrovirals. The model includes a series of interventions that can be implemented, as resources permit, at the various levels of health service delivery (home; community; primary, secondary, and tertiary levels). Copies of the report will be sent to all PAHO/WHO Representative Offices in Spanish-speaking countries. Requests for additional copies or for copies of the English version should be sent to the following electronic address: sida@paho.org.

CDC and CAREC to Cooperate

The United States CDC and CAREC are planning to work together in programs for the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Dr. Eugene McCray, Director of the Global AIDS Program (GAP) of the United States will meet shortly with personnel from CAREC to hammer out the details of the cooperation. For more information visit our website at: http://www.paho.org/English/DPI/press_010608.htm.

U.S. Congress Discusses Epidemic in the Caribbean

Dr. George Alleyne, Director of PAHO, and Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS, will participate in a conference sponsored by members of the U.S. Congress to discuss the epidemic in the Caribbean.

AIDS Program in the Media

Interviews: Dr. Zacarías (CNN, May), (BBC, May), (Reuters, 06/19), Dr. Mazín (Washington Post, May; BBC, June), Dr. Hermida (VOA, 06/08; VOA, 06/12).

The purpose of this bulletin is to share information on the efforts of PAHO professionals involved in the response to AIDS/STI. It is not an official document of the Organization. To add or remove your name from the bulletin's distribution list, contact sida@paho.org. Use this email address to contribute articles for publication. We ask the PAHO AIDS/STI focal points to send us information on events, strategies, concerns, and needs. PAHO is the regional office of WHO in the Americas and a co-sponsor of UNAIDS.



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