GLOBAL-WORLD HIV/AIDS ALLIANCE (GHAA): CHARTING HEALTHY PATHWAYS FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

The Global-World HIV/AIDS Alliance (GHAA) is a collaboration of representatives from civil society, faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, and government agencies who are pooling resources specific to their respective organizations’ missions to assist with enhancing education and early treatment for HIV/AIDS in marginalized and medically underserved communities worldwide. The Alliances’ partnerships are divided into five geographically oriented operational groups (called clusters), which are the Africa Regional Cluster, Asia Regional Cluster, Europe Regional Cluster, Latin-Caribbean Cluster, and United States Cluster. The purpose of this collaborative effort, which relies on the expertise and services of agencies and institutions from 26 countries, is to mobilize experts from various fields to share lessons learned about effective (and ineffective) strategies for reaching those most neglected, to ultimately realize a decline in HIV/AIDS infection and death rates. It is hoped the sharing of culturally sensitive educational materials and prevention strategies will decrease new HIV cases, increase participation in clinical trials, and mobilize grassroots efforts to affect health policy. Emerging from GHAA is the Charting Healthy Pathways for Vulnerable Populations, a 15-year initiative scheduled for 2006 through 2020. The inaugural launching took place in Hyderabad, India, in February 2006, and the first biennial global conference was held in October 2007 in Richard’s Bay, South Africa. Several regional cluster meetings are scheduled in various countries before the second global conference in China in October 2009. In the meantime, cluster country representatives will engage in various forms of dialogue to promote innovative prevention/awareness strategies, identification of resources and services to be rendered, potential research collaborations, and networking to engage others in the cause of GHAA as we move to become the “global voice for vulnerable HIV populations.”

Key Words: GHAA (Global-World HIV/AIDS Alliance), HIV/AIDS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to emphasize the need for mobilizing and engaging and connecting committed organizations worldwide, in an effort to address the growing HIV/AIDS pandemic that is claiming disproportionate numbers of lives in marginalized populations. According to the most recent estimates from the World Health Organization and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), ≥5700 people die of AIDS every day, and 95% of the victims reside in low- and middle-income countries that lack key prevention and care service. UNAIDS estimates that $18 billion is needed now to effectively address the needs of people infected with HIV. Therefore, the need is imminent for the formation and mobilization of alliances to pool resources: human, financial, service-based, education-based, and a strong advocacy base to address this deadly disease.

The Global-World HIV/AIDS Alliance (GHAA), a collaboration of academic institutions committed to serving vulnerable/marginalized populations with civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, and government agencies that share this mission. GHAA presents this article as the core of its strategic planning for 2006–2020. The lead partner of this initiative is Jackson State University of Jackson, Mississippi (USA), on behalf of the Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) Translational Research Network (USA), which is composed of 18 institutions across the United States, and the Mississippi Consortium for International Development (USA), which also includes Alcorn State University, Mississippi Valley State University, and Tougaloo College. The core partners include Mahatma Gandhi College-Nagarjuna University of Guntur (India); Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (India); All India Institute of Medical Sciences (India); Central Universities of Nationalities (China); Southern Medical University, Guangzhou (China); Catholic University College (Ghana); University of Port Harcourt (Nigeria); University of Zululand (South Africa); University of Fort Hare (South Africa); University of Limpompo (South Africa); University of South Africa (South Africa); Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University (Nicaragua); University of Yaounde-Faculty of Medicine (Cameroon); Mahidol University (Thailand); University of the Philippines, Manila (Philippines); National Forensic Psychiatric Hospital of Korea (South Korea); College of Public Health Administration, Ministry of Public Health (Thailand); University of Zambia (Zambia); and the Catholic Hospital Association of India (CHAI). Additional partners and members are being invited to join GHAA as the Charting Healthy Pathways Initiative is implemented in other regions across the globe.

As the lead partners lay the foundation to strengthen institutional education and research capacities, an extensive