

**In Part 3 of our series of informative articles on the work of The Aurum Institute, we highlight the Institute's HIV Care and Treatment programme.**

## **LIGHT FOR LIFE**

"Light for Life" was established in 2004 and is one of the Aurum Institute's largest and most established programmes. This programme evolved from being a workplace programme focused on antiretroviral delivery, to a large HIV care and treatment programme with more than 100 facilities in the public and private health sectors throughout South Africa.

The programme focuses on HIV positive people who would not otherwise be able to access care and treatment. Screening for TB (tuberculosis) is an element of the programme owing to the close link between the two diseases.

With funding from the United States' President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR), the 'Light for Life' community programme operates in all nine provinces and in a variety of settings ranging from general practitioner practices to prisons.

Services cover the full spectrum of HIV care and treatment, from HIV testing to providing antiretroviral therapy (ART) through four main models: The Aurum Institute's own clinics; through partnerships with the government; in partnerships with smaller NGOs already providing care and treatment and through a network of general practitioners who roll out care to the indigent with the costs being covered by the Institute.

In some operating areas of the mining industry this programme provides care and treatment to the families of industry employees, as well as independent contractors.

Through partnerships in the public and private sectors, the programme is facilitating greater access to HIV infected people who need ART.

The programme has an extensive training programme in place to develop the capacity of health care providers and provides a framework for research to inform health care providers about ART implementation in South Africa and in the developing world.

Dr Dave Clark, Deputy CEO of The Aurum Institute, says: "It's been tremendously exciting to work side by side with government on this programme. Its success is an encouraging indication that similar stakeholder relationships with government will develop throughout the healthcare

environment to close the gap between patients and services and to improve the standard of delivery of these services and reach more vulnerable populations. It has also been very encouraging to see the community members mobilising themselves to take advantage of the improved health care services and gain access to proactively tackling the HIV/TB problem.”

### **The Correctional Services Programme**

As part of the Light for Life HIV Care and Treatment Programme, the Aurum Institute has been working in collaboration with the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) in Gauteng to support and strengthen the Department’s Comprehensive Care Management and Treatment (CCMT) clinics within its correctional facilities, through a wide range of activities.

In Soweto, for example, offenders who needed HIV-related health support were referred to the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital. This required DCS manpower to escort them to and from the hospital and placed the public at potential risk from the offenders. The Institute’s Correctional Services Programme in Gauteng has subsequently succeeded in providing the necessary treatment to offenders on site, within Correctional Services facilities in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Krugersdorp.

### **Clinical support**

The Aurum Institute provides mentorship to doctors and nurses at the various Correctional Services facilities in the form of advice on clinical cases; the distribution of up to date treatment guidelines and protocols; quality assurance of HIV/TB care prescriptions and the implementation of CCMT clinic data collection forms to ensure that individual patient data is recorded and stored.

### **Training**

The Aurum Institute’s training department has provided on-site training to DCS staff on all aspects of HIV/AIDS and TB, including voluntary counselling and testing, ART, support groups, peer education on HIV/AIDS and TB diagnosis and treatment.

### **Human resources**

The Institute has assisted in the appointment of appropriate and quality health care and support staff to the correctional facilities, through involvement in the appointment process and by the provision and supplementation of salaries.

### **Data management and monitoring and evaluation**

The Institute’s personnel have been involved in ensuring the implementation and training of correctional services staff on the use of the CCMT clinic data collection forms. This will ensure that individual patient data is collected and will facilitate the monitoring and reporting of the HIV programme.

### **Research**

The Aurum Institute, in collaboration with the DCS, the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, the National Health Laboratory Services and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine is conducting a research study titled "*A preliminary study of screening for tuberculosis in a South African correctional facility*", within the Johannesburg correctional facility.

Through this study the Institute aims to determine the burden of TB among offenders and correctional facility staff members and to evaluate the best tool or combination of tools to screen for TB. This will in turn inform and guide DCS policy on screening for TB within correctional facilities.

### **The Future**

"Our Correctional Services Programme has attracted the attention of some international prison groups who are evaluating the potential of this model for application in their own countries," says Clark. "This reaction has been very rewarding."

"We have monitored and assessed the outcome of the programme to date and it has proved to be as good as any other similar programme of its kind elsewhere in the world. Based on the success of the programme in Gauteng, in collaboration with the DCS, we aim to extend it to other correctional facilities in all provinces in South Africa."

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