EGPAF’s Global Reach

The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) is the global leader in the fight against pediatric HIV and has reached over 24 million women with services to prevent transmission of HIV to their babies. In 2015-2016, we are supporting activities in more than 6,000 health facilities in 19 countries; to further advance innovative research; and to execute global advocacy activities that bring dramatic improvement to the lives of millions of women, children, and families worldwide.

The Adolescent HIV/AIDS Epidemic

There is growing recognition that adolescents are a key population in need of attention within the worldwide HIV/AIDS response. Globally, about 2.1 million adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 years are living with HIV. In 2014, there were approximately 220,000 new HIV infections among adolescents ages 15-19. Despite major advances in HIV prevention, care and treatment, adolescents are the only age group in which deaths due to AIDS are not decreasing in Africa. The majority of these deaths occur in adolescents who were infected at birth and in infancy. Access to and uptake of HIV testing and counseling (HTC) by adolescents is significantly lower than by adults, and antiretroviral therapy (ART) coverage rates are lower for adolescents than for any other age group of persons living with HIV, signaling a need for targeted adolescent programs. In addition, there is a lack of expertise and training of health care workers and caregivers in managing a child’s transition from pediatric to adult care, including the psychosocial and reproductive health needs and uninterrupted treatment during this transition.
EGPAF’s Current Adolescent Work

EGPAF currently provides comprehensive HIV services for adolescents from prevention to testing to care and treatment. For example, in Kenya, EGPAF currently tests more than 7,000 adolescents and youth ages 10-25 each quarter under the Pamoja Project. Globally, EGPAF reaches approximately 450,000 pregnant adolescent girls each year with HTC through provision of prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission (PMTCT) services and provide nearly 50,000 adolescents living with HIV (ALHIV) with HIV care and treatment services.

New Horizons Advancing Pediatric HIV Care Collaborative

Founded in 2014 by Janssen, the Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson, EGPAF, and Partnership for Supply Chain Management, the New Horizons Collaborative is a multi-sector coordinated effort aimed at improving and scaling-up pediatric and adolescent HIV/AIDS care and treatment. Specifically, the Collaborative aims to a) address an immediate humanitarian need for advanced ART for children and adolescents, and b) to support health systems strengthening for national HIV/AIDS programs.

The New Horizons Collaborative facilitates several directly funded platforms to address these objectives. New Horizon's darunavir /etravirine donation program is designed to increase access to pediatric HIV medicines for children and adolescents experiencing treatment failure. There are currently four countries participating in the New Horizons donation program: Zambia, Kenya, Swaziland and Lesotho. Additional eligible countries will be identified through a standard expression of interest program to conclude in June, 2016. In addition to the donation program, the New Horizons Collaborative is currently developing several resources to support adolescent care and treatment such HIV status disclosure and transition to adult care guidelines, provider curricula, trainings, and a south-to-south learning network.

Increasing Access to Services

Adolescents are a challenging population to reach in traditional care settings, as they tend to not seek services at health centers due to stigma and fear of discrimination. In addition, younger adolescents rely on their caregivers, who may also be affected by the fear of stigma and discrimination, to provide them with care and treatment. To help address this, EGPAF supports the creation of adolescent-specific services, adolescent-friendly clinic days and adolescent corners at health facilities to increase access to services for this population. We work to ensure that health providers are trained in providing adolescent-friendly health services. We also support the development of community-level adolescent health awareness and testing campaigns led by adolescent peer ambassadors. These peer ambassadors are typically older ALHIV (ages 13-19 years), who lead adolescent psychosocial support groups and have extensive knowledge about HIV and stigma.

We support the implementation of targeted activities for adolescents and youth during community events, and provide behavioral interventions, including school-based education and sensitization activities. These events improve community knowledge and community support around HIV and AIDS. In Lesotho and Kenya, EGPAF supports the implementation of Adolescent Health Days and in Swaziland, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, EGPAF supports special community dialogues for adolescents under the Advancing Community-Level Action for Improving Maternal and Child Health/PMTCT Project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation through the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development.

EGPAF’s Adolescent Disclosure Support and Retention in Care

Disclosing one’s HIV status is particularly difficult among youth and adolescents as many struggle with the fear of stigma and discrimination within their communities. EGPAF provides...
support for disclosure of HIV status to HIV-positive children and adolescents and support for HIV-positive adolescents to disclose to family, friends, partners, and peers. The support includes trainings for parents/caregivers and psychosocial support for adolescents.

To help adolescents remain on treatment, EGPAF supports enhanced follow-up including programs where EGPAF-trained health workers and peer educators connect with adolescents who have received care at EGPAF-supported facilities outside the health care setting to encourage and support their return to health clinics for care and treatment. In Kenya we ensure that health care workers engaging with adolescents are trained to provide adolescent-specific services through facility-based continuing education and off-site mentorships.

Ariel Clubs/Camps

Named after Elizabeth Glaser’s daughter Ariel, EGPAF has pioneered the Ariel Club/Camp model of psychosocial support groups for HIV-positive children and adolescents, and has been supporting the clubs and camps since 2007. These support groups are currently implemented in nine countries (Figure 2). Participation in these activities has been shown to improve retention in care and ART adherence among adolescents. These camps provide a safe environment among ALHIV peers to form strong supportive relationships to help them remain in care and treatment throughout their transition to adulthood.

The Red Carpet Program

With funding from ViiV Healthcare, EGPAF has designed The Red Carpet Program, which seeks to improve the long-term health outcomes of adolescents and youth living with HIV in Homa Bay County, Kenya through the development, implementation, and evaluation of an adolescent and youth-specific comprehensive linkage to care and early retention program.

The program will have interlinked facility-and community-level components targeted at newly diagnosed adolescents and youth ages 15-21 years, including:

- The development and implementation of a program model featuring fast-tracked HIV services, separate facility areas with adolescent-friendly health care workers, peer educators providing individualized, age-based education and counselling, dedicated psychosocial support groups for newly diagnosed youth, and adolescent/youth advocates based in schools and communities to provide additional counselling and emotional support;
- The engagement of an Adolescent and Youth Peer Advisory Group to play a key role in program design and implementation; and
- The collection of extensive baseline data on adolescent and youth loss to follow-up, retention and adherence, service preferences, and clinical outcomes.
Strategy
EGPAF’s adolescent strategy is based on five guiding principles that will help inform our programmatic work: 1) Recognition of the heterogeneity of adolescents and their needs; 2) Focus on both HIV-positive and HIV-negative adolescents; 3) Commitment to building an evidence base for adolescent HIV-programming, interventions, and best practices; 4) Strengthening linkages and referrals to other social and protective services, orphans and vulnerable children and adolescent-focused programs, and other health services (including gender-based violence prevention; and 5) Adolescent engagement in the design and implementation of services and activities.

Strategy 1
Intensified support for ALHIV
Priority activities include: psychosocial support groups; dedicated disclosure, retention and adherence support; adolescent engagement activities; and support for transition into adult HIV care and treatment.

Strategy 2
Intensified support for pregnant adolescents
Priority activities include: intensified follow-up and adherence counseling; adolescent-focused support groups and classes; strengthening health worker capacity for adolescent services; and enhanced HIV education.

Strategy 3
Intensified HIV case-finding for adolescents
Priority activities include: improving access to HTC services; implementing and increasing adolescent-specific activities during community events and at health facilities; increase local support for adolescent-friendly clinic days; development of standard operating procedures and training curricula for adolescent-specific services; explore new approaches for reaching adolescents, including enhanced point-of-care and self-testing.

Strategy 4
Improve services for HIV-infected and uninfected adolescents
Priority activities include: linking adolescents to income-generating activities; strengthen integrated gender-based violence, HIV, sexual and reproductive health, and family planning services; empower adolescent girls and young women to know their rights and access comprehensive services; provide and expand enhanced HIV and reproductive health education.

Figure 3: EGPAF’s adolescent strategies