HIV & AIDS in South Africa

The HIV&AIDS epidemic cuts deeply into the lives and communities of South Africans. It is currently estimated that in South Africa, 5 million are HIV positive and an alarming twenty percent of adults are already living with HIV&AIDS.

**Challenge**

As primary health care providers, nurses are involved in the provision of HIV health services. They are integral to addressing the impact of HIV&AIDS. Nurses work in various settings and the number of cases and types of services needed pose significant challenges to them. Nurses have inadequate resources, equipment and/or training to assist them in responding to the HIV pandemic.

**Supporting Nurses**

The Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA) has partnered with the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) in a project to help reduce the impact of HIV&AIDS through strengthening the ability of nurses to respond to the HIV pandemic. This exciting new initiative, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), is called Caring for the Caregiver.

**Working Together**

The project has two areas of focus. Firstly, to improve the capacity of South African nurses to provide care to those infected with and affected by HIV&AIDS. Secondly, to improve the health and health system in South Africa through:

- The *Caring for the Caregiver* awareness campaign;
- Linking the nursing profession with community HIV&AIDS organizations; and,
- Addressing gender inequality with respect to HIV.

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*The global HIV/AIDS epidemic is an unprecedented crisis that requires an unprecedented response. In particular it requires solidarity – between the healthy and the sick, between rich and poor, and above all, between richer and poorer nations. We have 30 million orphans already. How many more do we have to get, to wake up?*

Kofi Annan,
United Nations Secretary General
DENOSA’s work on the South Africa Nurses HIV&AIDS Initiative is supported by the Canadian Nurses Association and undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

**DENOSA will:**

**Develop and implement a model for Caring for the Caregiver**

- Implement Caring for the Caregiver awareness campaign
- Create and sustain nurses’ support groups
- Organize talks by Persons Living with HIV
- Coordinate exchanges
- Support Employee Assistance Programs
- Promote use of HIV&AIDS toll-free help lines

**Quality care for others begins with quality care for self**

**Increase nurses’ access to HIV&AIDS information**

- Circulate HIV&AIDS information in publications and at special events

- Distribute gender-sensitive HIV&AIDS resources
- Promote access to HIV&AIDS resources
- Increase awareness of occupational health and safety and universal precautions

**DENOSA is a voluntary, autonomous, non-sexist, non-racial and non-profit organisation for nurses and midwives. It is a dynamic, proactive organisation that is continually in touch with its members and the communities they serve. The organisation strives to function with transparency and democracy. This is based on the recognition of human rights, professional and all other values which impact on nurses and nursing.**