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Editorial

The Siyakhana Project will be expanding in 2008, thanks to continued funding and an MOU between the project and the Eastern Cape Department of Health for the provision of ARV treatment for people who access the programme.

We are excited by the signing of the MOU because it signifies a deeper co-operation between ourselves and government.

Current funders DaimlerChrysler and German development agency DEG have indicated they will continue funding the project and USAid through the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (Pepfar) have pledged support.

Along with continued treatment and support to the HIV positive employees of the 17 currently participating companies, the Siyakhana Project will be adding 25 new companies to its client base in 2008 and a further 25 in 2009. We will incorporate tuberculosis (TB) mitigation and treatment into our programmatic approach because people who are HIV positive and infected with TB are 50 times more likely to develop active TB in their lifetime than people who are HIV negative, and it so makes good sense to address TB.

We will also assist with capacity building in ten clinics in our effort to improve the quality of care of people accessing testing and treatment.

We have also expanded access to our GP network to HIV positive Buffalo City Municipality

PPP an HIV and AIDS solution

The DaimlerChrysler Chamber Health Trust Siyakhana Project is nearing the completion of its two year pilot phase and has amply demonstrated the value of private public partnerships (PPP) as an appropriate vehicle for a sustainable and comprehensive response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, in workplaces and in the communities from which employers draw their labour.



The importance of forging a response to HIV and AIDS, grounded in a private public partnership approach has underpinned the project since its conceptualisation and it has grown out of a successful PPP which saw the development of the globally heralded DaimlerChrysler South Africa HIV and AIDS Workplace Project which was developed in 2001.

Both the DCSA HIV and AIDS Workplace Project and the Siyakhana Project were presented as a combined case study at the Global Business Coalition's on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria/Transatlantic Partners Against AIDS (GBC/TPAA) meeting in Russia where GBC hosted top policy-makers, business leaders, and dignitaries from China, India, and Russia, among other countries, for the Leaders Forum on Public-Private Partnerships (PPP).

"The forum included two unique workshops to identify, launch and establish a sustainable framework to guide new public-private partnerships (PPP's) in the fight against HIV/AIDS and TB in Russia, China and India," DaimlerChrysler's Group Health and Safety Advisor, Dr Clifford Panter said.

The Siyakhana Project is a response to the economic reality that small and medium size businesses in South Africa absorb more than half the people formally employed in the private sector and contribute about 42% to the country's GDP. HIV and AIDS are already having a significant direct and indirect impact on SMEs and very few have implemented even rudimentary HIV and AIDS interventions in the workplace.

Like the DaimlerChrysler workplace policy, the Siyakhana Project is widely viewed as an international benchmark, and is set for significant expansion in 2008.

Since the project was showcased in Russia, Panter says he has received numerous telephone calls from interested parties in China, India and Russia keen to hear how the project assists people who are not on medical aid access ARV treatment.

employees.



Dr Simeon Odugwu
Siyakhana Project Manager

HQ pleased

Siyakhana Project's Project manager Simeon Odugwu recently visited Germany to give feedback to DaimlerChrysler's Politics and Health Management Departments on the project's progress.

"They were impressed with what can be achieved, what is possible if one implements a comprehensive programme that tackles things holistically," he said.

DaimlerChrysler has indicated it will fund a second cycle of the project.

The TB connection

South African medical authorities need to start thinking about tuberculosis and HIV and Aids as a single epidemic, rather than treating them separately, Dr Greg Hussey, head of the University of Cape Town's Institute for Infectious Diseases, said.

He said some 250 000 new cases of TB were reported every year in South Africa, and that number was growing. Probably more than half of them were also HIV positive.

The diseases should be seen not as parallel epidemics, but as one epidemic, requiring a single intervention.



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