

**Government of Pakistan**

**Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination**

**Press Release**

**Health Minister Calls for collective efforts to defeat HIV/ AIDS**

Islamabad: November 29, 2018- Federal Minister National Health Services Aamer Mehmood Kiani said government is committed to making sincere efforts for increasing the access to and uptake of HIV preventive and treatment services by engaging with all stakeholders to promote HIV awareness and minimise stigma and discrimination against HIV. The government also aspires to support people living with HIV empowerment by creating an enabling environment and adopting an integrated multi-sectoral approach to address the socio-economic determinants responsible for the spread of HIV in the country. He was addressing a seminar in connection with World AIDS Day.

Minister said Pakistan has an estimated 150,000 people living with HIV. Of these only 25,000 are registered at the 33HIV treatment centres across the country.

We all need to realise our responsibilities and the critical role we all have to play to make Pakistan HIV free. We still have a chance today as Pakistan is confronted with a concentrated HIV epidemic that can be addressed by a focussed and targeted approach. We need to unite to avert a full-blown HIV epidemic by taking immediate preventive measures, encourage HIV testing and treatment, and addressing HIV associated stigma and discrimination to reduce the number of new HIV infections.

The series of awareness sessions held at community level through public outreach campaigns, educational institutes, policy making institutions and healthcare settings/hospitals to share important information and statistics related to the HIV epidemic in the country, free of cost HIV testing and treatment services being provided by the Government of Pakistan, to reduce stigma and discrimination and address misconceptions associated with HIV awareness is commendable. We hope that everyday becomes an AIDS Day till we can liberate the country of this menace.

Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination has made concrete and concerted efforts through the National AIDS Control Programme to promote HIV awareness and adopted a high impact evidence based approach for the coming years focusing on both prevention and treatment of the disease through working directly with the affected communities.

Programme Manager National AIDS Programme Dr. Baseer Khan said the World AIDS Day, 2018 theme of “Know your status” is also a reinforcement of basic human right to enable every individual to seek basic health services and also knowing his status of health. Throughout the week we have been provided an opportunity to realise that HIV can be prevented and HIV can be treated so let’s all take that first step towards making Pakistan HIV free as responsible citizens of this great country.

Sajid Hussain Shah  
PRO to Federal Minister