

NEPHAK STATEMENT ON MPP- ViiV ANNOUNCEMENT.

On April 1st 2014, The Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) and ViiV Healthcare announced a new collaboration on HIV medicines, signing two licensing agreements to increase access to dolutegravir (DTG), a promising new antiretroviral, for both adults and children. The announcement comes just two months after the European Medicines Agency approved the drug for adults and adolescents age 12-18, and eight months after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval.

The National Empowerment Network of people living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya (NEPHAK)¹ applauds this move by the Medicines patent pool and ViiV Healthcare and is excited by the accelerated efforts realized in the agreement. In the past it has taken an average of seven to nine years for generic versions of new HIV treatment to reach developing countries after introduction in industrialized nations. The agreements would allow generic manufacturers to produce low-cost versions of DTG for countries with the highest HIV burden, where 93% of adults and 99% of children living with HIV in the developing world reside. Almost all Kenyans living with HIV who are on treatment take generic ARVs, which procured by the government and availed free in public health facilities.

DTG is considered a significant advancement in HIV treatment. The medicine does not require boosting and better, safer and better tolerated than many of the currently available ARVs. The medicine can be used in combination with other drugs for patients that have never taken HIV therapy as well as for the many that have developed resistance to their current regimens. The WHO has estimated that 9.7 million people are on first-line HIV treatment today and that more than one million people will be on second-line treatment by 2016. In Kenya, the numbers of PLHIV requiring 2nd line ARVs have been increasing, especially among children and adolescents.

NEPHAK is excited by these developments as it will provide access to new generation HIV medicines for PLHIV and address the needs of children born and living with HIV in resource limited countries.

¹ The National Empowerment Network of People living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya (NEPHAK) is a national Network that unites people living with HIV (PLHIV) and those affected by TB and AIDS through community based organizations such as post-test clubs, support groups, men's associations, carers associations, women groups, youth groups and non-governmental organizations including, PLHIV networks. NEPHAK hosts one of the Expert Advisory Group member to MMP.

“DTG has great potential for improving treatment options in developing countries given its high effectiveness and low side effects” Said Ms. Florence Anam NEPHAK’s advocacy officer adding that she welcomes the ViiV-MPP collaboration and other efforts to speed delivery of innovative ARVs to those who need them.