

Proposal Summary: *Pediatric HIV/AIDS Training Project*

In Kenya, where infant and child mortality rates had been decreasing, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and malnutrition are now causing death rates to rise. It is estimated that 2.5 million children worldwide are infected with HIV or ill with AIDS, with East Africa home to fully one-fifth of this population. Clinical treatment of children with HIV/AIDS poses particular challenges; children are not just small adults. The special care, treatment, and drug formulations children need require that physicians receive specific education, training, and on-going support. Children infected with HIV progress to full-blown AIDS more quickly than adults. These children are highly vulnerable to opportunistic infections and often respond poorly to immunization and treatment for otherwise routine childhood illnesses. Life-threatening co-infection with malaria and/or pneumonia exacerbates and compounds the challenge of diagnosing symptoms and providing effective treatment. Kenya, indeed all the nations of Africa, need help to ease the suffering of these children and their families. We must invest in the welfare of Africa's children in order to create healthy, prosperous, and self-sustaining societies on that continent.

SATELLIFE has been approached by the Kenya National Pediatric HIV Training Program to assist in its efforts to disseminate and exchange vital information regarding the treatment and prevention of HIV infection in children. The Kenya National Pediatric HIV Training Program is a joint program involving personnel from Gertrude's Garden Children's Hospital, The Pediatric HIV Clinic at the Nairobi University Hospital, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and other health organizations in Kenya. The Kenya National Pediatric HIV Training Program has sought out SATELLIFE's involvement in this project because of our expertise in setting up successful information services in developing nations and our ability to leverage relatively small financial investments into valuable programs with far-reaching effect.

For the proposed project, SATELLIFE will design, implement, and provide technical management of an online forum for health care workers treating children with HIV/AIDS in Kenya, as well as the students, graduates, and facilitators of the Kenya National Pediatric HIV Training Program. The proposed *Kenya Pediatric AIDS Forum* will be managed locally by pediatricians involved in the Kenya National Pediatric HIV Training Program and who are actively involved in treating children with HIV infection or AIDS. SATELLIFE will train and assist staff to moderate the forum and provide ongoing technical and circulation management support. It is envisioned that access to these information services will eventually be extended to health care workers throughout East Africa.

The Kenya Pediatric HIV/AIDS discussion group will create a pediatric HIV communication network in Kenya that supports the exchange of information and dialogue among physicians who are treating sick infants and children. Currently, no such network exists in Kenya. Participants in the Kenya Pediatric HIV Training Program will initially be recruited to take part in this forum so that they can rapidly share information and experiences, discuss approaches, problems, and successes, and learn through action as they address the critical care of HIV-infected infants and children. Trained moderators will review all messages sent to the discussion group, stimulate and facilitate ongoing conversations, and contribute current items of interest from the medical literature in support of ongoing treatment and care efforts.

In time, SATELLIFE expects to develop an allied Pediatric HIV/AIDS electronic newsletter which will provide evidence-based medical and health information developed, selected, and edited specifically to meet the clinical needs of medical professionals practicing in Africa's least developed nations and which will provide opportunities for continuing health provider education as well as

avenues for the free exchange of information, ideas, and support. The proposed publication focused on pediatric HIV/AIDS will be available *free of charge* to residents of developing nations.

Subscribers will receive electronically a newsletter including recent pediatric HIV research findings, new treatment options, new investigations available, and any other information useful to health care workers involved in pediatric HIV management in Kenya. The newsletter will also provide information about pediatric HIV training programs to be run in Kenya or internationally and summaries of general HIV conferences and pediatric HIV conferences held in Kenya or internationally. In addition, subscribers will have access to medical alerts, clinical case discussions, and selected topics of urgent attention sent via email if they are considered to be of sufficient importance that their distribution cannot wait until the next scheduled newsletter. Similar to the proposed *Forum*, the proposed newsletter will be managed locally by an editorial committee including pediatricians involved in the pediatric HIV training program and treating children with HIV/AIDS infection.

Project Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of this project is the improvement of healthcare for children in Kenya infected with HIV or suffering from AIDS by widely disseminating reliable, accurate, practical, and usable medical information and health data specifically relevant to clinical practice and treatment of pediatric HIV/AIDS.

Project objectives include:

1. Increased knowledge and understanding among primary healthcare providers of pediatric HIV/AIDS treatment guidelines and medical recommendations derived from evidence-based research;
2. Increased availability of medical information specifically relevant to treating children in Kenya infected with HIV or suffering from AIDS ;
3. Increased opportunities for continuing healthcare provider education through access to a wide array of applicable, relevant, practical pediatric HIV/AIDS medical information;
4. Increased communication among Kenyan healthcare providers fostering meaningful exchange of information and ideas related to pediatric HIV/AIDS.
5. Reduced isolation among pediatric HIV/AIDS healthcare providers in rural community settings.

Project Evaluation

SATELLIFE will monitor and evaluate the quality, depth, and relevancy of information provided to address pediatric HIV/AIDS healthcare needs. Indicators of success will be 1) the number of participants; 2) the level of user satisfaction with the information service provided; and 3) the perceived changes in user practice and behavior. Mechanisms employed for collecting data may include gathering participant information and demographics during the registration process; tracking participant usage of the Kenya National Pediatric HIV Forum; tracking user comments and feedback; online user surveys; and/or in-country focus groups with Forum participants.

Project Activities and Schedule

Dependent on funding availability, SATELLIFE plans to begin collaboration with the Kenya National Pediatric HIV Training Program in December 2005. We expect that project planning, staffing, and training will be completed in three months and that the *Kenya Pediatric AIDS Forum* will

launch in month four. SATELLIFE will immediately commence monitoring and evaluating use of the Forum and users' response.