

FORD MOTOR COMPANY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
&
HIV/AIDS

1. REASONS FOR THE COMPANY UNDERTAKING TO COMBAT HIV / AIDS.

- The significance of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as raised in the UNAIDS report of December 1998, came to the attention of the executives of the Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa (FMCSA) and it was decided to embark upon an intervention programme to promote HIV/Aids Awareness amongst its Company employees and their families.
- Also, the projected impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa as an employer in the South African Automobile Manufacturing Industry was fully recognised as potentially serious by the Company's Executive Safety, Health & Environmental (SHE) Committee, a forum in which Trade Union representatives and Salaried Forum members participate.
- It was also very clear that the South African Government could not be expected to deal with the HIV/Aids issue on its own and that business needed to get involved, if any meaningful difference was to be made.
- **The reality of the situation during the first half of 1999 was:**
 - Widespread denial that HIV/AIDS actually exists.
 - Ignorance amongst the general workforce of how infection occurs and the inter-relationship with sexually transmitted diseases.
 - A firm belief in myths, such as the ability of traditional healers to cure the disease.
 - Opposition to the use of condoms, even if made available free of charge.
 - A reluctance to engage in any discussion on the topic of sex or HIV/Aids, from a cultural background basis.
- **It was evident that an opportunity existed for constructive intervention through:**
 - Increased levels of HIV/AIDS awareness and knowledge at the workplace within the South African Automobile Manufacturing Industry.
 - Providing guidance and assistance to Suppliers and Dealers.
 - Enhanced levels of HIV/AIDS awareness and knowledge amongst the families of employees, with a focus on the youth.
 - Active assistance and support in communities within which employees are resident, by
 - Assisting Trade Unions on the topic of HIV/AIDS, in support of their own programs.
- An initiative to embark on a constructive program to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic was met with enthusiasm by all Company employees, management and unions/employee representatives. As a consequence, the HIV/AIDS Steering Committee was established in August 1999. Importantly, the Committee is chaired by the Company's CEO and Group Managing Director, with representation by all stakeholders. This clearly signifies that the HIV/AIDS initiative is not just another Human Resource program. This Committee meets on a monthly basis.

- An HIV/Aids Policy was drawn up with the primary purpose of defining Company policy in respect of HIV and AIDS to ensure that there is consistency and fairness in the manner in which affected employees are treated both by the Company and by their colleagues.
- The HIV/Aids program has enjoyed the support of both management and the Unions who are represented on the HIV/Aids Steering Committee.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK UNDERTAKEN

- An HIV/AIDS Steering Committee was established in 1999. There is participation by all stakeholders and the committee is chaired by the Company CEO and Group Managing Director.
- A Company Policy Statement on HIV/AIDS was developed and published. Union inputs were obtained prior to publication and their signature appears on the document.
- HIV/AIDS Program Co-ordinators were appointed and as at November 2002, 77 HIV/AIDS Peer Educators have been trained to cover the two Ford Plants (Pretoria and Port Elizabeth).
- HIV/AIDS educational materials (manual for Peer Educators and an Employee Handbook) were developed.
- HIV/AIDS awareness training was conducted with all employees by shutting down all Company operations for an afternoon of training through the use of an industrial theatre play by professional artists. Senior dignitaries, the CEO and people living with HIV/AIDS made presentations.
- An HIV/AIDS Awareness Family Day was held involving employees, spouses and dependants.
- Benefit programs were aligned to promote the disclosure of employee HIV/AIDS status viz: additional medical cover by "Aid for AIDS".
- On-site dispensing of free condoms was decentralised. Usage increased from 700 per month to over 17000 per month.
- On-site medical clinics nursing staff were trained in best-practice clinical protocols for identification and treatment of STD's and related opportunistic diseases.
- An HIV/AIDS seminar for other employers in the South African Automobile Manufacturing Industry was hosted, providing leadership on workplace initiatives.
- On-site HIV/AIDS testing has been facilitated, with nursing staff trained in pre- and post-test counselling.

In a effort to reach those communities beyond those which specifically include FMCSA employees and their dependents, the Company has embarked upon two initiatives in partnership with local government and NGO's to influence behavioural change and assist with the care and support of those affected by the HIV/Aids Pandemic:

- Behavioural Change

Together with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality of Port Elizabeth, the regional Department of Education, the University of Port Elizabeth and a number of community-based organizations, FMCSA announced during March 2001 that they have combined forces in the fight against HIV/Aids. This entailed the launching (effective April 2001) of an HIV/Aids pilot study involving senior primary school children (aged 11 - 13 years) in 40 schools in the Port Elizabeth area. The programme is called the "Life Skills Programme Focusing on HIV/AIDS Education for Primary Schools Youth".

Taking place over a period of 12 months, the primary objective of the pilot study is to test the hypothesis that "Effective implementation of the National Life Skills HIV/AIDS Education Programme needs ongoing support for Teachers and alters Knowledge, Attitude and Perceptions in Learners".

Ford Motor Company, through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has provided R390, 000 towards this project.

- Care and Support

An HIV/Aids Pilot Project, with a focus on the care and support of people living with HIV and Aids orphans or orphans-to-be in Mamelodi (Pretoria), has been developed in partnership with the CDC and local community-based organisations. It was launched on 20 August 2001 and the FMCSA intends to "showcase" this initiative on how business can constructively contribute to the fight against the spread and effects of the HIV/Aids pandemic.

Ford Motor Company, through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has provided R300, 000 towards this project.

4. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO THE COMPANY AND THE COMMUNITY ?

From a state of massive ignorance amongst employees, contract workers and undoubtedly their families, significant progress has been made to a situation where:

- HIV/AIDS awareness and knowledge has increased to a level where every employee and contract worker at Ford has been exposed to the realities of the disease.
- People no longer hesitate to engage in open discussion on the topic, with more and more seeking advice or clarity.
- The use of condoms supplied by the Company has increased ten-fold.
- Schools and a variety of community-based organisations are approaching the Company on an on-going basis for guidance and assistance during community-type events, staged in those areas where employees are resident.
- Company HIV/AIDS Peer Educators are invited to participate in religious gatherings and to address the topic of HIV/AIDS in a public forum.
- Educational booklets on the topic of HIV/AIDS, developed and produced by the Company, have been distributed to all employees and taken home to share with families and friends.

5. GENERAL

- Received a CDC Award in 2000 for the design and implementation of an exemplary HIV/AIDS Workplace Program in the International Category was presented to FMCSA -the only award made to an organisation outside of the U.S.).
- On 16th January, 2002 the FMCSA was awarded the US Secretary of State's Award for Corporate Excellence for our HIV/AIDS programme. It is through the dedication of FMCSA employees, peer group educators, the HIV/Aids Steering Committee and others that the Company was nominated for this prestigious award. Of the over 60 nominations received in 2001, Ford was selected as the winner in the multinational category. The Secretary of State's Award for Corporate Excellence was established to recognise the important role US businesses play abroad as good corporate citizens.

It highlights the Department's increasing role in business-related issues. Candidates for this award are nominated by the Chiefs of US Missions around the world and two companies are selected – one in the multinational category (MNE) and one in the small-to-medium enterprise (SME) category.

VOLUNTARY COUNSELLING & TESTING

During October 2002, the Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa took another significant step in the fight against the Aids pandemic when the company announced the formation of a company-funded, on-site Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) programme.

It has been explained to employees that:

- Taking an HIV test is the only sure way of determining their HIV status.
- To test negative is very empowering knowledge. They can make a decision that it is now up to them to remain HIV free.
- To test positive is not necessarily a death sentence. Extensive and rapidly improving forms of professional help are already available free of charge to our Medical Aid members.
- Knowing their HIV status will enable them to ensure their ongoing good health, continued employment and eligibility for all normal employee benefits. Thousands of people all over the world today are living positively with HIV infection and Beating it by treating it.

Employees have been advised how the VCT process works and what is involved:

- The VCT process includes a pre-test counselling session which is a one-on-one, private and confidential discussion with a trained counsellor on how the test is conducted and WHAT the benefits of knowing one's HIV status are.
- The signing of an informed consent declaration
- The taking of the blood sample and
- A post-test counselling session – again a one-on-one, private and confidential discussion with the counsellor on the test results, with professional advice on what to do now that you know your HIV status.
- Anybody who may test positive will be assisted by the independent testing company with enrolment onto the Disease Management Program offered FREE OF CHARGE by the FMCSA's respective Medical Aid Schemes, to assist on-going good health, family life and employment in PRIVACY AND STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY.