



Fact Sheet

Preventing Parent-To-Child Transmission (PPTCT) of HIV: A Four-Pronged Approach¹

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Despite remarkable progress towards preventing parent-to-child transmission (PPTCT) of HIV in better resourced countries, HIV infection continues to occur in children during pregnancy, labor and delivery, and breastfeeding. While better resourced countries have been able to bring pediatric infection to less than 2%, worldwide an estimated 420,000 new cases of pediatric HIV infection occurred in 2007, with over 90% of these in sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly half of these infected children will die before their second birthday without treatment.

In 2003, the World Health Organization released a comprehensive four-pronged strategy to prevent HIV among infants and young children; it has since been adopted by many organizations, including UNICEF and UNAIDS.¹ This approach, detailed below, emphasizes not only the importance of prevention of HIV infection in women of reproductive age and subsequent infant infection, but also the importance of access to family-centered care and nutrition programs. CEPA incorporates these four prongs into its advocacy.

- 1. Primary Prevention of HIV.** The first prong promotes the prevention of primary infection of HIV among women of childbearing age. The delivery of primary prevention interventions are encouraged to occur within services related to reproductive health such as antenatal care, postpartum/natal care and other health and HIV service delivery points.
- 2. Prevention of unintended pregnancy among HIV-positive women.** The second prong encourages the importance of providing appropriate family planning, counseling and support to women living with HIV to enable them to make an informed decision about their future reproductive life, while paying special attention to preventing unintended pregnancies.
- 3. Prevention of PPTCT.** The third prong targets the prevention of HIV transmission *in utero*. In order to accomplish the prevention of transmission at this stage, the WHO recommends that HIV testing be integrated in maternal-child health care, including counseling for the mother regarding labor, delivery and breast feeding.
- 4. Linkage to care and support (provide care for HIV-positive mothers and their infants and families).** The fourth prong encourages better integration of HIV care, treatment and support for women found to be positive, their children and families.

¹ "Guidance On Global Scale-Up of the Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission of HIV"
http://www.unicef.org/aids/files/PMTCT_enWEBNov26.pdf