Dear Friends,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones well. It has been a while and we are excited to share our updates and some of the exciting innovations that have greatly impacted thousands of lives.

Alive Medical Services has been propelled forward by our strong core values – including our dedication to innovativeness. The different innovations that serve our clients in a holistic nature are centred on sustainability.

Capacity building for both our clients and staff beyond HIV care and treatment has been extremely rewarding, not only has it enhanced our State-of-the-art services but also improved our skills, involvement and greatly empowered AMS.

We at AMS are very thankful for your unwavering support in building the different ideas and making them a reality as we serve our clients with utmost love and dignity.

In this issue, we have highlighted the different innovations and their levels of sustainability to our clients. We know that HIV care and treatment merged with psychosocial support, economic empowerment, and growth enables our clients to live happier and healthier lives.

Together, more lives will be saved!

Thank you, Dr. Pasquine N Ogunsanya

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Alive Medical Services at the 2016 Women Deliver Conference

At the end of May, Dr. Pasquine Ogunsanya traveled to Copenhagen, Denmark to present at the renowned Women Deliver 2016 Global Conference. This was an opportunity for Dr. Pasquine to share her experience and expertise at the largest global conference on the health, rights, and wellbeing of girls and women. With women and adolescent girls continuing to remain at the highest risk for contracting HIV/AIDS, it is essential to focus specifically on the services and care provided to this group. Dr. Pasquine used this opportunity to highlight the deep connection between women’s and girls’ health, rights, and HIV/AIDS.

Dr. Pasquine’s selection to speak at this prestigious conference provides continued recognition for the high-impact and cutting-edge comprehensive HIV prevention, treatment, and care services that set AMS apart. Speaking at the Women Deliver 2016 Global Conference provided Dr. Pasquine the opportunity to share her wealth of knowledge with other leading experts, practitioners, and advocates of women’s health around the world.

The entire AMS team was honoured to receive this recognition and to have the opportunity to share the clinic’s lessons and success stories with a global audience. We believe that sharing knowledge, challenges, and achievements at global events like the Women Deliver Conference provides the foundation and tools needed to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic. We would like to thank the Proctor & Gamble Company for their continued support and for providing us the opportunity to engage in leading global health events. AMS’ recognition as a leader within the field of women’s and girls’ health and HIV care is a stunning testament to the groundbreaking work that we continue to do with your support – Thank you!

Victor’s Club

In the past few months, deliberate efforts have been made to create sustainable channels of information sharing and dissemination among the young clients of AMS to improve service delivery and the clients’ health. Smaller peer groups have been created through the Victor’s Club and these have enriched the dissemination of sexual reproductive health among the members.

New subgroups have been created in the Victor’s club by dividing the youth and the children by age to increase solidarity. The target age group for the Victor’s Club is 11 to 24 years, with the aim of having older members advise the younger ones. Division into smaller circles of 11-14, 15-18 and 19 -24 means that there is more interaction with members among an age group that they are more comfortable with. This in the end has prompted them to share more personal matters, to follow-up on their peers, and to seek for advice whenever needed.

“The level of stigma has incredibly reduced since the Victor’s Club was divided into the smaller and manageable age groups. A number of adolescents and youth were not taking their medicines well due to stigma back at home but the smaller groups help in improving their adherence to the prescribed medication, says Edith Nabula, the Victor’s Club president.

The aim of the Victor’s Club at AMS is to create a safe space for young people where they can share, and this has been tremendously successful. The last quarter has seen an increased number of young people attend the Youth Days, registering up to 200 clients in attendance.

The combinationation of peer support and independence has resulted in high retention and viral suppression. The love and dignity with which the youth receive support has prompted them to attend more regularly.

To sustain communication channels, the youth use social media channels like Facebook and WhatsApp, through which they stay socially connected and seek any advice that is accorded to them when needed.
AMS’ “state-of-the-ART” model

Since its inception, AMS has consistently provided comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment and psychosocial support services to over 13,000 clients. With the HIV prevalence rate remaining high in Uganda, AMS is taking long strides in contributing to the goal of eliminating HIV. This aim is woven into the free holistic HIV services that are provided with love and dignity.

The model of care that AMS pioneered in the differentiated care is the innovative Community based ART pick up which has translated into Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission (EMTCT) of HIV since 2013. AMS was the first clinic that pioneered client initiated community ART pick up model which has been successful that AMS was requested to present this model to CDC and MOH and this model has now been adopted to be used nationally. AMS was also selected by MOH to be on the committee that adopted and formulated the WHO guidelines for Differentiated ART model in Uganda. The model is in line with the WHO and UNAIDS consolidated guidelines on Differentiated Care using the Test and Treat approach.

The diverse services provided by AMS do not only cater to HIV-positive clients. Patients are given treatment and care for non-communicable diseases and can be easily monitored at the clinic since it offers 24-hour services. Treatment from AMS comes with a holistic package that is offered through various ways. The clinic seeks to empower young people through the psychosocial services of the Vickers’ Club. There is also an element of economic and social empowerment through the income-generation groups in which women come together to make bracelets under the Kwagalana Group and clients grow crops for domestic and commercial purposes under the Kapeka Gardening group.

Maternal and child health is also a central component to AMS’ ART model. Pregnant women are keenly followed up on after being referred to other facilities for deliveries. This has translated into elimination of the mother to child transmission of HIV from AMS women in care since 2013.

Many times clients come from different regions of the country to seek good-quality and free medical care given with utmost love and dignity. “AMS is a one-stop-shop for everything a patient would need. We never lack medicines, the love and care alone is outstanding, plus we have the qualified medical personnel to take care of the patient’s medical needs,” shares Dr. Liz, the AMS Clinic Manager.

As the clients wait in queue to seek medical attention, they are treated to video and live information, education, and communication materials on HIV care. This keeps them informed and entertained simultaneously. Very vulnerable and malnourished clients are also provided with foodstuffs on ‘Food Days’ that take place twice a month on Wednesdays. This model has proven to be very effective and successful over time. Clients have confidence in the services offered with utmost integrity, dignity, and love and in turn it has greatly impacted the large numbers that seek this support.

Gardening Groups Become a Source of Income for Women in Kapeka

One of our core values at AMS is innovativeness, which translates into sustainability in the services we provide in the long run. A comprehensive approach to our clients’ well-being has fostered some of these innovations that have become projects and a way of life. The Kapeka Gardening Group is one of the many innovations that have greatly improved the physical and economic well-being of our clients in Kapeka, a subcounty in Nakaseke district in the central region of Uganda.

The Kapeka Gardening Group was initiated in 2013 through the large number of AMS clients from the area. The group was then supported with training in modern farming practices by the Development in Gardening project that was funded by Keep a Child Alive. The trainings later fostered the emergence of 12 gardening groups from 12 support groups in Kapeka alone. The groups that gained from this training have further extended their skills to 4 gardening groups in Semuto, another sub-
Fast-tracking food distribution to the clients in need

On every second and third Wednesday of the month, AMS’ front yard is adorned with packages of food. Clients fill up the tent and wait patiently in queue to be served. These bimonthly days are called “Food Days.”

Through this nutrition programme, AMS continues to ensure that all our clients have their nutrition needs taken care of. With the increasing number of clients at an average of 100 new clients each month, there has emerged a need to devise means to cater to our clients’ needs efficiently.

The fast-tracking method has been developed by AMS to better assess the nutrition needs of each client. The nutrition assessment is done using methods like:

“Mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) to determine whether the patient is malnourished”

The patient is then assessed for their food needs and about whether they can afford to get all the nutrients required. Some patients who are in a very severe state of malnutrition are given ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF). These boost their weight to an average gain of 3 kilograms in two weeks. Patients are then issued food cards on “Food Days” to access the food availed by AMS for a period of 6 months.

The fast-tracking method enables the clinicians to determine the patients with more need than others. Some patients’ condition boosts back to normal in as early as 3 months and this is when the “Pave Way for the Hungry” platform is applied. In this platform, AMS prioritizes providing for the clients most in need. The patients in more need have just lost jobs or their viral load is too high that it weakens them to a point that they cannot sustain their nutrition needs, among other possibilities.

After 6 months, patients are reassessed to determine whether their bodies have fully rejuvenated as they continue with medication and all our other health services that are offered with love and dignity.
Food Day - Something for those in critical need

Youth Day - A smile on every young person’s face

AMS PROGRAMS ARE MADE POSSIBLE BY GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM:

KCA
KEEP A CHILD ALIVE

CDC
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

P&G

Rotary

Musicians without Borders

MoA

UPMB
ACTS 1:7-8

ACTS 1:7-8

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