

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION**

Press Release

Curtain Raiser for AIDSCON-6

Chandigarh, 1st February, 2017: Chandigarh State AIDS Control Society is organizing two day's conference "AIDSCON –6 – Toward AIDS Free World" on 3rd & 4th February, 2017 at IMA Complex Sector-35 B, Chandigarh.

The conference will be inaugurated by Sh. VP Singh Badnore, Governor of Punjab and Administrator, U.T. Chandigarh along with Sh. Parimal Rai, IAS, Advisor to Administrator UT, Chandigarh and Anurag Aggarwal, IAS, Home Secretary-cum-Secretary Health U.T., Chandigarh.

The conference is primarily planned as a mainstreaming activity to sensitize and attempt to involve the community in the AIDS Control Programme. The objective of the conference is to consolidate all efforts carried out regarding control of HIV/AIDS and bring together all partners on one platform. Since a lot of work has been done by various agencies in this field it is desirable that there should be some kind of coordination between the agencies and exchange of ideas, thoughts and knowledge. AIDSCON will provide an appropriate platform for the same.

Chandigarh State AIDS Control Society is the only State AIDS Control Society in the country that has ever organized a conference like AIDSCON and has been doing it very successfully from the last five years. This year also Chandigarh SACS has worked hard to bring together on one platform the service providers, policy makers, researchers, students and beneficiaries.

Chandigarh State AIDS Control Society has taken major steps over the past years to control the HIV/AIDS prevalence in the Union Territory and the surrounding areas. The prevalence of HIV in an area is measured by the positivity amongst Pregnant Women. In Chandigarh, this positivity has reduced from 0.27% in 2008 to 0.11% in 2016. The HIV positivity among the general population has also come down from 7.12% in 2008 to 0.81% in 2016.

The High Risk Groups have also been showing a decreasing incidence of HIV new infections. Similarly Sexually Transmitted Infections have also shown a decline.

The prevalence among Intravenous Drug Users continues to be the same as in the past years and is something that is being addressed aggressively.

At the moment there are 4550 patients alive and on ART in the centre at PGIMER. Out of these, 578 (12.70%) are from the local population. It is important to remember that the patient load in Chandigarh is actually a reflection of the region as the States of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh contribute to the patient load. As PGI is a tertiary health centre, the referred patients reach here usually at a late stage in their disease. This results in larger number of deaths. The number of patients started on the treatment in the ART Centre has been a stable figure since 2012.

Another indicator of low prevalence of HIV is the positivity in the Blood Units collected through Voluntary Blood Donations in the Blood Banks. It is seen that the HIV positivity in the Blood Units is also very low i.e. 0.03%.

Dual elimination of congenital HIV & Syphilis is an important target for Chandigarh. It is being ensured that all pregnant women are tested for HIV & Syphilis and treatment started if required. This will ensure a healthy baby. This way paediatric HIV will soon be stopped.

In Chandigarh regular awareness activities have helped to bring down the HIV prevalence in the city. People are adopting healthy lifestyles including safe sex practices. The voluntary testing at Integrated Counseling and Testing Centers has increased.