

assistance to ensure a safe and adequate blood supply. The focus of this initiative is 14 countries in Africa and the Caribbean that are heavily affected by HIV/AIDS: Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Haiti, Guyana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. The purpose of this announcement is to provide expert guidance and technical assistance to the Ministries of Health or the National Transfusion Services in the 14 targeted countries as they rapidly develop and implement a national safe blood program with demonstrable results within the first year of the Emergency Plan. An additional intent is to develop sustained indigenous capacity to continue these programs after the project ends.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Authority: This program is authorized under section 301(a) and 307 of the Public Health Service Act, [42 U.S.C. 241(a) and 242l] as amended and under Public Law 108-25 (United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Act of 2003) [22 U.S.C. 7601].

Purpose: President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief has called for immediate action to turn the tide of HIV/AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean, to prevent at least seven million HIV infections within five years. An important aspect of the President's plan is to provide assistance to ensure a safe and adequate blood supply. The focus of this initiative is 14 countries in Africa and the Caribbean heavily affected by HIV/AIDS: Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Haiti, Guyana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that five to ten percent of all HIV transmissions are attributable to unsafe blood transfusions. Transmission of HIV and other blood-borne pathogens via blood transfusion is preventable by establishing an adequate supply of safe blood through a systematized blood transfusion service and minimizing unnecessary transfusions. However, according to WHO, among blood donations in Africa in 2002, only 90 percent were screened for HIV, 55 percent for Hepatitis B virus, and only 40 percent for Hepatitis C virus.

The rapid implementation of safe blood programs and precautions against medical transmission of HIV is a priority area for the President's plan. The overall goal is to develop and implement a national safe blood program with demonstrable results within the first year of the Emergency

Plan. The purpose of this announcement is to provide support to organizations able to offer expert guidance and technical assistance to Ministries of Health and the National Transfusion Services in the 14 targeted countries on the development and implementation of a national safe blood program.

Measurable outcomes of this program will be in alignment with the following performance goal for President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief: Prevent 7 million new HIV infections. The initiative will involve large-scale prevention efforts, including the rapid establishment and strengthening of safe blood transfusion services.

This initiative is a coordinated effort led by the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator at the Department of State and involves various U.S. Federal Government agencies, including, the Department of State, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Department of Defense, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Activities

Awardee activities for this program are as follows: The provision of expert guidance and technical assistance to Ministries of Health or the Government's National Transfusion Services in the 14 targeted countries: Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Haiti, Guyana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Awardees must carry out activities with Ministries of Health or the National Transfusion Services in multiple countries. Ministries of Health or the National Transfusion Services will be responsible for the actual implementation of the blood safety programs, including management, operations, and monitoring.

Specifically, the awardee(s) will provide expert guidance and technical assistance in the following areas:

- **Infrastructure**—Assist in assessing current infrastructure needs for a national, regionalized blood transfusion system, including regional blood collection and processing facilities, laboratory testing equipment and supplies. Advise in the strengthening of regional blood collection facilities in major urban areas, preferably near major health care facilities. Advise in the provision of standard laboratory equipment and reagents to regional blood collection facilities to test blood for transfusion-transmitted infections and to perform blood grouping and cross matching.

- **Blood collection**—Develop generic and site-specific protocols for obtaining, handling and storing, transporting, and

distributing blood for use in blood collection facilities. Assist in developing and maintaining a network of blood donor recruiters and blood donor counselors to operate from each regional center. Assist in developing and maintaining a system to identify a network of low risk and repeat blood donors. Guide in the management of blood collection facilities that have the capacity to obtain, handle and store blood safely with good recordkeeping. Implement effective quality assurance procedures for collecting and storing blood.

- **Testing**—Develop generic national and site-specific protocols for testing blood for HIV, hepatitis and syphilis. Manage blood testing facilities, ensuring good recordkeeping. Implement effective quality assurance procedures for testing blood.

- **Transfusion and Blood Utilization**—Develop and implement national guidelines for the appropriate use of blood and blood products, nationally and regionally. Develop blood utilization review and quality assurance systems for blood usage.

- **Training**—Develop and provide training programs and continuing education programs for health care professionals involved with blood transfusion services, such as physicians, nurses, physician assistants, community health aides, counselors, and laboratory technicians in the fields of blood donor recruitment and blood collection. Develop and provide training programs and continuing education programs for physicians and laboratory technicians in basic principles and practice of blood banking and transfusion medicine. Develop educational programs for health care providers, nurses and the general public on safe transfusion practices, including reducing the demand for unnecessary transfusions and recognizing community norms in practices regarding blood transfusions.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**—Implement a system for reviewing and adjusting program activities based on monitoring information. Measure clinical outcomes to assess the impact of the program.

Funding will be provided to initiate new programs or expand existing programs (e.g., expanding from one region to other regions of the same country) that include the above compounds.

In a cooperative agreement, HHS/CDC staff is substantially involved in the program activities, above and beyond routine grant monitoring. HHS will work under the guidance and supervision of the Office of the Global