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## MCC News

An e-newsletter about male circumcision for HIV prevention in Kenya

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A theatre group performs a skit on the importance of voluntary medical male circumcision during the launch of the programme at the Kamukunji grounds in Kibera.

*Photo courtesy of IRDO*

## Male circumcision programme expands beyond Nyanza

Voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) services are now available free of charge in Nairobi's Lang'ata District as part of the government's efforts to curb the spread of HIV infection.

The ministries of health are collaborating with Impact Research and Development Organization (IRDO) to offer the services, which are currently available at Lang'ata Health Center, Ushirika Medical Clinic, and the AMREF health facility in Laini Saba. A mobile unit will soon be added to make VMMC services available in other parts of the district.

Nairobi is the second province after Nyanza to offer free VMMC as part of a comprehensive package of HIV prevention services that include HIV counselling

and testing, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, risk-reduction counselling, and provision of condoms. Since the government launched its programme in Nyanza in November 2008, more than 130,000 men have been circumcised.

IRDO is among the organisations supporting the programme in Nyanza Province. The organisation's director, Dr. Kawango Agot, says they are applying the lessons learnt in Nyanza to help set up the Nairobi programme.

“We borrowed lessons we've learnt in Nyanza so as not to reinvent the wheel,” Dr. Agot said. “However, we also recognize that each place is unique and requires different approaches to service delivery.”

The government adopted VMMC as part of its HIV prevention strategy after studies in Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda showed that being circumcised reduces a man's chances of becoming infected with HIV by about 60 percent.

The ministries of health have taken a phased approach to rolling out the VMMC programme. In the first phase, from 2009 to 2013, the strategy is to prevent as many HIV infections as possible by focusing on parts of the country where the prevalence of male circumcision is low and the prevalence of HIV infection high. These areas include Nyanza, Western, Rift Valley, and Nairobi provinces.

In Western Province, about 50 health workers recently received training in the provision of safe male circumcision services in preparation for the expansion of the VMMC programme to Teso District. The government also plans to extend the VMMC programme to Rift Valley's Turkana District.

### **VMMC programme mobilises to meet increased demand**

The government and its partners have been using various strategies to meet an increased demand for voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) services during the month of August.

Last year programme implementers in some areas noticed a constant flow of clients seeking male circumcision in August, when young men and boys were on school holidays. This year, in July, they prepared to meet that demand by building on lessons learnt during the Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) of November-December 2009, when more than 37,000 men and boys were circumcised over 30 days.

Much of the latest effort is designed to expand access to VMMC services. Officials from the ministries of health (MOH) have enlisted staff members who

were on leave to provide the services, just as they did during the RRI. Some health facilities that do not routinely provide VMMC have formed their own teams of trained providers to offer the services during the month of August. And the partner organisations are deploying more outreach and mobile teams to bring VMMC services closer to communities.

District steering committees in all 12 districts of Nyanza where the VMMC programme operates are supervising the effort to ensure that a high standard of care is maintained as the volume of clients increases.

Other strategies are designed to promote greater uptake of VMMC. The programme's mobilisers are working with voluntary counselling and testing services to reach young men, and sensitisation meetings were held with primary and secondary school head teachers to encourage them to inform their students about the benefits of male circumcision.

Accelerated uptake of VMMC services during the August holidays would help the MOH and its partners meet their goals of reaching at least 100,000 men and boys in Nyanza from July 2010 to June 2011.

### **Male circumcision in the news**

#### **Male 'cut' boosts drive against Aids, says report**

*Daily Nation*, 2 August

#### **Medics step up fight against botched circumcision**

*The Standard*, 12 August

#### **AFRICA: Could HIV be a matter of biology?**

*PlusNews*, 17 August

#### **Kenya Attempts to Modernize Traditional Circumcision Rites**

*Inter Press Service*, 24 August

### **Resources**

#### **Male Circumcision at the XVIIIth International Conference on AIDS, Vienna, Austria**

Male circumcision for HIV prevention was highlighted in more than 55 presentations at the XVIIIth International AIDS Conference in Vienna, Austria, 18-23 July. A link to the presentation abstracts is available [here](#).

#### **Neonatal and Child Male Circumcision: A Global Review**

The report reviews global practices in male circumcision of neonates and children, covering topics such as prevalence, age at circumcision, type and training of provider, common circumcision methods, frequency of complications, and cost.

### **Safe Male Circumcision Policy, Government of Uganda, Ministry of Health**

This document describes the mission, guiding principles, policy objectives, and strategies of the safe male circumcision programme launched by the Ugandan government in July 2010.

**The Male Circumcision Consortium (MCC)** works with the Government of Kenya and other partners to prevent HIV and save lives by expanding access to safe and voluntary male circumcision services. Family Health International (FHI), EngenderHealth, and the University of Illinois at Chicago, working with the Nyanza Reproductive Health Society, are partners in the Consortium, which is funded by a grant to FHI from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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