



## Global Campaign News February 18, 2002

Welcome to the biweekly *Global Campaign News*! The *Global Campaign News* is a forum for international exchange on microbicide activities and information with an aim to build a more informed and integrated movement for microbicide development and other prevention options against HIV and STDs.

We welcome your input and contributions. Correspondence can be addressed to [info@global-campaign.org](mailto:info@global-campaign.org). If you would like to unsubscribe to the Global Campaign News, please reply to this e-mail with the subject line: UNSUBSCRIBE.

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### **"Microbicides: HIV Prevention's New Hope"**

#### ***Press event highlights new evidence in making the case for microbicides.***

A first-generation microbicide could save 2.5 million lives over three years in low-income countries. This new finding was one of the compelling results of five working papers commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation and released February 12 at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. "Microbicides: HIV Prevention's New Hope," was co-sponsored by the Alliance for Microbicide Development, the Global Campaign for Microbicides, and the International Center for Research on Women as well as the Rockefeller Foundation. The event represented the first public release of the long-awaited results of a consultative process assessing needs and opportunities in the field of microbicides research, development, and introduction. Expert working groups were formed in five areas: science, pharmaco-economics, public health impact, access and use, and advocacy. Their conclusions strengthen more than ever the argument in favor of increased commitment to microbicides as a scientifically feasible and urgently needed tool for HIV prevention.

"For the first time -- and I get goosebumps as I say this -- we have the hard data to make a strong case for investments in... microbicides," said Dr. Geeta Gupta, president of the International Center for Research on Women and long-time microbicides advocate. The scientific working group concluded that while clinical testing of microbicides presents certain challenges, these challenges are manageable, and a safe and effective microbicide could be available within five years. The pharmaco-economics working group determined that there is a shortfall of about US\$545 million over five years in public funding for microbicide research. However, the analysis also showed that once a first-generation microbicide is available through public investment, market forces should

take over and private industry will be motivated to invest in future products. A mathematical model developed by the public health impact working group showed that even a 60% efficacious microbicide used half the time that condoms aren't used, by people who are easily reached by existing distribution systems, could avert 2.5 million new infections over a three year period. Even within the conservative parameters used in the model, this number is particularly meaningful when compared to the 1.8 million new infections among women that occur each year.

A microbicide will only prevent HIV infections if it is used regularly and by people most at risk. This was the primary message of the access and use working group, who call on researchers and donors to dedicate significant time and investment to creating the mechanisms and conditions for widespread access to and use of an eventual microbicide. This would mean conducting acceptability and behavioral research along with clinical research to determine user preferences, responses, and potential barriers to use at the outset. It also means planning ahead for the mechanisms to purchase and distribute an effective microbicide to those most in need. The advocacy working group, which was chaired by the Global Campaign, delivered a "Call to Action" for microbicides. Recognizing that there is an advocacy component to each of the other four areas, the working group calls for dedicating a portion of funds raised for microbicide research and development to strengthening the capacity of civil society actors -- such as women's health groups, HIV/AIDS organizations, and community representatives -- to participate in decision-making related to the field's research agenda, clinical trial implementation, and access initiatives.

The executive summary of the five documents can be found on the Global Campaign website, [www.global-campaign.org](http://www.global-campaign.org). For the full papers, you can visit [www.rockfound.org](http://www.rockfound.org).

### **Advocates in Action**

North American advocates are making microbicides increasingly visible at national and international conferences. First up on this year's roster is Grisel Robles, our Illinois site coordinator, presenting for us at the 2002 Community Planning Leadership Summit for HIV Prevention in Chicago next month. In the same week, southern California advocates Jennifer Moore and Kevin Whaley will put microbicide advocacy on the program of the National STD Prevention Conference in San Diego. In May, Iowa site coordinator, Jane Meyer, and Florida advocate, Deborah Jones, will be presenting a microbicides workshop at the American Association for Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists in Miami while Georgia site coordinator Terri Wildrer updates social workers on microbicides at the National Social Work and HIV/AIDS Conference in New Orleans.

What's next? Plans are pending for several advocacy presentations the international Microbicides 2002 conference in Antwerp, including one proposed by the California Microbicide Initiative (CaMI) and another proposed jointly by US, Canadian and European Global Campaign members. The XIV International AIDS Conference in Barcelona next July and the US Conference on AIDS in Anaheim next September are also attracting microbicide advocacy abstracts including some proposed by our Connecticut, Illinois and Georgia Global Campaign sites. The Philadelphia site hopes to

be sending presenters to Boulder for the national Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health Summit in August; a month that may also find Canadian advocates presenting at the International Women and Health Meeting Toronto. Then we'll close out 2002 with Washington advocates talking up microbicides at the National Harm Reduction Conference in Seattle next December.

### **What's News on our Website?**

Megan Gottemoeller had an article published in the SEICUS Report: Microbicides, Expanding the Options for STD Prevention. You can view this article at our website: <http://www.global-campaign.org/dom/newsdom.html>.

We also received press coverage for the February 12<sup>th</sup> Press Conference from Reuters: HIV Prevention Product Close to Market Survey, which you can view at our website: <http://www.global-campaign.org/dom/newsdom.html>

For a more detailed background on microbicides, you can read a recent article: Microbicides to prevent heterosexual transmission of HIV: Ten years down the road. By Janneke van de Wijgert and Christiana Coggins. <http://www.global-campaign.org/dom/newsdom.html>