

COMMUNITY LINKS AND HUMAN EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE



STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

MARCH 2017

CLHEI'S POLICY AGAINST STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION OF PLHIVs

VISION STATEMENT

A self reliant society where individuals and groups explore their inner resources with the aim of realizing their full potentials.

MISION STATEMENT

To work with the under-privileged, helping them to maximize their potentials and self reliance.

VALUES

- Timeliness: Punctuality within agreed timelines, promptness in responding to requests.
- Good attitude: Maintain a positive disposition in thought, speech and action.
- Integrity: We are our words
- Excellence: Excellence is our mirror

MOTTO

Planting Hope, Changing Lives

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The stigma and discrimination policy provides an understanding and protection of the rights of PLHIVs as contained in the national guidelines for community HTS.

BACKGROUND

CLHEI upholds the fundamental right of PLHIVs in her communities of project implementation and even beyond and is quite aware of the confidentiality challenges faced by PLHIVs. We therefore will not in any way undermine the right and confidentiality of any of our positive client as we intend to implement our community HTS in line with national guidelines and standards.

Stigma and Discrimination Policy

Introduction

These policy provisions are made to protect the rights of beneficiaries of **Community Links and Human Empowerment Initiative (CLHEI)** against Stigma and Discrimination relating to HIV/AIDS. This policy is also in compliance to Nigerian constitution, policies surrounding client rights, and the HIV/AIDS (Anti-Discrimination Act 2014)

This policy is therefore to guide the actions of **CLHEI** staff in their work with beneficiaries. It also provides for beneficiaries to report (including anonymously) cases of violations in a confidential and secure manner.

Rights of the Beneficiaries

- Right to be treated with courtesy and dignity
- Right to accurate information
- Right to respect for his or her privacy (including confidentiality of information)
- Right to be able to choose to have a relative during counseling or Vulnerable Children's service provision
- Right to non-discrimination
- Right to informed consent

Rights Violations

The rights of persons shall be construed as having been violated by the failure to provide care, by providing substandard care, or by abusing individuals based on characteristics such as disease status (e.g. HIV status), sex, age, gender, religion, disability or ethnic background.

Lack of confidentiality undermines prevention, care and treatment efforts and increase the impact of the epidemic on individuals, families, communities and nations.

Discrimination violates people's right to health. Individuals' right to life is also threatened when access to lifesaving treatment such as anti-retroviral therapy or, indeed, to prevention Interventions that protect against contracting HIV is obstructed.

The right to informed consent rooted primarily in the rights to health and liberty of one's person is violated when a patient is tested for a condition without her knowledge, or is tested even after having refused to take the test. More broadly, health workers must obtain the patient's informed consent in order to administer testing, treatment, and other procedures and before disclosing patient information.

The right also addresses situations where a legal representative is required and the importance of even in those circumstances of enabling patients to be involved in decision making to the full extent that their capacity allows.

Target Groups/Activities

As part of the efforts to reduce stigma and Discrimination in SMILE implementing communities. The following activities will be conducted:

Type of Activities	Audience-Groups	Provide capacity	Location
Advocacy:	Community leaders, Religious group and key stakeholders	Engage religious, traditional leaders and PLHIV support groups with the view to promote support for PLWHIV and booster confidence among support group members, reduce self-stigma and improve members' ability to deal with external stigma	Community centers, traditional rulers palace, Hospital and any safe place identified by group
Capacitybuilding	Key stakeholders on stigma issues in the community	Involve relevant stakeholders such as policymakers, community gate keepers/leaders, religious leaders, traditional rulers, Health workers, youth groups and PLHIV groups in capacity improvement programs including training and coaching. This engagement will address fears about HIV, misconceptions about transmission and promote understanding, compassion and professionalism amongst health works and others.	Provide this during coaching , mentoring and step down trainings / meetings
Community Dialogue	Community leaders; political, cultural and religious leaders	This will be targeted at Community leaders; political, cultural and religious leaders, in the LGA to promote traditional and religious legal systems with the view to resolving and changing harmful traditional norms and religious practices	Within the LGA
Community Mobilization and Sensitization	Community members	Target community members for HIV education and testing aimed at providing correct information about HIV prevention, transmission and treatment in order to promote care and support for PLHIV to reduce	In the community

		stigma and discrimination	
One-on One Counseling	Community member	Targeted at PLHIV and their family Members to reduce both self-stigma and stigma and discrimination at the family level.	In the community or health facility

Our Commitment

The rights of beneficiaries on the SMILE project will be respected and upheld within the ambits of the Nigerian constitution. Communities and beneficiaries will be supported to realize their rights to respectful and nondiscriminatory access to care and support by all staff of Integrated Health Program on the SMILE project.

Project beneficiaries will be encouraged to report anonymously, if they so choose, any breach of these rights by staff or community volunteers of the organization.

Reports of breach of rights or abuses by staff or Volunteers of **CLHEI** can be reported to the Community improvement team, (CIT) or by calling the CSO's hotline made available to community members, beneficiaries and community volunteers (CVs). The information on how to report rights infringements shall be visibly pasted in facilities where **CLHEI** implements within and outside the office premises.

Stigma and Discrimination

CLHEI shall not discriminate or permit discrimination by any member of its staff against any beneficiary/individual on the basis of race, color, religion, nationality, sex, pregnancy, gender, HIV status, parental status, marital status, age, disability, HIV

The overall goal of the **CLHEI** adapted policy on HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination is to provide a framework for advancing the multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS epidemic in Benue state in order to achieve effective control by reducing the rate of new infections, providing equitable care and support for those infected and affected and mitigating the impact of the infection; thereby enabling all people in the state to be able to achieve socially and economically productive lives free of the HIV and its effect.

Services targeted at beneficiaries of the project shall inculcate human rights approach, combating stigma and discrimination, and shall be offered in a gender sensitive and gender responsive way to address social vulnerability factors such as poverty and gender discrimination.

Community services shall be offered in the context of continuum of care with strong linkages to treatment care and support

Respectful and nondiscriminatory treatment:

All staff, volunteers and representatives of **CLHEI** shall:

- Treat every beneficiary with respect, recognizing their rights to privacy and confidentiality of information
- Beware of situations that constitute stigmatization or discrimination against beneficiaries
- Beware of acts that breach the rights of beneficiaries.
- Encourage meaningful participation of VC and their Caregivers in community activities and decision making without discrimination.
- **CLHEI** and staff shall NOT discriminate nor stigmatize any beneficiary young or old based on his/her health or economic status.
- Avoid the discrimination or stigmatization of beneficiaries based on their color, creed, sexual orientation, political affiliation, tribe, ethnic group and religion as such acts shall be considered as misconduct and attract appropriate disciplinary measures.

Reporting stigma and discriminatory acts

If an allegation of stigmatization or discrimination is made against a member of staff, or volunteer or any representative of whether or not the alleged act was committed at the organization's premises or elsewhere, the procedure below shall be followed:

- I. The allegation should be reported to the Senior Manager of **CLHEI**. However, if the Senior Manager is the alleged perpetrator of the act, the case shall be reported to the MWASD and **CLHEI** the Coordinator of the Network of people living with HIV in Local Government Area or comprehensive ART site for prompt investigation by appropriate authorities
- II. **CLHEI** will accord the investigating body the necessary support and ask all staff members to do the same.
- III. Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with **CLHEI** support and advice
- IV. If a member of staff is being investigated **CLHEI** reserves the right to suspend such staff during the period of the investigation to allow the investigating team unhindered access to relevant documents and/or persons
- V. All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities

- VI. If the allegations against a staff is unfounded, all rights that were previously withheld shall be reinstated
- VII. Where a staff is found culpable, **CLHEI** will refer the case to relevant organizations including the local authority, children's social care team or the police. The appointment of such staff shall be subsequently terminated.
- VIII. In situations where the above point (line VIII) is applicable, **CLHEI** shall notify the Management of SMILE to ensure their records are updated
- IX. **CLHEI** retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an investigation
- X. Counseling will be available - directly delivered by **CLHEI** or through referral to appropriate/ qualified organization for an individual discriminated against by the staff or volunteer of **CLHEI**

Strategic intervention and indicators

Intervention	Indicators	Data Source
Advocacy and community Sensitization	Number of key Stakeholders(community and religious leaders) reached with messages on stigma and discrimination Disaggregated by Sex	Attendance Lists
Capacity building	Number of CSO staff trained on Stigma and discrimination Number of community volunteers oriented on HIV care and support, stigma and discrimination Disaggregated by Sex	Attendance list
One –on-one counseling	Number of beneficiaries on the SMILE project counselled on Stigma and Discrimination Disaggregated by Sex and Age	Service form

	Number of cases of abuse reported anonymously Number of cases of abuse/violation issued reported, investigated and resolved Number of organizations with structure for anonymous reporting	Activity report/referral form

FOR COMPLAINTS/ ENQUIRIES/SUGGESTIONS or Report Violation/Abuse of Rights

Call: 07037724378

Send an email to: communitylinks11@gmail.com

***Be assured that all emails and calls will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You can also make use of our suggestion box
*it is confidential, anonymous and secure***

 19/5/2017

Dr. Dennis Tephtheph

BOARD CHAIRMAN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR