

Success Story: Empowering Women for Better Health Outcomes

Ethiopia HIV/AIDS Care and Support Project
January 2011

This report was made possible through support provided by the US Agency for International Development, under the terms of Contract No. 663-C-00-07-00408-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the US Agency for International Development.

HIV/AIDS Care and Support Program (HCSP)
Management Sciences for Health
784 Memorial Drive
Cambridge, MA 02139
Telephone: (617) 250-9500
www.msh.org



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

HIV/AIDS Care and Support Program

Success Story

Empowering Women for Better Health Outcomes



Effective prevention of mother to child transmission allows women like Aberu to take control of their own health and deliver healthy HIV-negative babies.

Aberu Hailu is a 31 year old mother of four living in Hidmo rural kebele (community), 8 kilometers south east of Adigodum town in Tigray. Two years ago, she visited the Adigodum Health Center to be tested for HIV, a disease she had learned about through health education. She discovered she was HIV-positive and informed her husband he should be tested, but he refused. Two months later, Aberu became pregnant and found herself in despair; she thought she would pass the virus on to her baby, her husband still refused to be tested, and she feared the stigma and discrimination she knew often came with a positive HIV status.

Once again, Aberu turned to the Adigodum Health Center and the HIV/AIDS Care and Support Program (HCSP) for help. HCSP began providing comprehensive HIV/AIDS care at Adigodum Health Center three years ago. In the Ethiopian year 2002, 1,011 pregnant women were tested for HIV at the health center and 27 HIV-positive pregnant women received appropriate treatment, care, and support after learning their status. Aberu quickly learned that her baby could be protected from the virus with prevention of mother to child transmission services. She also joined the health center's mother support group, where her fears of stigma and discrimination were allayed through the support of other women in the same circumstances.

When Aberu went into labor, she was at home in her kebele. A health extension worker (HEW), trained by HCSP, carried Aberu on a stretcher and began the several hours walk to the health center. On the way, Aberu delivered her baby with the help of the HEW. Having been well educated after her diagnosis, she was able to disclose her HIV status and warn caregivers to avoid possible blood and fluid contamination. Aberu is now the proud mother of a 9 month old HIV-negative baby named Welde.