

MISA Leaves No One Behind:

Addressing HIV and AIDS in the Retail Automotive Industry

The UNAIDS GAP Report released in July shows that 19 million of the estimated 35 million people living with HIV today **do not know** that they have HIV.

South Africa accounts for almost 19% (6.1 million) of the estimated global number of people living with HIV. More than 2 million people living with HIV in South Africa are on Anti-retroviral Treatment, however there may be more than a quarter of PLHIV who do not know they have HIV. In order to access treatment a person with HIV has to undergo an HIV test and eligibility tests for accessing Anti-retroviral Treatment (ART).

In an industry with almost 300,000 working women and men, it is critical to consider strengthening wellness, HIV and TB workplace programmes to ensure no one is being left behind

MISA and ILO have embarked on drive to encourage HIV Counselling and Testing in line with the Getting to ZERO@Work Campaign and VCT@Work initiative. The initiative seeks to reach 5 million workers with Voluntary and confidential HIV Counselling and Testing (VCT@WORK) by 2015. The initiative will ensure that people who test positive are referred to HIV services for care and support, and treatment if needed.

“If workplaces in the automotive industry, particularly the retail embrace this initiative it could signify one of the most important advances we’ve seen in expanding access to HIV testing within a healthy, enabling environment and linking to on-going support including treatment,” said Simphiwe Mabhele, HIV and AIDS Technical Specialist of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The VCT@WORK initiative, (Voluntary Counselling and Testing) is part of the ILO’s efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goal 6 and the global target of reaching 15 million people living with HIV with lifesaving antiretroviral treatment by 2015, as set out in the 2011 United Nations General Assembly Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. “To reach this goal we need to work together through the ILO and MISA collaboration to ensure that Retail Automotive industry workplaces are free of stigma and discrimination, women and men know their HIV and TB status and those require access to care are directed appropriately” Martle Keyter, the CEO-Operations of MISA said.

ILO addresses MISA delegates on matters of HIV and AIDS and the world of work during the MISA Women’s Forum Breakfast Meetings. MISA collaborates with ILO on the VCT@Work initiative to target 10,000 working women and men in the Retail Automotive Industry.



Simphiwe Mabhele, ILO HIV/AIDS Technical Specialist presenting at the Women’s Forum organized by MISA.

The VCT@WORK initiative builds on the ILO’s Recommendation on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work (No.200), to ensure safe and healthy working environments free of stigma and discrimination.

Following the adoption of ILO Recommendation No.200, the South African Department of Labour launched a revised Code of Good Practice on HIV and AIDS and the World of work through a Government Gazette in June 2012. The Code and its Technical Assistance Guidelines seek to provide guidance on the development and implementation of Wellness, HIV and TB Workplace Programmes.

The VCT@Work Initiative is directly linked to the HIV Counselling and Testing strategy implemented by the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) and number generated through the initiative will be shared with SANAC.

  VCT@WORK 5 million by 2015 <i>Together we can make it happen!</i>	✓ Consent ✓ Confidentiality ✓ Counselling ✓ Convenience, and ✓ <u>Connection to Care</u>
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“We want to use the mobilizing power of the ILO and its constituents, including MISA to encourage the millions of working women and men to undertake voluntary HIV testing by 2015,” said Mabhele. He called upon all the MISA members present in the Women’s Forum Breakfast Meetings to join forces and turn this target into reality. “The countdown to 2015 has begun and the Retail Automotive Industry should make each day count!” he added.

The ILO and MISA collaboration will therefore assist workplaces in the retail automotive industry to strengthen workplace programmes that address HIV and AIDS in line with the National Strategic Plan on HIV, TB and STIs (2012-2016). The collaboration is characterised by two elements, i.e. 1) HIV Counselling and Testing; and 2) Development of Wellness, HIV and TB Workplace Programmes.

Together we can make it happen!



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