



HIV AND AIDS POLICY

Approved by Board: 19 November 2019

Next review date: November 2020

**Managed on behalf of the CEO and Board by: Program
Manager**

***Revisions to this version are identified on the last page**

1. Purpose of this Policy

This policy guides Interplast Australia & New Zealand (Interplast) in ensuring its programs overseas and all aspects of its domestic operations are inclusive of people living with HIV. In all facets of its work, Interplast strives to ensure that people with HIV, or at risk of having HIV, are provided with equal opportunities, their confidentiality and privacy is protected and any stigmatisation and discrimination is avoided.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the following people:

- Interplast staff members, contractors and consultants;
- Interplast volunteers¹;
- Interplast Board of Directors;
- Local implementing partners²; and
- Observers/visitors accompanying an Interplast activity overseas.

3. Definitions

Interplast works within the universal definitions outlined by the World Health Organisation³

HIV stands for the human immunodeficiency virus which infects cells of the immune system, destroying or impairing their function. Infection with the virus results in progressive deterioration of the immune system, leading to "immune deficiency." The immune system is considered deficient when it can no longer fulfil its role of fighting infection and disease. Infections associated with severe immunodeficiency are known as "opportunistic infections", because they take advantage of a weakened immune system.

¹ Volunteers include medical volunteers (surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and allied therapists) undertaking an activity overseas or participating in professional development in their own country or overseas, and those who are members of Interplast's committees and working groups, and non-medical volunteers, such as those in administrative, promotional or fundraising roles.

² Local implementing partners are those organisations and individuals that Interplast works with in countries overseas to achieve mutually agreed objectives in development activities.

³ <http://www.who.int/features/qa/71/en/>

AIDS stands for Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a term which applies to the most advanced stages of HIV infection. It is defined by the occurrence of any of more than 20 opportunistic infections or HIV-related cancers.

Stigma can be described as a dynamic process of devaluation that significantly discredits an individual in the eyes of others. When stigma is acted upon, the result is discrimination that may take the form of actions or omissions.

Discrimination refers to any form of arbitrary distinction, exclusion, or restriction affecting a person, usually but not only by virtue of an inherent personal characteristic or perceived belonging to a particular group - in the case of AIDS, a person's confirmed or suspected HIV-positive status - irrespective of whether or not there is any justification for these measures.

4. Legislative Framework and Standards

In alignment with the ACFID Code of Conduct, Interplast is committed to including and addressing the needs and rights of vulnerable and marginalised people and their representatives in all aspects of their aid and development activity. These groups may include those most at risk of HIV and HIV positive people.

(Commitment 1.2. ACFID Code - We respect and respond to the needs, rights and inclusion of those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by marginalisation and exclusion.).

Interplast also adheres to the following Australian legislation, international conventions and frameworks:

- Australian Government's Eighth National HIV Strategy 2018–2022
- Equal Opportunity Amendment (Family Responsibilities) Act 2008
- Federal anti-discrimination laws such as the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- UNIADS Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS 2016-2021
- UNAIDS Terminology Guidelines
- WHO/UNAIDS Disability and HIV Policy Brief
- DFAT's Health for Development Strategy 2015-2020

5. Policy Statement

Interplast acknowledges the impact of HIV on its direct beneficiaries, staff in partner organisations and its own staff. Interplast is committed to the principles of equal opportunity, non-discrimination, privacy and confidentiality in relation to respecting and protecting the rights of people with HIV.

Interplast acknowledges the linkages of HIV and disability and that "...persons living with HIV (asymptomatic or symptomatic) have impairments which, in interaction with the environment, results in stigma, discrimination or other barriers to their participation, they

can fall under the protection of the Convention (Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities)⁴

Interplast will take appropriate steps to support any staff member affected by HIV and will provide guidance, materials and/or training to staff where there is an increased risk of exposure to HIV.

6. Policy in Practice

This policy will be embedded in Interplast's organisational culture and practices.

In implementing this policy, Interplast will:

- a) ensure its staff and volunteers understand and are knowledgeable on issues of HIV and AIDS;
- b) ensure its staff and volunteers work safely and in accordance with Interplast's Blood Exposure Incident Information Sheet. All Interplast medical volunteers who will be undertaking clinical work will have a Blood Exposure Sharps Injury Kit as part of the standard equipment set;
- c) protect individuals' privacy and confidentiality and refer people living with HIV, or at risk to HIV infection, to appropriate voluntary confidential counselling and testing services;
- d) ensure information is made available about prevention and risk management for those employed in the hospitals and other workplaces used by Interplast teams. This should include guidance on safe work practices generally.

7. Monitoring and Review of Policy

This policy will be monitored and reviewed in line with the process outlined in the Policy Framework. The Program Manager is accountable to the CEO and Board for managing and maintaining this policy.

Where compliance issues are identified, the designated Program Manager will work with staff and other relevant stakeholders to address these issues promptly.

Any updates and revisions to this policy must be endorsed by the designated Program Manager and CEO before being submitted to the Interplast Board for its approval. Policy changes will be reflected, as necessary in updated operational manuals.

⁴ WHO/UNAIDS Disability and HIV Policy Brief

***Revisions to HIV and AIDS Policy**

Nature of proposed revisions	Date on which CEO endorsed	Date on which Board approved
Initially approved		September 2006
Annual review and updates including; minor grammatical, spelling and wording changes, updates to Blood Exposure Incident Information Sheet, update to ACFID Code of Conduct and legislation.	2012 - 2017	
Minor updates to definitions of Interplast personnel Minor updates to definitions of HIV/AIDS Revision of 'policy in practice' to more accurately reflect current practice	9 November 2018	20 November 2018
Minor updates including updating national standards (2018-2022 National HIV Strategy)	10 November 2019	19 November 2019

This Policy will be reviewed and adjusted, as required, by the CEO, staff and Board on an annual basis.