



ACTIVITY PROPOSAL

Title: HIV/AIDS Peer Educator Training for VSU Employees

Participants: Faculty and Staff of the Visayas State University

Date: January 12-14, 2022

Venue: 1st Floor CCE Building, ViSCA, Baybay City, Leyte

Rationale

HIV/AIDS epidemic is a threat to all. According to the HIV/AIDS and ART Registry of the Philippines for August 2021 (DOH Epidemiology Bureau, 2021), a total of 878 newly diagnosed cases have been reported, 96% of which are males (847) and 4% are females (31). It is estimated that 33 new cases per day is being reported which means that in every two hours, a Filipino becomes infected for life. Moreover, almost half of the cases (427) belong to the 24-34 years old age group followed by the 15-24 years old at 33% (291), 35-49 years old at 16% (138), 50 years old and older at 2%, and <15 years old at 1% (4), respectively. Of the total reported cases, 96% (847) were infected through sexual contact. Among the different regions of the country, the National Capital Region still tops the rank for number of newly reported cases at 27% (234) while Region 8 have the least number of cases at <1% (1). Infection with HIV or Human Immunodeficiency Virus has long-term complications hence, preventive measures and early diagnosis of HIV are important.

Different approaches have been employed to increase HIV awareness across all groups of individuals, one of which is the peer education program. This an approach to health promotion in which, community members are empowered to promote health-enhancing change among their peers. It empowers the youth and young professionals to take action for their health as well as motivate their peers to seek professional help themselves. This allows for teaching and sharing of health information, values and behavior with others who may share similar social backgrounds or life experiences. Peer education is recognized to be an effective and popular strategy for HIV programs and youth reproductive health internationally (RTI International, 2017). This program have been reported to increase levels of knowledge and reports of positive sexual behaviors such as STI-care seeking behavior, increased condom-use for HIV-prevention, and intention to delay first sexual intercourse (Family Health International 360, 2005). The elders in the community, young professionals, faculty and staff in schools can be harnessed to provide correct information and skills to targeted clientele. In peer education, the involved parties personally know each other and have already established mutual trust. The peer educators are perceived to be more mature in their outlook in life and because of their experiences in life and educational preparation, they can be a good influence to the youth and thus, can be effective in changing and modifying attitude and behaviours of the targeted clientele.