

---

## Costs of Support Groups of People Living with HIV/AIDS

PHA peer support groups were first set up in Thailand in the early 1990s. In May 2005 800 such groups were active nationwide, most based in public hospitals and supervised by hospital nurses or social workers. In 1998 the Thai Network of People Living with AIDS (TNP+) was formed to coordinate the activities of the different groups of people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs). The network now has seven offices in different regions of Thailand.

TNP+ began its project to support adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART) in the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) ART program in July 2002 (Kumphitak and others 2004). Training and other technical support is provided by Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) and the AIDS Access Foundation: one MSF doctor (10 percent of the time), four full-time nurses, and five full-time social workers. Coordination and ongoing support is provided by 27 coordinators from TNP+ or from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

PHA groups are expected to fulfill certain criteria in order to participate in this project. They must have at least two volunteers (the usual number is three) who commit to providing three kinds of service to their clients: one-on-one counseling, home visits, and group meetings. The group must have a working relationship with the hospital staff so that patient care can be planned properly. A budget for PHA

volunteer and PHA group activities must be secured. PHA volunteers must be adequately trained in three areas:

- basic knowledge about ART and opportunistic infections
- counseling
- concept of a continuum of care.

In an ideal situation, each PHA volunteer has a caseload of 20 clients, but a volunteer would have fewer if many of the clients are sick and need frequent home visits, if many of the clients are children, or if the area is remote and transportation is difficult. However, because of the rapid expansion of the program and the difficulty of finding enough PHA volunteers and enough budget, many PHA volunteers have a much higher caseload. In May 2005, 150 hospitals had on average three PHA volunteers providing peer support for adherence. In these 150 hospitals, 16,000 PHA are being prescribed ART. Accordingly, the mean caseload of each volunteer is 35 PHA taking ART.

As shown in tables C.1 and C.2, the cost of PHA support per client supported in an ideal situation (that is a caseload of 20 clients per PHA volunteer) is US\$78 per year; and in the real situation in May 2005 (35 clients per PHA volunteer) the cost is US\$45 per year.

In reality, PHA volunteers carry out other activities, such as home visits for clients who are sick but not yet taking ART. Moreover, the support network of NGO health professionals and TNP+ and NGO coordinators is also actively preparing volunteers from a further 150 PHA groups to take this active role in adherence support for the MOPH ART program. However, the budget for the recurrent costs of the further PHA peer support for adherence has not yet been secured.

**Table C.1** Costs of PHA Support Groups in Thailand: Management Level

*Costs of PHA Peer Support Groups*

*Management Level*

1) Investment cost of PHA coordinating network (unit: per 300 PHA groups)

<b>Currency Exchange Rate</b>	
Baht	US\$
40	1
<b>Discount Rate 3%</b>	

<i>Items</i>	<i>Investment cost</i>	<i>Life span years</i>	<i>% spent on PHA</i>	<i>Annual investment cost</i>		<i>Annual discounted cost</i>	
				<i>Baht</i>	<i>US\$</i>	<i>Baht</i>	<i>US\$</i>
<i>Capital items</i>							
Buildings	7	—	10	50			
Vehicles	3	600,000	10	80	48,000	1,200	40,945
Computers	16	360,000	5	80	57,600	1,440	52,758
<i>Office equipment</i>							
Furniture (tables and chairs)	24	3,000	5	100	600	15	550
Telephones	6	3,000	5	50	300	8	275
Printers	12	4,000	5	100	800	20	733
Photocopy machine	1	40,000	5	50	4,000	100	3,664
<b>Total</b>					<b>111,300</b>	<b>2,783</b>	<b>98,924</b>

Continued on next page.

**Table C.1** Continued**2) Recurrent cost of PHA coordinating network (unit: per 300 PHA groups)**

Items	Unit	Operation cost per month	Annual cost	% spent on PHA	Annual Recurrent Cost		
					Baht	US\$	
<i>Recurrent items</i>							
Office space (rental)	6	Cost per month per office space	4,167	300,000	50	150,000	3,750
Vehicles (maintenance)		Cost per month per car	1,667	20,000	80	16,000	400
Computers (maintenance)		Cost per month					
Office equipment (maintenance)		Cost per month					
Utilities (electricity, water)		Cost per month for 6 offices	13,400	160,800	50	80,400	2,010
Communications (phone, fax, mailing)		Cost per month for 6 offices	19,800	237,600	100	237,600	5,940
Staff		Cost per month					
Doctor	1	Cost per month	50,000	600,000	10	60,000	1,500
Nurses	4	Cost per month	25,000	1,200,000	100	1,200,000	30,000
Coordinators	27	Cost per month	10,000	3,240,000	100	3,240,000	81,000
Social workers	5	Cost per month	18,000	1,080,000	50	540,000	13,500
Drivers	—	Cost per month					
Volunteers	—	Cost per month					

*Note:* Costs included in the estimate are for activities to improve treatment adherence (prevention activities are not included).

**Table C.1** Continued

<i>Items</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Operation cost per month</i>	<i>Annual cost</i>	<i>% spent on PHA</i>	<i>Annual recurrent cost</i>	
					<i>Baht</i>	<i>US\$</i>
<i>Recurrent items (continued)</i>						
Office supplies	Cost per month for 6 offices	17,500	210,000	50%	105,000	2,625
Travel/transportation for M & E	Cost per month per person	3,333	39,996	100%	39,996	1,000
Vehicles (gas)	Cost per trip					
Accommodation/hotels	Cost per day per person					
Per diem	Cost per day per person					
Meeting/training cost	Cost for 10 (2 day) workshops per year	500,000	500,000	100%	500,000	12,500
<b>Total</b>					<b>6,168,996</b>	<b>154,225</b>

**Table C.2** Costs of PHA Support Groups in Thailand: PHA Group Level**1) Investment cost of PHA support group (unit: per PHA group)**

Items	Investment cost	Life span	% spent on PHA	Annual investment cost		Annual discounted cost		
				Baht	US\$	Baht	US\$	
<i>Capital items</i>								
Buildings (1 room in a hospital)								
Vehicles								
Computers								
TV								
VCR								
Table, chairs, cabinets	1 set	3,000	5	100	600	15	550	14
<b>Total</b>					<b>600</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>14</b>

**2) Recurrent cost of PHA support group (unit: per PHA group)**

Items	Unit	Operation cost	Annual cost	% spent on PHA	Annual cost of staff time	Total recurrent cost	
						Baht	US\$
<i>Recurrent items</i>							
Office Space (Rental)	Cost per month	12,000		100		12,000	300
Vehicles (Maintenance)							
Utilities (Electricity, water)	Cost per month						
PHA Volunteers (2–3 days/week for counseling services)	3 Daily allowance	150	58,500	100		58,500	1,463

**Table C.2** Continued

<i>Items</i>		<i>Unit</i>	<i>Operation cost</i>	<i>Annual cost</i>	<i>% spent on Annual Cost PHA of Staff Time</i>	<i>Total recurrent cost</i>	
						<i>Baht</i>	<i>US\$</i>
Travel/transportation for home visit							
Vehicles (gas)	2	Cost per day per person	50	15,600	100	15,600	390
Per diem	2	Cost per day per person	150	46,800	100	46,800	1,170
2 persons for one home visit = 400 baht/day (3–5 client visits)							
Cost for group meetings							
Food and drinks	30	Cost per meeting/person	25	9,000	100	9,000	225
Transportation	30	Cost per meeting/person	25	9,000	100	9,000	225
<i>Training Items</i>							
a) Medical (OI + ARV)	3	Cost per PHA trained	1,733				
b) Counseling	3	Cost per PHA trained	1,733				
c) Continuum of care	3	Cost per PHA trained	1,733				
<b>Total cost of training</b>	3	Cost per PHA trained/year	5,200	15,600	100	15,600	390
<b>Total</b>						<b>166,500</b>	<b>4,163</b>
<b>Grand total</b>						<b>6,434,970</b>	<b>160,874</b>
<b>Total cost per PHA group</b>						<b>187,943</b>	<b>4,699</b>
<b>Total cost per PHA trained</b>						<b>62,648</b>	<b>1,566</b>
<b>Total cost per client supported per year (ideal: 20 clients per volunteer)</b>						<b>3,132</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Total cost per client supported per year (May 2005: 35 clients per volunteer)</b>						<b>1,790</b>	<b>45</b>

