

## Second centre for HIV/AIDS drugs

Staff Reporter

CHENNAI: Measures are afoot to establish a second centre for providing second line antiretroviral drugs to persons living with HIV/AIDS in Chennai soon, Principal Secretary Health V.K. Subburaj said here on Tuesday.

At present, these drugs are being provided at the Government Hospital of Thoracic Medicine, Tambaram.

He was participating in 'Children's meet', a programme for children living with HIV/AIDS organised by Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board along with Department of Outreach, Loyola College.

Increase in corpus

As part of the efforts to help such children, the Health Department has approached corporate entities and banks to increase the corpus fund of Rs.5 crore, which was provided by the State government.

At present, the annual interest amounting to Rs.50 lakh is being used towards education and treatment of children living with HIV/AIDS.

“We want to increase the fund to Rs.25 crore in a year. Several companies have evinced interest,” said Mr.Subburaj. About 15,000 children across the State are benefitting from the fund.

He added that non-governmental organisations and institutions must extend their support for the benefit of more children.

The meeting for such children was organised for the first time to showcase their talents. Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board's chairperson Salma said there are plans to hold awareness meetings for acceptance of such children at schools.

Actor Kushboo and Child Welfare Committee chairperson P.Manorama stressed the importance of education for children with HIV/AIDS.

Loyola College principal B.Jeyaraj said that the college would give priority to such children in admission. The Outreach Department was working towards providing better amenities and education in 23 slum areas around the college, he said.

Nearly 200 children from four NGOs took part in various competitions and were given free clothes.

Participants demanded that the government must set up more centres in city government hospitals for second line treatment.

S.Noori, president of South India Positive Network, said one more centre in the city would reduce the time taken to get medicines at the hospital in Tambaram.

<http://www.hindu.com/2011/01/19/stories/2011011963140200.htm>