

## HOPE for Babies

Mother-to-child transmission of HIV is the most common way young children contract the virus and happens when HIV is passed from a mother to her baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding. HOPE Cape Town is currently initiating an innovative new project which aims to support the pregnant women who come to Tygerberg Hospital for care. Through counselling and psycho-social support, the project aims to help HIV negative women avoid infection, and help HIV positive women achieve their dream of an HIV negative baby.

### **An effective Prevention of Mother to Child Transmissions (PMTCT) programme requires mothers and their babies to:**

- Receive antenatal services and HIV testing during pregnancy
- Have access to antiretroviral treatment (ART)
- Practice safe childbirth practices and appropriate infant feeding
- Make use of infant HIV testing and other post-natal healthcare services - (<https://www.westerncape.gov.za>)

HOPE Cape Town has identified the need for additional counselling and support of mothers during this vulnerable period. Our first priority is to ensure that HIV uninfected mothers remain HIV negative during their pregnancies, but we also need to help diagnose and support HIV positive mothers during the pregnancies, delivery and post-natal period, to reduce the risk of transmission to their babies.

Through our HOPE for Babies project at Tygerberg Hospital, HOPE Cape Town aims to address this on various levels by assigning two fulltime HOPE Community Health Workers / Counsellors to the following areas:

## **Antenatal Clinic**

- Pregnancy and HIV related health talks / information sessions for expectant mothers
- Counselling / guidance on feeding choices
- HIV counselling and testing
- Support of HIV+ mothers

## **Labour Ward**

- Test / re-test all unbooked and previously HIV negative mothers when they present in labour (in accordance to the South African National Guidelines)
- Support HIV positive mothers through the birthing process, ensuring that they take their treatment and that safe birthing practices are followed
- Review feeding choices

## **Postnatal ward and clinic**

- Ensure that patients understand and commit to their own treatment regimens as well as the prescribed infant prophylaxis
- Review feeding choices
- Confirm the Community based health care facility where the mother/infant pair will continue their care

## **Community**

- Community based follow-up via our HOPE to Home project

## **Tygerberg Hospital Maternal Obstetric Unit Monthly Statistics**

- 2400 antenatal patients
- 650 deliveries (total)
- 135 deliveries (HIV+ mothers)
- 50 post-partum follow-up patients