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| Ministry of Health  No: 3655/BYT-AIDS  Re: new HIV/AIDS treatment standards | 29th May 2015 |

To: Directors of Departments of Health of all national-level provinces

In order to expand HIV/AIDS treatment to a nationwide scale and to apply new eligibility criteria, the Ministry of Health requests Directors of all provincial Departments of Health to instruct Provincial AIDS Centers, Hospitals and District Health Centers in the locality to offer ART for HIV/AIDS patients who meet the following criteria:

1. **ART initiation criteria**

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| **Target group** | **ART indication** |
| Adults and children > 5 years old | CD4 count ≤ 500cells/mm3 |
| Start ART irrespective of CD4 count in case:   * Clinic stage 3 and 4, including TB infection * HBV/HCV coinfection * Pregnant and breastfeeding women with HIV * HIV-positive people with their negative partner * HIV-positive people of one of high risk groups including IDUs, sex workers, MSMs * HIV-positive people > 50 years old * HIV-positive people living in mountainous, coastal and remote regions |
| Children under 5 years old | * ART should be offered to all HIV-positive children irrespective of their clinical stage and CD4 count * ART should be initiated for all children under 18 months old with positive PCR result or positive HIV antibody test plus one of the following signs: oral thrush, severe pneumonia, severe infection or any AIDS diseases |

1. **1st line ART regimens**
   1. **Adults and children > 10 years old (including HIV-positive pregnant women)**
      1. Preferred regimen

TDF + 3TC + EFV

Fixed Dose Combinations (FDC) are preferred to facilitate easier administration and treatment adherence.

* + 1. Alternative regimen
* If TDF is contraindicated, substitute TDF with AZT
* If EFV is contraindicated, substitute EFV with NVP
* 3TC could be substituted by Emtricitabine (FTC)

Note: children over 10 years old but weight less than 35kg should be offered treatment regimen as in 2.1.1.

* 1. **Children from 3 to 10 years old**
     1. Preferred regimen:

ABC + 3TC + EFV

* + 1. Alternative regimens:
* If ABC is contraindicated, substitute ABC with AZT
* If EFV is contraindicated, substitute EFV with NVP
* 3TC could be substituted by Emtricitabine (FTC)
  1. **Children under 3 years old**
     1. Preferred regimen:

ABC + 3TC + LPV/r

* + 1. Alternative regimens:
* If ABC is contraindicated, substitute ABC with AZT
* If LPV/r is contraindicated, substitute LPV/r with NVP

These new treatment criteria will replace old criteria specified in HIV/AIDS Diagnosis and Treatment Guidelines issued in the Decision No. 3003/QD-BYT dated 19 Aug 2009 and Decision No. 4139/QD-BYT dated 2 Nov 2011 by the Minister of Health.

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Sincerely,

On behalf of Minister

Vice-Minister

(Signed & stamped)