

Caribbean Summit – Why Media Matters: Drew Altman Opening Remarks

Good morning to you all.

This morning I want to focus entirely on substance - on what we've learned at the Kaiser Family Foundation over more than 10 years of running large media campaigns in partnership with some of our country's and world's largest media organizations in both news and entertainment. I would also like to frame some issues that come to mind when talking about the potential elements of a "Caribbean Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS."

Because I have a reputation for being very direct, a trait some consider admirable while others consider hopelessly undiplomatic in the international arena, I want to say a few things straight out:

First, these days, as Americans travel abroad, we are always a little uncertain as to how we will be received, due to the current unpopularity of many government policies. However, I do not represent our government, but instead am here dedicated to this common cause – to save lives.

Second, we are here later than we should have been; the Caribbean is a region with the second highest infection rates in the world. While I will describe the process that brought us here today, I would like to acknowledge the situation as it stands, and apologize that it has taken so long.

Third, this assembly is an amazing first step, but it is only that. Without follow-through, this historic meeting won't matter, and without commitment to sustaining efforts from you and building capacity from us and others, there can be no follow-through. Today, let us agree to that.

Finally, while we have been involved in amazing campaigns in the United States, Russia, India, and Africa that have reached millions, saved lives, and won multiple Emmy and Peabody awards, today we are not in the U.S. or Russia or Africa. We want you to know we are respectful of the fact that the Caribbean is different and that each Caribbean nation has unique challenges and issues. Thus, leadership, direction, and design of this must come from you. Although we will try to facilitate and help, we will do our best not get in your way.

As I said before, I have a problem with being direct, but I do so as a matter of being respectful to you and exercising the appropriate humility an outsider should have.

The Kaiser Family Foundation is a research-based organization, and in the early 90's we began conducting the most comprehensive research in the U.S. about where people, especially young people, get information on health and other

issues. Every study we've done has underscored the powerful role media plays, whether in U.S. or other parts of the world.

In a survey we did in the U.S. this spring, 64% of American people said media was their primary source of information about HIV/AIDS. But here's the amazing thing – doctors and other health professionals, friends and family, each were only identified as the primary information source by 10% of the population. We continue to see similar results almost everywhere in the world - from Russia to South Africa. And, from what we know about the role of media in people's lives generally, I'm confident you would find similar results here as well.

In late 1997, we conducted a unique experiment with NBC's medical show *ER*, which at the time was the most popular television show in the United States with 40 million viewers. We worked with the writers and producers of that show to introduce a new, HIV-positive character into the storyline. That experiment became the foundation of our partnerships with large media companies. We learned that by far the most popular storyline in the show that year was not, as expected, the love affair between two famous actors – George Clooney & Julianne Margulies – but instead the storyline about secondary character Jeanie Boulet (Gloria Reuben) who was HIV positive. This finding became the basis for subsequent research which convinced us of the basic property we bring to all media partners – “you can entertain, make money, and do good at same time.” Your pro-social and HIV messages can make shows more popular, not less popular, as well as strengthen brand recognition and popularity with viewers.

Armed with these kinds of data, about a decade or so ago, we began to approach some of the largest media companies in the US about direct partnerships to conduct comprehensive media campaigns combining public service announcements with longer form programs, popular shows, websites, hotlines, and full range news and public affairs programming. This resulted in the current array of partnerships with media companies and major campaigns that include BET, MTV, Univision, FOX, and a comprehensive-wide campaign with VIACOM/CBS called KNOW HIV/AIDS. Add in our global partners, including our longest standing global partner the South African Broadcasting Corporation, and we are talking about millions of dollars per year in media commitments.

Again, we are a research-based foundation. The results are impressive, with millions of young people calling campaign hotlines, going to websites, and most importantly, repeatedly delaying sexual activity, practicing safer sex, and getting tested for HIV.

While our work with media on HIV began in the U.S. and in South Africa, where we've had a deep involvement for 20 years, some years ago we asked if we could play a role, building on our experience, in helping to mobilize media around the world in the fight against HIV. However, “going global” was not a small

decision for our organization, but the moral imperative was to us overwhelming, and so we became a global organization only in our work on HIV.

In 2004, I met Kofi Annan in New York and talked with him about launching a new effort to mobilize the world's media in a fight against HIV on an unprecedented scale. And so the Global Media Aids Initiative or "GMAI" was thus born and formally launched by the Secretary General at the United Nations later that year, with a call to action to the world's media.

(I'd like to acknowledge Sir George Alleyne who is representing the Secretary General at this meeting - we look forward to hearing from him later this morning.)

It is in support of the goals of the GMAI and the Secretary General's call to action that we're here today, acting somewhat as an "action arm" of the GMAI. And we've also been working with local partners on major, pioneering campaigns in India, Russia, and Africa – in fact, just about six months ago, I was in a meeting very much like this one in Johannesburg with a group of media leaders from across the African continent.

A key outcome of that meeting was the establishment of the African Broadcast Media Partnership Against HIV/AIDS — an organizing model I also hope you'll consider for this region.

- So far, more than 27 companies representing 22 countries in Africa have joined the partnership to share expertise, leverage resources, and undertake coordinated campaigns to address HIV/AIDS in their countries.
- The goal is to bring on board representation of major media from every country in Africa. Within this framework for collaboration, we hope to produce and share content, informational materials, and resources to dramatically expand HIV-related programming across the continent.
- The commitments the media leaders are planning are truly significant – for example: broadcasters have agreed to a commitment of 5% of all daytime broadcast programming to HIV/AIDS with half in primetime, on top of commitments to longer-form shows; and a commitment to a commonly themed, cross country public service announcement campaign, all based on donated time.

I want to underscore that ultimately commitments like these are what is going to transform cultures, political agendas and save lives, not meetings. Concrete outcomes are always the goal.

So having done this for more than decade, we've naturally learned few things. What I'd like do is finish up by raising some issues for discussion, illustrating each with a short video clip.

I'm always asked what is the right message... is it abstinence?... or safer sex?... is it scare tactics or positive/uplifting messages? I am here to tell you that there is no single magic message that is right for all people in all places at all times – messages need to be country and culturally relevant. And, in addition to conveying messages, campaigns also need to convey basic information, which so many people still do not have.

Consider these four radically different examples – all different, but all effective in their own countries:

[show clip]

In our work with youth, we mostly favor positive messaging, but in truth the research provides no hard and fast rules.

A second point, public service announcements by themselves can have real impact, if they are targeted to the audience they're trying to reach – for example, run at the right time of day or night with sufficient frequency. But public service announcements by themselves are not a comprehensive strategy nor are they the most powerful media tool.

Probably the most powerful tool at your disposal is to integrate HIV messages and information into the most popular TV and radio shows. We have seen HIV integrated into a variety of show formats, from dramas like *ER* to comedies and even reality series, which I understand are increasingly popular here. I want to share with you now some clips from some of the shows we have worked with to incorporate HIV-themes, including one reality show we recently worked with called *America's Next Top Model*, where we were able to bring an HIV-positive young woman onto the show to talk about her story and educate the models. During the episode, the model had the chance to shoot a public service announcement for our KNOW HIV/AIDS campaign which was then re-broadcast over the following weeks on the UPN network. So, not only was it a good message, but it also allowed cross-promotion for the show, an equation for “good business.” Let's take a look at the clips.

[show clip]

By the way, our federal CDC conducted its own evaluation around that last clip on the tape from *Girlfriends*, which found significant impact both in reducing stigma and increasing HIV-testing among viewers. And thus, the research documents impact.

We've also witnessed impressive collaboration between media and non-media companies in ways that are mutually beneficial and do good for society at the same time. In Russia, for example, our partners brought Coca-Cola and Durex condoms into the partnership. For the first time anywhere in the world, cans of a Coca-Cola product were distributed with a condom and HIV/AIDS awareness

information that referenced our campaign. Coca-Cola recognized the strength of the campaign, particularly among young people, and they wanted to be a part of it. It was good for advertising, good for relations with broadcasters, and good for raising public awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Another thing to think about in campaigns is the use of rapidly developing new technologies, of which a good example is now the ubiquitous cell phone. Here's an example of how cell phones are being used in a campaign in India.

[show clip]

And, finally, of course, you have an ability to impact through your news and public affairs programming, which I know you all already do. This is extremely important as it has a different than public service announcements and storylines, as they're aimed primarily at influencing individual attitudes and behaviors. But news and public affairs programs also influence national discussion and debate, national agendas, and national leaders. *The People's Business* episode on HIV/AIDS that was aired by the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation over the weekend is just one excellent example of how news programming can speak to this issue and elevate the level of attention paid to it by officials.

It's a critical point about media campaigns – they're not just tools of HIV prevention and public education, they're also vital strategic levers that can be especially important in countries like Russia, where leaders have been slow to address the epidemic and where stigma is strong. The very existence of a national media campaign can help "break the silence" and erode stigma.

In addition to working with entertainment media, Kaiser has for 15 years run the largest fellowship and internship programs for health journalists. With support from the Gates Foundation, we have taken this project global and will be running a major training program for journalists at the International AIDS Conference in Toronto in August. As part of our commitment to the Caribbean, I would like to announce today that we will be bringing a group of SIT journalists from the Caribbean to participate in the conference and program, with the goal of improving coverage of the epidemic here.

To wrap up, I wanted to share one last clip with advice from one of the world's greatest leaders on the subject of HIV/AIDS.

[show clip]

It's always good to let Nelson Mandela have the last word – just say that we are keenly intent in your thoughts and ideas about what will work in this region, and we are committed to following your lead to make it happen.

Thank you.