



REPORT ON RED RIBBON CLUB SEMINAR

Awareness Programme on HIV/AIDS, Blood Donation & Substance-Use Related Health Services

Date	6 August 2026
Venue	Zonal Hospital, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh
Institution	Government College Karsog
Participants	Pallavi and Garima, Peer Educators, Red Ribbon Club
Accompanied by	Dr. Lomeshwar, Teacher & Nodal Officer, Red Ribbon Club, Government College Karsog

Introduction

On 6 August 2026, Pallavi and Garima, Peer Educators of the Red Ribbon Club, Government College Karsog, attended an awareness seminar organised at Zonal Hospital, Mandi. They were accompanied by the Nodal Officer, Dr. Lomeshwar, from Government College Karsog. The programme focused on health awareness, HIV/AIDS prevention and services, blood donation and transfusion services, blood-borne infections, and substance-use-related healthcare services.

The participants reached the hospital at approximately 10:00 a.m. and waited for the programme to commence.

Proceedings of the Programme

At the beginning of the programme, red ribbons were distributed among the participants as a symbol of HIV/AIDS awareness and solidarity with people living with HIV. The participants were also required to complete the necessary documentation for reimbursement of travelling expenses. The concerned counselor, Mrs. Nanda, guided the participants regarding the required formalities.

Session on Common Diseases and Health Awareness

The first session was conducted by a senior medical officer, who invited the participants to introduce themselves and their respective institutions. The session provided useful information about scrub typhus, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and other common health problems, with emphasis on their modes of transmission, early recognition, prevention and the importance of timely medical consultation.

The discussion highlighted that accurate health information, personal hygiene, appropriate preventive practices and timely access to healthcare services are essential for reducing the risk and complications associated with communicable diseases.

Session on HIV/AIDS, ICTC and ART Services

A detailed session on HIV/AIDS and related healthcare services was conducted subsequently. The participants learned about the role of Integrated Counselling and Testing Centres (ICTCs) in providing HIV counselling and testing services. ICTCs play an important role in creating awareness, facilitating HIV testing with informed



consent and confidentiality, providing counselling, and linking individuals requiring further care to appropriate health services.

The participants were also introduced to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) Centres, which provide care and treatment services to people living with HIV. Effective antiretroviral therapy helps control HIV infection, improves health outcomes and supports a better quality of life. HIV-related services also emphasise confidentiality, counselling, prevention and linkage to appropriate treatment and care.

The session also emphasised the important role of peer educators and youth in spreading scientifically accurate information, encouraging responsible health practices and reducing stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS.

Session on Blood Donation and Blood Transfusion Services

Another informative session focused on blood donation and blood transfusion services. The participants learned about the importance of voluntary blood donation and the organised collection, testing, processing, storage and safe utilisation of donated blood.

Information was provided about the Blood Component Separation Unit (BCSU) and Blood Storage Unit. The participants learned that donated whole blood can be separated into different components according to clinical requirements. These include:

- **PRBCs (Packed Red Blood Cells):** Primarily used to improve oxygen-carrying capacity in patients with significant blood loss or anaemia.
- **FFP (Fresh Frozen Plasma):** Contains plasma proteins and coagulation factors and is used in appropriate clinical situations involving coagulation abnormalities.
- **Cryoprecipitate:** A plasma-derived component rich in specific clotting proteins and used in selected bleeding and coagulation disorders.

The session helped the participants understand that component separation enables a single blood donation to potentially benefit more than one patient, depending upon clinical requirements.

The participants were also introduced to Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT), an advanced molecular testing approach used in blood screening to detect genetic material of certain infectious agents and thereby improve transfusion safety. The importance of proper donor selection, screening, safe blood collection, component preparation and storage was also discussed.

Session on NAT and Opioid Substitution Therapy

The participants were further introduced to NAT (Nucleic Acid Testing) and the Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) Centre.

OST is an important harm-reduction intervention for people with opioid dependence. Under India's National AIDS Control Programme, OST is also relevant to reducing health risks associated with injecting drug use, including transmission of HIV and other blood-borne infections. It combines medication-based treatment with counselling and other support services.



The session helped the Peer Educators understand how healthcare services can address not only infectious diseases but also substance-use-related health risks through prevention, treatment, counselling and rehabilitation-oriented approaches.

Interaction with the Medical Officer

After completion of the technical sessions, lunch was provided to the participants. Later, Dr. Dinesh Thakur, Medical Officer, interacted with the participants. The Peer Educators introduced themselves and briefly introduced Government College Karsog and its Red Ribbon Club activities.

The interaction provided an opportunity to discuss the role of educational institutions and student Peer Educators in promoting health awareness among young people. The importance of disseminating correct information about HIV/AIDS, blood donation, prevention of communicable diseases and substance-use-related health risks was emphasised.

Conclusion

The seminar was highly informative and provided the Peer Educators with valuable practical knowledge about HIV/AIDS prevention and care, ICTC and ART services, blood donation and component separation, NAT, and OST services. The programme also highlighted the importance of awareness, early testing, timely treatment, safe blood practices and reduction of stigma and discrimination.

The knowledge gained during the seminar will be useful for the Peer Educators in conducting awareness activities among students and the wider community through the Red Ribbon Club of Government College Karsog.

The programme concluded with a photography session, after which the participants, along with their accompanying teacher, departed for Government College Karsog.



Some Glimpses of the Event



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GOVERNMENT COLLEGE KARSOG

District Mandi, Himachal Pradesh

Red Ribbon Club

