

## **One-Day Orientation Programme and Exposure Visit to Zonal Hospital, Mandi**

**Date: 18 July 2025**

A one-day Orientation Programme and Exposure Visit was organised on 18 July 2025 by the District AIDS Control Society, Mandi, in collaboration with the Himachal Pradesh State AIDS Control Society, Shimla, and the office of the Chief Medical Officer, Mandi. The programme was conducted at Zonal Hospital, Mandi, with the objective of sensitising and building awareness among youth about HIV/AIDS prevention, care, support, and treatment, and to strengthen the role of Red Ribbon Clubs (RRC) in educational institutions.

The participants included one Nodal Officer, Prof. Meera Sharma, along with two peer members, Ms. Anu (BA 3rd year) and Ms. Priyanka (BA 3rd year), from the Red Ribbon Club of Government Degree College.

The day began at 10:00 a.m. with registration and welcome session by Ms. Shyam Lata ICTC Counsellor and highlighted the importance of youth involvement in the national response to HIV/AIDS. This was followed by a detailed orientation session conducted by the resource persons from the District AIDS Control Society and the ART Centre, Zonal Hospital Mandi.

Key topics covered during the orientation included:

- Current status of HIV/AIDS in Himachal Pradesh and India
- Modes of HIV transmission and myths & misconceptions
- Importance of early testing and the facilities available under NACP
- Role of Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) in HIV management
- Prevention of Parent-to-Child Transmission (PPTCT)
- Stigma and discrimination faced by People Living with HIV (PLHIV) and the need for a supportive environment
- Role and responsibilities of Red Ribbon Clubs in colleges

After the classroom session, the participants were taken on an exposure visit to various units of the Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre (ICTC), ART Centre, and blood bank services at Zonal Hospital Mandi. The counsellors and medical staff explained the entire process of voluntary HIV testing, pre- and post-test counselling, CD4 testing, dispensing of free ART medicines, and linkages with care, support, and treatment services. The peer members actively interacted with the staff and gained practical insight into the functioning of these critical HIV-related facilities.

The programme concluded at 4:00 p.m. Prof. Meera Sharma, Nodal Officer, expressed gratitude on behalf of the college team and assured that the knowledge and exposure gained would be effectively disseminated among other students through peer-led activities in the Red Ribbon Club of Government Degree College Dehar.

The visit proved highly informative and motivating for the participants, reinforcing their commitment to spread accurate information, reduce stigma, and promote voluntary testing and healthy behaviour among the youth of the college and surrounding community.









