

Published: September 2014

## SACEMA issues policy brief on access to antiretrovirals

Alex Welte - Director of SACEMA

On the occasion of AIDS 2014, the twentieth International AIDS Conference in Melbourne, SACEMA released a policy brief on the ongoing debate about appropriate initiation of antiretroviral therapy (ART) for HIV positive people.

Noting with approval the bold approach lately espoused by the South African ministry and department of health, SACEMA hopes this policy brief provides further support within public discourse to the department in its efforts to press ahead into uncharted territory with its world leading ART programme.

The key point of this statement is that investigation and debate among scientists and public health professionals should shift from fine tuning criteria for initiating ART, to embracing the next waves of challenges that will result from making ART

initiation the domain of informed and supported patient choice, rather than eligibility guidelines.

Attempts to delay the inevitable, in terms of massive programmes and unknown long term challenges and limitations of this most effective of interventions, it is argued, are at best fleeting, and at worst risk delaying preparedness for what ultimately lies ahead in any case.

**Alex Welte** - Director of SACEMA. Areas of interest: population dynamics, disease surveillance, and applied mathematics generally.  
alexwelte@sun.ac.za

**Reference:**

[http://www.sacema.com/uploads/announcements/2014-07-24\\_policy\\_brief/PolicyBriefANewEraForHIVTreatment20140722.pdf](http://www.sacema.com/uploads/announcements/2014-07-24_policy_brief/PolicyBriefANewEraForHIVTreatment20140722.pdf)