



## **Adam's Love launches Food & Travel Voucher Programme**

For Men Who Love Men most impacted by COVID-19 crisis in Thailand

**28 September 2020, Bangkok, Thailand** – Adam's Love Global Foundation for MSM and Transgender Health (ALGO) with grant support from Frontline AIDS, funded by the Elton John AIDS Foundation, is distributing food and clinic visit transportation vouchers for men who have sex with men (MSM) and Transgender (TG) women living with HIV, and those most impacted by COVID-19 crisis which will allow them to buy healthy food of their choice, continue clinic visits and help them being adherent to HIV medication.

COVID-19 is an unprecedented event that has drastically impacted daily lives of Thai MSM and Transgender women, especially MSM living with HIV who have lost their jobs. COVID-19 impact in Thailand is in many ways adverse than other Asian countries. The country is heavily dependent on tourism sector, comprising a large proportion of Thailand's GDP. Many MSM heavily rely on the sector for employment and are experiencing job losses as businesses remain closed for extended duration.

Nutritional needs are heavily compromised due to unemployment and economic challenges. Many MSM living with HIV and facing a cash crunch have reported reducing their daily food intake. MSM especially in rural provinces need to travel long distances to refill medication, and sometimes think of skipping clinic visits to save on travel/fuel costs. *"I have been skipping meals to pay rental and utilities. COVID-19 has impacted me personally on a daily level but I definitely can't return to my parents so I avoid eating during day time"*, **21 years old Adam's Love MSM participant living in South Thailand.**

*"It is critical that we do everything in our power to mitigate the devastating impact of COVID-19 on marginalised people. Adam's Love is providing an essential lifeline for men who have sex with men and transgender people living with HIV to take their medication regularly and safely despite their economic insecurity"*, **said Christine Stegling, Executive Director at Frontline AIDS.**

*"The unexpectedly prolonged period of COVID-19 crisis continues to impact lives of MSM. Our foundation will provide monthly meal vouchers for over 150 MSM living with HIV, who have lost their work as a result of COVID-19 (including MSM in Islamic-settings in Southern Thailand where MSM face high stigma) to ensure they have basic food security and nutrition to continue their daily ART doses after meal. Travel vouchers for MSM in remote provinces will help ensure MSM living with HIV do not miss their clinic visits and refill medications on time. Our staffs will coordinate and follow up with the clinic staffs to ensure seamless HIV care services"*, **said Tarandeep Anand, CEO of Adam's Love.**

The intervention is a rapid response designed to address the immediate and emerging barriers faced by MSM impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Each voucher will provide MSM a month's supply of food and the ability to purchase other essential household items. MSM will be able to redeem their voucher at local provincial supermarkets, giving them choice and a sense of happiness amid the drastic impact caused by COVID-19 crisis. Although, the long-term impact of COVID-19 are unpredictable but support from Frontline AIDS would enable Adam's Love to immediately start the rapid response intervention and greatly benefit Thai MSM living with HIV get through this critical 3-6 months transition period, while maintaining optimal ART adherence.

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