



PHOTO & CAPTION

Supporting Families Affected by AIDS



Photo: USAID/Virginia Foley

Mrs. Ralingam and her child are now welcome to return home.

Mrs. Ralingam delivered her fourth child at home and visited the hospital for follow-up care. It was there that she learned that she and her child had been stricken with HIV/AIDS. When her neighbors learned, they did not want her to return home. Her husband temporarily disappeared.

An alarming 90 percent of the 5.1 million people in India with HIV/AIDS don't know about their status and only learn about it by chance. The USAID-supported Community Health Education Society (CHES) in Chennai seeks to support families affected by HIV/AIDS. Five family resource centers help nurture people with AIDS and correct myths and misinformation among communities to reduce fear and slow the spread of the disease. A separate CHES shelter houses and educates 32 AIDS-affected children who have nowhere to live and no family to turn to.

A community care worker from CHES moved into the Ralingam home, openly cooking food and caring for the mother and baby. When neighbors saw that sharing a home and food with the family was safe, they welcomed them back and began to help support them.