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# CAMEROON BAPTIST CONVENTION HEALTH SERVICES **The Health Services Chronicle**

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## Stop Press!!

Read the HS Chronicle and pass it on to the next person.

## Bible Verse of the Month

"Those who walk uprightly enter into peace, they find rest as they lie in death".  
Isaiah 57:2 (NIV).

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## Looking Back at CBC Health Services' Participation at 3rd UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs



Stakeholders across the globe commit to beat NCDs

Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services Non-Communicable Diseases Control and Prevention (NCDs-CP) program turned another page in its advocacy drive when it joined other Civil Society Organizations across the world at the 73rd UN General Assembly and 3rd High-Level Meeting (HLM3) on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in New York on September 27, 2018.

World Health Organization (WHO) reports that NCDs are the leading cause of deaths in the world today accounting for up to 41 million deaths every year, equivalent to 71% of all deaths globally.

Prof. Tih Pius Muffih, Director of CBC Health Services, told the media present during the launching that the campaign is to raise awareness against Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes, heart attacks, strokes, cancers, and chronic respiratory diseases.

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## Looking Back at CBC Health Services' Participation at the 3rd UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs

In the run-up to the HLM3, on September 24, 2018, the Global NCD Alliance held a briefing for NGOs attending the High-Level Meeting on NCDs. A passionate crowd of NCD Civil Society actors at this event shared successes of the NCD movement to date and discussed how to ensure that the next platform of the NCD agenda be stronger.

Sir George Alleyne, NCD Alliance's Board member and Director Emeritus of Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) challenged everyone to be personal when talking about NCDs, given that governments and leaders talk about NCDs as if they don't concern them. "NCDs concern everyone and everyone is exposed to the risk of having NCDs," he said.

The event included panel discussions on Delivering on Commitments/Accountability and implementing the WHO "Best Buys" and other commitments to NCDs prevention and control.

Maik Dunnibier made a landmark presentation on alcohol titled "Trouble Brewing," an advocacy policy and guide that can help put the issue on the agendas of world's governments which was released by WHO, the NCD Alliance, International Organization of Good Templars (IOGT) and Vital Strategies.

Maik Dunnibier opined that "The world is reaching an inflection point and a tepid response to NCDs is simply not an option for the sake of billions of people around the world, it is time for a radical change."

The NCD Alliance, with nearly 350 Civil Society Organizations, including the CBC Health Services, and experts released a joint statement calling on all the leaders at the High-Level Meetings in New York to seize the "Do or die" moment of the third UN High Level Meeting (HLM) on NCDs to go beyond the unambitious and weak commitments contained in the political declaration of the third UN HLM on NCDs adopted in New York on September 27, 2018.

This strong call comes at a time when governments are failing woefully to represent the health needs of their populations by compromising with health inhibiting industry interference.

### Cont'd from pg. 1

On October 1, 2018, the Civil Society criticized the weak language in the agreement that governments signed onto and called for more accountability. "Governments have squandered the opportunity of this High-level meeting to close the financial gap for NCDs with real commitments for the health of their people," reads Civil Society's statement.

"We are disappointed that this political declaration is not nearly as ambitious, as innovative, nor groundbreaking as it needs to be to deliver on the commitments that Heads of State and Governments made in 2011 and 2014," said Katie Dain, CEO of the NCD Alliance.

Civil Societies have also criticized the UN HLM3 for not "Walking the Talk," saying it is unacceptable that after all the speeches on the importance of Civil Society in overcoming NCDs, not a single Civil Society representative was called upon to make an intervention from the floor at the HLM3 panel. Other side meetings gearing up to the High-Level meeting were organized by the PRB, NCD Child, and NCD Free just to name a few. Some of the topics on deliberation were "NCD Prevention and Adolescents:

The time to act." The topics were streamed live, allowing the online community to participate on Facebook and tweeter on September 25, 2018. Close to 40 million people die yearly from these chronic diseases according to the World Health Organization. The Sustainable Development Goals aim to reduce the number of NCD related deaths by one third by 2030.



Ferdinant Mbiyzenyuy, Program Manager NCD-PCP, presents the role of Cameron's civil society organisations in beating NCDs

## Pioneer SNS for Dunger Baptist Hospital Mbem Passes On



Mr. Yani Matthew Monde

**The pioneer Supervisor of Nursing Services (SNS) for Dunger Baptist Hospital Mbem, Mr. Yani Matthew Monde has gone ahead to rest with the Lord, his maker.**

**M**r. Yani died on September 30 and was laid to rest on October 20, 2018 in his village in Mbem, Nwa Subdivision - Northwest Region.

Shortly after Mr. Yani's mortal remains were removed from the Bamenda Regional Hospital Mortuary, there was a brief stopover at the Nkwen Baptist Health Center in Bamenda where Mr. Yani worked in his last days. Addressing the mourners here, the CBC Health Services' Chief of Administration and Finance (CAF), Mr. Warri Denis described the departed senior staff as one of the architects in whose hands the CBC Health Services grew and sprouted especially in Mbem where he served for most of his working life. The CAF said Mr. Yani was an example of faithfulness and hard work to emulate.

Speaking earlier in tears, one of the daughters of the fallen hero, Yani Edith, said their father was a true friend and mentor. She added that the vacuum created by his exit from this life would be difficult to fill. On behalf of the family, she appreciated the CBC Health Services immensely for the support in all spheres given their father during the long period of his illness.

The Director of Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih, the Senior Administrator of Mbingo Baptist Hospital, Mr. Nji Richard Nkeh and the Assistant Administrator of Nkwen Baptist Health Center, Mr. Tosam Ephraim, were among the mourners and sympathizers that converged to bid farewell to the deceased.

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## Biography, Work History of Mr. Yani Matthew

Yani Matthew Monde was born in 1958 at Mbem, Nwa subdivision of the then Northwest Province, into the family of Pa Yani and Ma Ngechu.

He attended primary school at CBC School Sabongari in Nwa where he obtained the First School Leaving Certificate in the year 1968. He proceeded to secondary school in 1969 at Mbem and obtained the GCE Ordinary Level Certificate in 1972.

Mr. Yani started work with the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services as a Ward Auxiliary in 1979 till 1982 when he went in for further training. From 1983 to 1984, he enrolled to be trained as a Nursing Aide at the Bango Baptist Hospital Training School for Nurses. After this training, he was employed at Bango Baptist Hospital (BBH) as a Nurse Aide. He worked there from 1984 till 1987 and went back to the Private School of Nursing and Midwifery, Bango to be trained as a Brevete Nurse. Upon completion in 1989, he was posted to serve in Bango Baptist Hospital where he worked until the year 2000. He was then transferred to Mbem Baptist Health Center where he worked till 2007 when he was again transferred to BBH effective October 8, 2007. He continued to work in BBH till July 1, 2008.

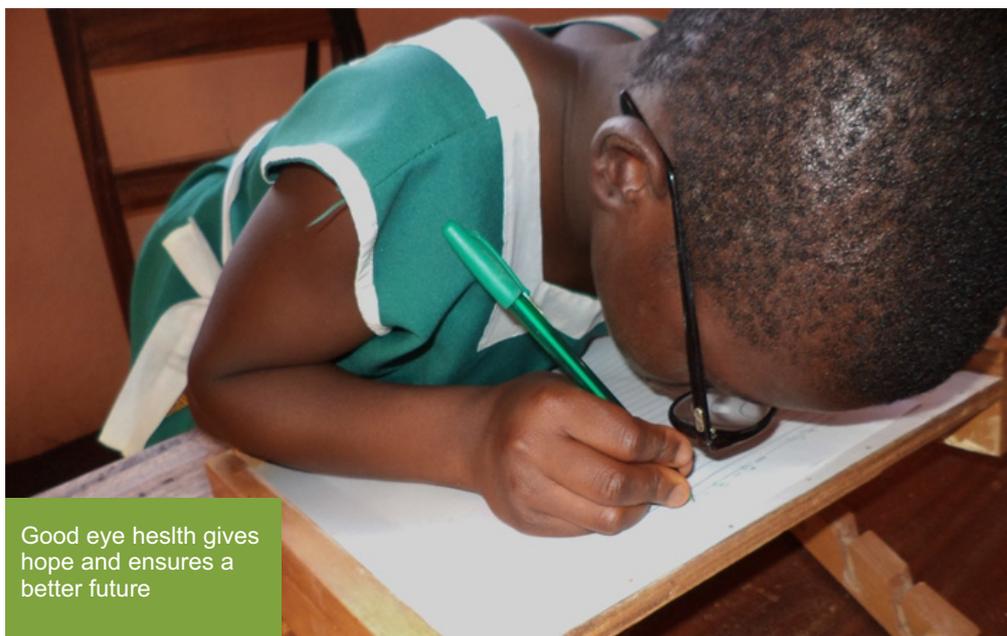
His hard work earned him an appointment as the Supervisor of Nursing Services for Dunger Baptist Hospital Mbem on August 18, 2008. He served faithfully in this capacity for eight years and was transferred to BBH to continue service in 2016.



Staff of CBC Health Services pay last respect to the remains of Mr. Yani Matthew

Mr. Yani in the days of his failing health was assigned to Nkwen Baptist Health Center (NBHC) on August 20, 2018, to facilitate his treatment at the Regional Hospital Bamenda. He worked at NBHC for a month and died in active service on September 30, 2018. Mr. Yani Matthew leaves behind a wife, children and colleagues to mourn him.

## Ensuring Eye Care Everywhere



Good eye health gives hope and ensures a better future

The human senses are our contact to the environment. Comparatively, the eye is the body's sense organ. We perceive up to 80 per cent of all impressions by means of our sight and if other senses such as taste or smell stop working, it's the eye that best protect us from danger.

According to SightSavers, about 36 million people are blind in the world today. This figure could rise to 115 million by 2050 but 75 per cent of sight loss can be cured or prevented.

WHO 2015 statistics also reveals that of the 253 million visually impaired persons in the world, 36 million were blind and 217 million had severe to moderate visual impairment. It is noted that 55% of this blind population were women (139 million). This gender difference stems from the longer life expectancy of women compared to men, women's greater risk of developing certain eye conditions, and women not having equal access to eye health services due to multiple socio-economic and cultural factors. October 11 is World Sight Day. This year's awareness day focused on the theme, "Eye Care Everywhere." This means everyone everywhere needs good eye care.

WHO and the Global Action Plan, with the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness have always encouraged partners to continue with the rolling theme, "Universal Eye Health."

The CBC Health Services in partnership with CBM Australia and Australian Aid (AusAID) have made significant progress in ensuring eye care everywhere in Cameroon. In 2014, the CBC Health Services started the first official retinal eye care clinic in Cameroon which at that time was serving millions of Cameroonians who were attended to by one well-trained retinal surgeon.

Down the road, millions of Cameroonians are being attended to with so many success stories.

**Cont' on pg. 4**

Hustaincia Ya narrates how her cataract which started in 2015 had been treated at Bansa Baptist Hospital (BBH). "In 2015, I had problems with my vision and at BBH a surgery was done on my left on March 1. Two days later, Dr. Beri Ngong carried out the same procedure to correct the right eye. Afterwards, my vision was restored," narrates Hustaincia as she beams with joy.

The Program Manager for the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SEEPD), Mr. Awah Jacques Chirac says, "The CBC Health Services started eye services since 1981 at Bansa Baptist Hospital. Over the years, it has grown and spread across the country. It provides comprehensive eye care services in almost all her health facilities located in the seven regions of Cameroon."

Today, over a quarter of a million Cameroonians are living with blinding conditions, which points out the burden of blindness in Cameroon. "Through the years, the introduction of some specialties such as retinal eye health, retinal, low vision eye care, and pediatric eye health are significant achievements of the CBC Health Services" states the SEEPD Program Manager.

Unfortunately, many Cameroonians are not very aware of the eye care services the CBC Health Services has put at their disposal. World Sight Day 2018 was therefore an opportunity for the organization to sensitize Cameroonians about the eye services she offers.

"Not many Cameroonians are aware of the retinal eye services we offer at Baptist Hospital Mutenege, the pediatric eye services we offer at Mbingo Baptist Hospital, low vision and retinal services offered at Bansa Baptist Hospital," adds Mr. Awah.

Julius Nwongong, an Ophthalmic Nurse at Nkwen Baptist Health Center Bamenda, reveals that the commonest eye defects he attends to at the health centre are: allergic-conjunctivitis, glaucoma, cataract, and uveitis.

He insists that it is advisable for everyone to do constant eye checkups to prevent eye complications. Dr. Beri Ngong Dimla, Ophthalmologist at Bansa Baptist Hospital, reiterated the same message in an interview she granted to the state radio (CRTV) on the occasion of World Sight Day 2018.

Statistics reveal that 53% of patients who consulted in CBC Health Services facilities in the past 5 years for eye-related conditions are women with the most seeking eye care for glaucoma, cataract and allergic conjunctivitis as well as many other eye conditions.

However, the combination of a growing and ageing population will result in a massive increase in the number of people who are blind or have moderate to severe visual impairment. Other factors that also present a major risk for the future are the dramatic increase currently seen in all parts of the world in the number of people with diabetes and those with high myopia.

Risk has been identified that an estimated 703 million people could be visually impaired by the year 2050. What then is the way out? Early diagnosis, management and adherence to treatment are highly recommended. In addition, massive investment is needed in eye health services along with the protection from out-of-pocket payments (insurance schemes such as BEPHA and Mutual Health) for the poorest sectors of society. These will help ensure universal access to eye health for all and to avert a further human and societal catastrophe.

Professor Tih Pius Muffih, Director of CBC Health Services, used the opportunity to state strongly, CBC Health Services' profound gratitude to all her partners; Australian Aid and CBM Australia that have sacrificially supported access to eye health to the Cameroonian population.

He says the partners have created a great impact in the lives of people "by promoting inclusive eye care, supporting outreach services, facilitating the setting-up of subspecialties in eye care including, uveitis, retinal and low vision as well as subsidizing cost of services.

On average, for the past five years, the CBC Health Services' eye services have reached 190,332 people with over 50,929 (27%) accessing services in remote communities through outreach services," adds the Director of Health Services.

As one of its strategies in commemorating this year's World Sight Day, all drivers in the Cameroon Baptist Convention were screened for visual impairment. Statistics from this screening will be carefully analyzed to inform decision-making. As an organization, the CBC Health Services is determined more than ever to continue with this responsibility to have eye care everywhere.

## New Liliane Foundation Director Pays Maiden Visit to CBC Health Services

The new Director of the Liliane Foundation (LF), Mr. Steven Berdenis van Berlekom paid a maiden working visit to the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services from September 20 – 28, 2018.

The Liliane Foundation, a Dutch-based non-governmental organization (NGO) works with 30 Strategic Partner Organizations (SPOs) in Africa (including the CBC Health Services), Asia, and Latin America to fund activities aimed at empowering children with disabilities for inclusion in mainstream development efforts, thereby improving the quality of their lives and that of their families. Mr. Steven, who took the reins of command at the Liliane Foundation in June 2018, was, therefore, accompanied during the visit by Mrs. Anneke Donker, the Organization's Development Advisor of NGOs.

On ground to receive and facilitate the work of the visiting team was Mrs. Agho Glory, Program Manager of the CBC Health Services' Empowerment and Disability Inclusive Development (EDID) program through which services to children with disabilities are provided in eight of the ten regions of Cameroon via local Partner Organizations (POs).



Mr. Steven Berdenis van Berlekom in a working session with the SPO.

## New Liliane Foundation Director Pays Maiden Visit to CBC Health Services

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Usually, the LF carries out yearly supervision of her Strategic Partner Organizations to appraise the work being done thanks to their funding. In all, the team from LF visited eight of the Partner Organizations (POs) in four regions of Cameroon.

Highlights of the visit centered on how well the POs are aligning to LF's vision and approach of including families and communities of Children with Disabilities (CWDs) in their care. It was noted with satisfaction that most POs are gradually moving from the charity approach of providing services to children with disabilities to the community-based approach, which facilitates the inclusion of CWDs both in the families and communities.

Given the current global economic situation characterized by fickle donor trends, the team paid a courtesy visit to His Royal Majesty the Chief of Bagang in the West Region of Cameroon to solicit his support for the course of children with disabilities in his community. The Manager of the EDID program seized the opportunity to request

for tangible collaboration between the chief and Choose Life Generation, the PO working in the Bamboutos Division.

In a moving presentation, the EDID Program Manager went down memory lane to commend the services partners such as the Liliane Foundation have rendered to foreign communities like Bagang. Mentioning the present global economic recession, Mrs. Agho called on the Paramount Chief to use his power of influence to sustain the realizations of humanitarian efforts such as those made by the LF. She suggested that the chief could do this by being an ambassador for the course of children with disabilities not only in his community, but also beyond.

In a meeting with the Director of CBC Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius, the LF team appreciated the Director for the team he has put in place to coordinate the work of partner organizations. They testified that they could see the result of the team's hard work in the field.

The visitors also used the opportunity to present the new strategic direction of the Liliane Foundation which is aimed at investing more on the capacity-building of strategic partner organizations to enable them become more self-reliant and resilient. In this light, they declared their commitment to support CBC Health Services to start a training program for Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) and Physiotherapy while encouraging the organisation to speed up with the planning process so that the training could start soon.

The visiting team left visibly satisfied by the quality of work carried out on the field for the betterment of the lives of children with disabilities in Cameroon. It was revealed that more than 2000 CWDs now have access to health, education, social and livelihood opportunities, thanks to Liliane Foundation funding.

## Ensuring Disability Inclusion Through the Use of Sign Language

Sign language is the language used to communicate with deaf people (people who can't hear or hear just partially).

World Health Organisation (WHO) says around 466 million people worldwide are living with hearing impairment, and 34 million of these are children. There would be an extreme global burden if this great number of people is not involved in daily work just because they can't hear and no one is able to communicate with them.



Unaddressed hearing loss poses an annual global cost of US\$750 billion. This includes health sector costs (excluding the cost of hearing devices), costs of educational support, loss of productivity, and societal costs.

Manasseh Che, Head Teacher of Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Inclusive School and Sign Language Center (ISSLC), says the Institution spends close to FCFA 45million every year to educate children with hearing impairment and train sign language teachers.

Every September 23 to 30 is set aside as International Week for the Deaf to create awareness on the importance of sign language and how deaf people can be better included in our communities. This year, 2018, the week is observed under the theme "With sign language, everyone is included."

The event presented the opportunity for the CBC Inclusive School and Sign Language Center in

Mbingo-Cameroon to reflect on the road it has covered this far. The school started in the year 2000 and today teaches about 156 children with hearing impairment.

Glory Ndzi has been deaf since birth. She is an alumnus of CBC ISSLC, and also a sign language teacher in the school. Through a hand written note, she tells me how she copes in the community especially in church without an interpreter. "I always try to sit beside someone who can be patient to write down for me what is said. The day I sit beside someone who can't write, I leave the meeting with almost nothing," says Glory.

"I am always lost with TV and radio when there is no interpreter. There are hardly sign language interpreters on TV because our people still don't include deaf people.

"When music is playing, I try to follow the vibrations I get from my feet and follow how slow and fast I see people move in dancing. Sometimes

even with an interpreter, music is still difficult to grasp when the interpreter doesn't understand the language used," writes Glory who is visibly worried about her ordeals.

"There can be an interpreter, but it is easier when he or she is experienced and understands other languages," she adds.

Mr Che Manasseh, who is the Head Teacher of CBC ISSLC and personal interpreter to Glory, says Cameroon still does not have a sign language system. "We use the American Sign Language combined with locally developed signs.

"We tried to create a single sign language system for Cameroon some time ago, but it failed because of the bilingual nature of the country. We need to create two (English and French) sign language systems because there are some differences that usually cause problems for children and trainees," explains Manasseh.

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There are very few sign language teachers in Cameroon. This makes it difficult to spot experienced and professional interpreters, yet a good sign language teacher in the country earns less than \$250 a month after going through seven years of training.

Mr. Che who has been an interpreter for close to 15 years affirms that most of the few sign language trainers and interpreters in Cameroon are driven by passion not the pay package.

He reveals that deaf children face the problem of exclusion in their communities because people find it difficult to communicate with them. Everyone therefore, needs to learn and understand some basic sign language.

"CBC ISSLC in partnership with the CBC Health Services' Socio-Economic Empowerment of

Persons with Disabilities (SEEPD) program and some local Councils in the Northwest Region have trained parents and some community members to be able to effectively communicate with these children and ensure their inclusion.

"We train teachers on sign language and send them to other schools like Government Bilingual High School Bamenda, Baptist Comprehensive High School Njinikejem and many others," says Manasseh.

Ms. Ngah Ashery, SEEPD Program Community Project Officer, says the program subsidizes the cost of educating children with hearing impairment. "All the children benefit from free Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT) screening in our hospital, and hearing devices are given to those in need at low cost," remarks Asheri.

Ms. Ngah is, however, optimistic about the promising results of inclusion of persons with hearing impairment. She insists that it is necessary for everyone to be able to communicate using sign language because we meet deaf people every day.



Glory always sits besides her personal interpreter, Mr. Che Manasseh, during important meetings

## Every Child Deserves to be Cured of Cancer



Honesty was treated of cancer. While not every other child in Africa!

Honesty, 21, is a cancer survivor who was diagnosed with cancer at the age of seven. She still remembers how her cancer was diagnosed and subsequently treated at Mbingo Baptist Hospital. "It all started in November 2004 when I had a painless swelling on my jaw. Two months later, it became painful and I was taken to the hospital where I was diagnosed with Burkitt's lymphoma and [my] treatment lasted four months," narrates Honesty with a broad smile.

Honesty is now pursuing her dream of becoming a veterinary doctor. She is a children's cancer ambassador in her own right as she advises other parents of children with signs of cancer to avoid traditional medicines and rush to the hospital for conventional treatment. Her testimony spells hope for all childhood cancer patients.

Yannick is a three-year-old boy who was also cured of cancer. His father, Alfred, a teacher by profession says, "My son had a swelling by the side [around the abdomen] and when I took him to the hospital, he was diagnosed of Wilms' tumour. The doctor then referred us to Mbingo Baptist Hospital to see Dr. Francine Kouya [an Oncologist]. There, Chemotherapy was performed on my son on weekly bases. Today, my son is cured of cancer and is doing well," explains the visibly happy Alfred.

"The doctor said we were lucky the sickness was discovered earlier," says Alfred, who remains very grateful to the CBC Health Services and World Child Cancer for subsidizing the cost of son's treatment. With a dazzling smile, he adds, "Going to Mbingo I didn't expect that my child's treatment would be subsidized. The doctor who referred us

Every 2 minutes, throughout the world, a child dies of cancer. Children's cancers are responsible for about 90,000 global deaths every year.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 70% of cancers can be treated if diagnosed early. Children's cancers are ever so often detected later because some parents and even health workers are insufficiently aware of the warning signs.

had told me that chemotherapy and surgery could cost about FCFA 450,000 but when we arrived at Mbingo, I spent only about FCFA 56, 000 for the treatment."

Apart from Honesty and Yannick, there are over 1,600 children who have been treated of cancer by the CBC Health Services.

With the development of more adaptable treatment protocols by the CBC Health Services and subsidies for treatment of children with cancers from partners like the Beryl Thyer Memorial Africa Trust, Stellenbosch University, World Child Cancer, and Leeds Children's Hospital, every child deserves a chance to be cured of cancer.

Cont' on pg. 7

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Glenn Mbah, CBC Health Services' Childhood Cancer Programme Coordinator, says, "Our treatment centres use adapted protocols from the West for treating of cancers. Over the years, the CBC Health Services has advanced and upgraded the protocols and can boast of a 55% survival rate of cancer children."

Nurse Practitioner, Vera Njamnshi, explains that chemotherapy is the most popular modality of treating cancer in CBC Health Services' hospitals and involves giving medicines that destroy cancer cells. "Sometimes, chemotherapy is accompanied by surgery and other treatment procedures," she adds.

Even though there is progress in instilling hope for childhood cancer kids, limited progress in pediatric oncology drug development remains a major concern amongst children's cancer stakeholders. Many children and adolescents with cancer still suffer as a result of severe and toxic treatments resulting in lifelong health issues

In the CBC Health Services, the treatment and care

for childhood cancers entail medical treatment of the child and psycho-social support for the child and the whole family. Through this holistic approach, the treatment of cancer in CBC hospitals involves many specialists including laboratories technicians, nurses, surgeons, an oncologist, pathologists, physicians, nutritionists, pediatricians, social workers, and chaplains. In this way, the patients and their immediate families are given relevant psycho-social and spiritual counseling and guidance required to take care of the patient.

The CBC Health Services continues to innovate and seek better ways to care for children with cancers. The introduction of palliative care has been described as an appropriate response to childhood cancer diagnosis as it can be administered alongside the treatment.

The Childhood Cancer Programme Coordinator, Glenn Mbah, regrets the fact that the number of childhood cancer cases seen every year in CBC hospitals and health centres is on the increase. "The CBC Health Services sees about 150 children with cancer every year in Bango Baptist Hospital,

Mbingo Baptist Hospital, and Baptist Hospital Mutengene."

"It is estimated that about 1000 children in Cameroon suffer from cancer every year, but only about 300 of them are diagnosed," reveals Glenn. Given these figures, the CBC Health Services is more and more committed to educating people and creating awareness on childhood cancers, the different types, and care for children with cancer available in the hospitals.

The CBC Health Services works in collaboration with other childhood cancer treatment centres in the country, including the Hematology/Oncology Unit of the Chantal Biya Foundation Mother and Child Centre in Yaounde and the Mount Mary Catholic Hospital in Buea. At a time when the World Health Organization is aiming for 60% survival rate for all children with cancer by 2030, it is believed that synergistic partnerships for early diagnosis and prompt holistic management of childhood cancer patients is the way forward.



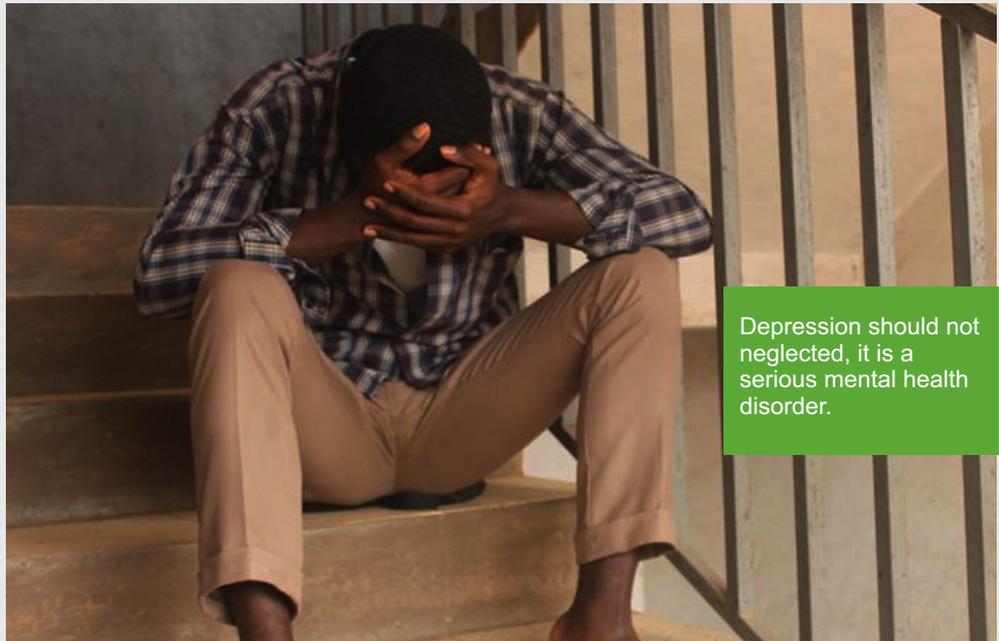
## Providing Quality Mental Health Care against the Odds

**"Imagine a world where everyone can thrive especially the young. Such an ideal world is one where everyone is mentally stable." says American Psychiatrist, Adolf Meyer.**

**The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."**

This definition shows that mental health is a fundamental component in sustainable development. Consequently, October 10 every year is designated as World Mental Health Day to raise awareness on the need to prevent mental illnesses and provide balanced and holistic care to people who suffer from them [illnesses]. Key stakeholders in the provision of mental health care use the occasion to continue to chart the way forward in making the available services accessible to all whilst pressing for governments to put in place better policies that ease the work of mental health professionals.

As a leading health care provider in Cameroon, the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health



Depression should not be neglected, it is a serious mental health disorder.

Services has been paying great attention to mental illnesses. The organisation has set up mental health clinics in Bango Baptist Hospital (where the main clinic called the Family Care Centre is found), Mbingo Baptist Hospital, and Mboppi Baptist Hospital Douala. People can equally seek help with their mental disorders beyond the CBC Health Services, mainly at the Douala General Hospital, L'Hôpital Laquintinie de Douala, and L'Hôpital Jamot in Yaounde

Some of the commonest mental illnesses in Cameroon include generalized anxiety disorders, specific anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorders, depression, dementia, and psychotic disorders.

World Mental Health Day 2018 took place against the backdrop of the sociopolitical crisis in the country's Northwest and Southwest regions. Experts say the crisis has left far-reaching consequences on the mental health of people in these regions.

Within this context, the CBC Health Services, therefore, adopted "Sociopolitical crisis and stable mental health" as the call for action during the commemoration of World Mental Health Day 2018. During the event, the organisation assessed the progress made so far in the provision of quality mental health care to Cameroonians.

Cont' on pg. 8

It has been revealed that since the inception of mental health services in Bansa Baptist Hospital in 2015, over 1000 patients have been attended to by six psychiatric nurses and other staff of the CBC Health Services. With continuous capacity-building for the staff and awareness creation in the communities, it is hoped that the number of people who benefit from the services will greatly increase in the coming months and years.

Loveline (given name) is a caregiver to a patient in the Family Care Centre (FCC) ward at Bansa Baptist Hospital who has been suffering from a mental illness for over 12 years. She says, "It's not been an easy ride given that she [the patient] doesn't understand that she has a problem. When the crisis surfaces, we find it tough to manage but given that treatment is available, we only struggle to take him to the hospital."

Like Loveline, many other families of persons suffering from mental illnesses face so many difficulties. It is financially demanding to take care

of persons with mental issues and this is sometimes compounded by the wastage of valuable resources with tradi-practitioners and soothsayers who offer no real solutions.

Globally speaking, Government spending on mental health is low in countries of the world particularly in developing countries. The WHO's fact sheet states that 33% of countries allocate less than 1% of their total health budgets to mental health, with others spending just 1% of their budgets. This, indeed, further worsens the already gloomy situation of mental health worldwide.

The mental health domain in Cameroon suffers a series of challenges. Only a few specialized centers mostly in major cities like Douala and Yaounde have mental health specialists.

Nadege Anya, Psychiatric Nurse and Supervisor of the Mental Health Services of the CBC Health Services, says, "Little subsidies on drugs, lack of monitoring policy on mental health services and

the non-inclusion of mental health in the country's national budget are some of the 'Berlin walls' standing on the road to a well-structured mental health care in Cameroon."

Despite the difficult mental health situation in the country, key stakeholders like the CBC Health Services continue to advocate for more robust health policies that will ensure quality care of persons with mental illnesses at all levels.

Anya Nadege regrets that the absence of mental health staff in health districts and centers in rural areas causes patients to travel longer distances to access care, making the cost quite high given the additional cost of transport they have to incur. Moving forward, she says it will take the inclusion of mental health medication on the list of essential drugs in the country and the training of all medical staff on basic mental health care to stem the tide.

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## EIC to Bar the Way for Resurgences of Malaria

The National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) says, "Malaria is one of the most prevalent parasitic endemic diseases in Africa, even though it is preventable, treatable and curable. In the tropical regions of the world, more than 300-500 million acute illnesses and at least one million deaths are recorded annually from malaria."

In Cameroon like in many sub-Saharan countries, the resurgences of malaria cases are greatly associated with limited or lack of information about the disease, socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental factors.

To avert this situation, Dr. Nfor Emmanuel, Focal Point for the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services' Malaria Control Program says Education, Information and Communication (EIC) is the key component that can bar the way to new cases of malaria in the communities.

He avows that with the understanding of the important role communication plays in behavioral change, the CBC Health Services' Malaria Control Program has embraced the education, information and communication component in her bid to roll back malaria.

"Several human hindrances and myths; sleeping under treated mosquito nets will terminate the lives of newborn babies and render them impotent in the long run, the presence of poisonous chemical in nets, and malaria is a contiguous disease that can be treated by magical powers, continue to make the fight against malaria challenging," notes Dr. Nfor.

Breaking these myths and ensuring that individuals, families, and communities take measures to prevent the disease has been the mainstay of the Malaria Control Program. The program has designed stickers to paste on taxis and has intentionally been holding health talks on malaria in waiting areas in hospitals, integrated health centers and Primary Health Centers (PHCs).

Quizzed further on the effectiveness of the EIC component, Dr. Nfor said effective education will improve the recognition of malaria, encourage the uptake of rapid diagnostic testing, discourage auto medication and roadside drugs, and promote the rational use of antimalarial drugs.

Besides sensitization, the program has set up a database for all actions carried out by CBC Health Services hospitals, integrated health centers, and primary health centers (PHCs) on malaria. The information will be a catalyst for an envisaged pilot research center on malaria. The research center will use CBC Health Services' facilities as malaria sample collecting sites.

## CBC Support Group Program Re-strategizes to Reach Out

"At the wake of the 'Anglophone Crisis' many of our Support Group members especially those in hard-hit zones have been displaced or moved to other safer zones. This has made it very difficult for us to rally or reach out to them," says Mr. Wepnje Joseph, CBC Health Services Support Group Supervisor.

Faced with the circumstance, the Support Group Supervisor assured that they are now re-strategizing to better reach out to their members even in displaced zones. "Though it is an uphill task, the health of the members is primordial and we are more than ever before committed to that course," affirms Wepnje in a chat with CBC Health Services Press.

It should be noted that Support Groups are a gathering of persons living with HIV and AIDS from various communities. The CBC Health Services Support Group program was established way back in 2010 to address the needs of persons living with HIV and AIDS by boosting their livelihood.

Before the crisis broke out in 2016, the program had over 68 mixed Adult Support Groups, 29 Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV Support Groups, and 19 Children Support Groups. But today, many of these group members have been displaced making most of their activities like embroidery and bead-making to come to a standstill.

It is against this backdrop that the Support Group program office is working out new ways to rally displaced members in areas where life is habitable.

The Support Group program amongst other activities has built self-esteem in people who had lost hope in life because of their HIV positive status and inspired many community members to know their status and adhere to Antiretroviral (ARVs) treatment for those who are positive.

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**Support Groups are a gathering of persons living with HIV and AIDS from various communities. The CBC Health Services Support Group program was established way back in 2010 to address the needs of persons living with HIV and AIDS by boosting their livelihood.**

# Mbingo Baptist Hospital & her Institutions

## MBH Nursing Staff Exercising Resilience Amidst Challenges

Nurses and clinical staff in Mbingo Baptist Hospital (MBH) have remained committed to the course of providing quality care to patients amidst the strong tides of crisis blowing across the region. Mrs. Tamon Evelyn, Supervisor of Nursing Services told the CBC Health Services Press that the adoption of the current 2-shift system characterized by long-working hours by the nursing staff is a demonstration of true resilience.

The change from a 3-shift system to 2-shift system for the security of the staff was challenging at the start but as time went on they have adjusted and fitted in so well," remarks Mrs. Tamon.

However, despite the nurses' resilience and readiness to serve, patient turnout is marginally low. Our reporter in Mbingo, Hilda Ndang made an appraisal of the wards and other clinical aspects of the hospital. Her first stop was at the A-Ward (Accident Ward) with 22-beds with only 10 patients when she visited it sometime in October 2018.

The Children's Ward had a facelift with a tiled floor, yet beds were empty as only four patients had been received in the previous three weeks. Despite discouraging statistics, our reporter's efforts took her to the B-Ward (Men's Ward). It was more dramatic there. Mrs. Chisikain Mercy, the Head Nurse, revealed that during normal days, her ward had an average of 26 patients but in the recent past, the number had dropped to 10 and had even gone as low as two on some days. In F-Ward (Female Ward), 10 patients were admitted. The next stopover was the S-Ward (surgical ward), one of the largest wards in the hospital with a bed capacity of 65. Mrs. Yong Genevieve, the Head Nurse, lamented that 70-75% of patients who had appointments for surgeries could not make it the hospital due to the ongoing crisis that had led to restricted movement. The S-Ward too was hard-hit as only 13 patients were in the ward.

In the midst of this gloomy picture, the SNS remarked that hope for a brighter future kept them moving on. The nursing office organized regular presentations and seminars on nursing care to keep the staff up-to-date.

## MBH Eases Tuberculosis Diagnoses via Training

Diagnosing and testing for tuberculosis (TB) at Mbingo Baptist Hospital (MBH) has been made easier following a training of laboratory staff. The in-house training which ran from September 6-7, 2018 was aimed at enhancing diagnostic abilities of laboratory staff.

Declaring the training open, Mrs. Tamon Evelyn, MBH Supervisor of Nursing Services (SNS) charged participants to avail themselves to be trained so as to better serve the patients who will be turning up for care in their respective stations.

After setting the stage, the training went into full gear with Mr. Ndichia Amos, MBH TB Coordinator, defining elaborately some key principles in TB diagnosing and testing, predisposing factors for TB, categories and treatment options. Other modules offered during the training included tuberculin skin test, molecular testing, smear microscopy and standard operating procedures for TB diagnosis.

The high point of the training was a practical session at the Tuberculosis Reference Laboratory in Bamenda (TRLB). During the session, the laboratory staff were drilled on how to record and report results on the Ziehl Neelsen (ZN) Microscope.

The Tuberculosis Reference Laboratory operates as a regional reference lab of the National TB Control Program (NTP). According to Dr. Melisa Sanda, the TRLB serves four regions of the country namely: Northwest, West, Southwest, and Littoral. The participants also used the forum to network with their counterparts from the other regions. Reports say, through such contacts, TB patients in the suburbs can easily be diagnosed. It is hoped that this will help curb the prevalence of the disease.

## MBH Mental Health Clinic

Three staff of the Department have been trained on the Mental Health Gap Action (MhGAP) program. Frankline Ngwen and Dr. Tadfor attended the MhGAP course that took place in BBH from August 6-11 using the Intervention Guide for mental, neurological and substance use in resource limited setting. Meanwhile, Mrs. Gamje Joel received a refresher course still in BBH from August 27-30, 2018.

According to Frankline Ngwen, the trainings will strengthen the Department and enable them to improve on their services to clients. As a challenge, many of the outreach activities have been suspended because of the current crisis that has made follow-up very difficult. The Department has been allocated ample office space to expand and improve on the care of patients.

## MBH Residency Programmes

The two residency programs; Christian Internal Medicine Specialization (CIMS) and Pan African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) hosted at Mbingo Baptist Hospital have been greatly affected by the socio-political crisis.

However, since crises are part of institutional life, braving and sailing through them is a strength. While PAACS relocated to Bango Baptist Hospital and came back to MBH when Mbingo became serene, CIMS on the other hand used the period of low patient turnout to get busy by intensifying lectures.

Dr. Gerald Tchinda, CIMS Resident remarked that before the stalemate, the program had a daily intake of 20 patients but daily attendance had gone down to two patients in some days because of the crisis. "So intensifying classes and lecture sessions with our residents was the right thing to do during this period to keep them busy," remarks Dr. Gerald.

Meanwhile, at the PAACS program, Dr. Mabanza Tresor, a Resident said they are now available in the hospital more than ever before to attend to patients. He said although the number of surgeries they carry out daily has greatly dropped, hopefully things will fully return to normal someday.

Dr. Mabanza further averred that one of their greatest challenges was how to go about the recruitment of new residents. He said many are afraid of the uncertainties around to sign up for the program. Despite the fears, he assured that 'our programs' are running smoothly

## Etoug-Ebe Baptist Hospital Yaounde EBHY Cements Ties with the Church

The spiritual life of staff at Etoug-Ebe Baptist Hospital Yaounde (EBHY) is instrumental in the provision of quality healthcare to the population of Yaounde and beyond. The role of the Chaplaincy Unit and the Spiritual Life Committee in catering for the spiritual needs of staff confirms this fact.

The work of the Chaplaincy led by Chaplain Cobnel Bochat, yielded fruit recently when they identified some staff who, due to their busy schedules, cannot attend weekly church meetings and inquirer classes. It is in this light that a follow-up and encouragement session was initiated in the Hospital. Nine of the staff during the follow-up session undertook inquirer lessons for baptism. Given that the CBC Health Services is a ministry arm of the church, these candidates were baptized on September 9, 2018 and handed to the churches for further nurturing.

The baptism was conducted by Rev. Yongwa Augustine of Evidence Baptist Church Omnisport, Yaounde. Nine of the new converts picked up membership at Etoug-Ebe Baptist Church while two were handed over to Berean Baptist Church Akok-Ndoe.

The event was interspersed by the blessing of a couple's marriage. To the couple, it was an eventful day as they equally dedicated their kid to God.

Mr. Yongwa Zacks, EBHY Administrator, speaking to CBC Health Services Press lauded the effort of the chaplain and the Hospital Spiritual Life Committee.

The three-in-one event was attended by Rev. Tamjong Hilarious of Etoug-Ebe Baptist Church, Mrs. Tamfu Hilda the representative of Berean Baptist Church Akok-Ndoe, family members and staff of EBHY.

# Nkwen Baptist Health Center

## NBHC, Striving Amidst Crisis

"We all acknowledge that we're going through difficult times as individuals and even as a Health Center," says Mr. Tosam Ephraim, Assistant Administrator at Nkwen Baptist Health Center (NBHC). Speaking to CBC Health Services Press recently, Mr. Tosam said despite the difficulties faced by the institution, it is keeping its head above the waters. As a corporate body, the facility has had to make some adjustments to stay afloat amidst the crisis.

The Health Centre had to moderate working days; closing at noon on Mondays and extending working hours on Saturdays from noon to 3:00 pm. This, however, has made work very difficult for staff who struggle to come to work even on 'ghost town' days. Like in other hard-hit CBC Health Services' hospitals and health centers, the crisis has limited patient turnout at the Mbingo Annex Bamenda, thereby affecting even cash flow at the Health Center.

In the midst of these perilous times, the Assistant Administrator assured that "NBHC is surviving because we haven't gone completely for a day without patients coming to our facilities. Each time patients have the opportunity to come to the health center, our cream of workers go the extra mile to ensure that everyone is satisfied."

As a coping mechanism, Mr. Tosam disclosed

that the administration has put in place a bus at the disposal of workers who find it difficult to come to work. The bus service is also available to patients on demand. He said the bus, in most cases, transports patients who are in critical conditions to Mbingo Baptist Hospital (MBH). This move has been greatly saluted as it comes to give hope to patients even in these difficult times.

Besides the transportation means, the NBHC has adopted a shift system where workers work even on Sundays to ensure that the facility is open always. According to the Assistant Administrator, anytime a client makes his/her way into the health center, they should not be stranded.

Quizzed on the state of work at the construction site of the Health Centre's maternity block, Mr. Tosam lamented that "If the project had been completed it would have accommodated many more clients. Unfortunately, the progress of work has been relatively slow." Though the work is taking a snail-pace, the Assistant Administrator hopes that the contractor can deliver the project by the end of the year.

Mr. Tosam said the completion of the maternity block will generate income that will go a long way to meet the pressing needs of the health center, and those other facilities hard-hit by the crisis.

## NBHC Commemorates World Sight Day 2018

Nkwen Baptist Health Center (NBHC) under the flagship of the Eye Department last October 10 joined the world at large in activities to mark this year's World Sight Day (WSD). The event presented an opportunity for the center to vulgarize her services in eye health.

According to Scholastica Loya, Assistant Ophthalmic Medical Assistant, glaucoma is one of the leading eye diseases patients present with at Nkwen Baptist Health Center (Mbingo Annex Bamenda). She confirms that out of the 28 drivers screened as part of activities to mark the 2018 World Sight Day, 12 were suspected for glaucoma.

During this year's event, the health center carried out intensive health education and sensitization around eye health on radio stations in Bamenda.

Quizzed on the response after health talks in terms of patient turnout, Scholastica said, "It has always been an overwhelming and massive turnout of patients to the unit for eye checks and consultations after such sensitization sessions."

As a way forward in curbing eye injuries, the Assistant Ophthalmic Medical Assistant maintained that people should always wear protective glasses when carrying out over-head-work, use only running water from a tap to take out foreign bodies from the eye, know where the nearest eye clinic is located and in case of traumas the victim should be rushed to the eye clinic immediately. The call to action during this year's World Sight Day was "Eye care everywhere."

## NBHC Dental Unit Keeping Community Oral Health in Check

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Oral health is a state of being free from chronic mouth and facial pain, oral and throat cancer, oral infection and sores, periodontal (gum) disease, tooth decay, tooth loss, and other diseases and disorders that limit an individual's capacity in biting, chewing, smiling, speaking, and psychosocial wellbeing."

Going by the WHO's definition, oral health is the indicator of the overall health, wellbeing, and quality of life of individuals. Given the importance of oral health, health care providers should have specialized service units to take care of the oral health needs of the population.

Being a strategic healthcare provider in Cameroon, the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health

Services has set up specialized services in all her hospitals and health centers to promote oral health. These units, also called, Dental Departments attend to many people who come with all dental and facial related issues daily. In Nkwen Baptist Health Centre (NBHC), those who provide oral health services are; dental auxiliaries, dental therapists, dentists, Oral Surgeons, and Orthodontists.

Ernestine Ngong, Expanded Duty Dental Assistant says the Dental unit of NBHC continues to record high patient turnouts despite the drastic drop in other departments due to the crisis in the region. She notes that most of the disease conditions patients present with are gum diseases (periodontitis), fractured teeth and pulpitis.

Ernestine adds that the continuous uptake of services by the population at the Health Centre is owing to the awareness on oral health and the quality of services they offer to the clients.

She further notes that notwithstanding the availability of services to cater for oral health issues, many people still develop dental complications from poor and unsafe practices that threaten their health in general. She encourages the population to visit the health facility after every six months with or without dental problems in order to keep their overall health in check.

It is worth noting that the provision of specialized services like oral health are in line with WHO's strategic goals of building healthy populations and communities and combating ill health.

## Banso Baptist Hospital & her Institutions

### BBH ENT Department to Procure New Equipment

The two Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Clinicians, Anasthasia Chin and Marie-Claire Kongnso look forward with hope as plans are being concluded for the procurement of a machine for the removal of foreign bodies from the ear, nose and throat.

Even though the Department needs a Microscope, a Broncoscope and a resident ENT surgeon at BBH, patient turnout keeps swelling because of increased public awareness on the ENT services offered. Referrals from other medical facilities also contribute to the daily average of 15-20 clients who turn up for medical care at the Department. Fortunately, surgical cases are not left to chance as Dr. Acha Everistus, lone ENT Surgeon for the CBC Health Services, always answers present every three months for Doctor's Support Visit. The fact that daily patient turnout can shoot up to 50 patients during such visits is accounted for by the massive sensitization that is done in churches and on radio stations.

## BBH YONEFOH Program Turns Attention to Christian Gatherings

"Sixty percent of the places we used to go to for outreach are currently inaccessible," laments Mr. Kwalar Rene, CBC Health Services Supervisor of Youth Network for Health (YONEFOH) program as he assesses the damage of the Anglophone crisis. "Since the major catchment is schools, it's difficult to reach out to these places," he continued.

As a coping mechanism, the program now focuses mainly on churches, technically leaving out the option of schools and communities. In this light, the emphasis on practice of education and targeted testing has continued to flourish.

Opportunities to perpetuate the mission of YONEFOH have been identified and maximized in Christian camps. These get-together programs in which YONEFOH's impact was felt include; the CBC National Youth Camp which took place at Ndu, the 3H Camp which happened at Wat, the Boys Brigade Camp which held at Nwanti and other such gatherings in Bambalang, Binka, Dumbu and Babungo.

In another vein, there was training for children teachers in Noni on the role of children teachers and workers in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

## Lassin Baptist Health Center Goes from Darkness to Light

A pair of new solar batteries has been installed at Lassin Baptist Health Center (LBHC) to bring a solution to the issue of lighting which has been preoccupying for some time now. The installation exercise took place on September 15, 2018.

In an exchange with the CBC Health Services Press reporter, Elvis Foncha, said a biomedical technician from Bansa Baptist Hospital carried out the installation by replacing the old solar batteries which were unable to store power and could barely shine for maximum two hours because the normal three years for a battery to be used had long expired.

This recent development spells progress for the health facility as the inconsistency of electricity had a negative impact on patient turnout and greatly hindered nocturnal medical procedures. Clients who patronize the services of the facility can finally hang their worries on the shelf as round-the-clock services are now guaranteed.

As expected, the staff and clients who were available at the facility at the time of the installation exercise greeted the gesture with grateful smiles.

In another vein, the administrative baton of command is now in the hands of Mrs. Wamei Hilda. The APNA screener who formally served at Mbingo Baptist Hospital shall now fit into the shoes of Mr. Kolem Emmanuel as the Chief of Center for Lassin.

In an interview with the CBC Health Services Press reporter, the new COC quipped, "I least expected it [the appointment], but thanks to encouragement from administration, colleagues and friends, I have gathered courage to accept God's decision on me."

The optimistic Chief of Center is coming to power at a time when LBHC is swarmed with enormous challenges such as inadequate staffing, no sinks, and inaccessibility amongst others. However, she is certain that the God who called her is going to carry her through.

## Baptist Hospital Mutengene & her Institutions

### Baptist Hospital Mutengene Accommodates Staff from Bafia Baptist Health Center

The spirit of solidarity reigns throughout the CBC Health Services. Solidarity is at the heart of the quality healthcare CBCHS offers to her clients. This proved true recently when the administration of Baptist Hospital Mutengene flung their doors wide to welcome staff from Bafia-Muyuka Baptist Health Centre who were seeking for a safe haven.

As victims of the socio-political crisis that is currently rocking the North and Southwest Regions of the country, the staff absconded from the health center into the bushes where they stayed for three days in deplorable conditions. In the process of running for their lives, some staff took ill while a good number of them lost their property.

In consultation with the Director of Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih, the administration of Baptist Hospital Mutengene arranged for the staff to be transferred and housed in Muntegene while pending a more sustainable option.

The staff from Bafia who arrived the health facility on October 11, 2018 with their family members were 11 in number.

In an exchange with the Press Division, the Senior Administrator of BHM, Mr. Wirba Samuel said "The staff were lodged and fed during the first three days of their arrival. With the opening of a new health center at Bonaberi, some of them will proceed to Bonaberi while others will move to Mboppi and a few will be retained here at Mutengene".

In a related development, staff who stay out of Mutengene have been stopped from coming to work on Mondays. Staff of the facility have equally been advised to be indifferent when it comes to political arguments especially out of the facility. These measures and a lot more have been adopted in order to ensure the security of staff in and out of the facility while trusting God for better days ahead.

## Health Services Complex Mutengene

### HIV-FREE Southwest Staff Brainstorm on New Project Year

HIV-Free Southwest project staff have met to take stock of the last project year (FY18) in preparation for the new project year FY19, which started on October 1, 2018. Consequently, all the staff working in different domains converged at the Health Services Complex from October 24-25 to strategize on the new project year.

During the strategic come-together, the level of attainment of the FY18 target was presented and the strategies put in place were evaluated amongst others. The two-day working session was graced by the presence of central level staff who gave updates on Finance, Data Management and Documentation as well as Communication in the current year.

"Health talks have proven to be a very effective strategy in contact tracing and index testing because it appeals to the consciences of those who are HIV Positive," opined Toh Jubilate, the HIV-Free index testing focal person for Southwest during a chat with Namondo Ewane, our Southwest-based reporter.

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## Cont'd from pg. 11

New strategies and innovations in keeping with the program areas that could improve the results that were already in the field were communicated to the staff. It is worth noting that in FY19, much attention and resources will be dedicated to index testing. It is expected that index alone would contribute thirty percent of the positive cases diagnosed. With an elaborate presentation on the staff guide for providing technical assistance, the staff also brainstormed on strategies to improve project outcomes in the context of the current socio-political crisis.

In the course of the meeting, CBCHS Press caught up with Dr. Atanga Pascal, Senior Technical Adviser for HIV-Free Care and Treatment who said, "We are trying to make sure that every patient in Care and Treatment owns a card that can be used for identification in a case where the patient is [internally] displaced".

The HIV Free Southwest Project Manager, Dr. Atembeh Bernard at the close of the two-day meeting, enjoined the staff to be diligent in their activities and follow strategies for improved results at the end of the project year.

## Mboppi Baptist Hospital Douala

### MBHD Diabetic Clinic: An Asset to Patients

The diabetic and hypertension clinic at Mboppi Baptist Hospital Douala (MBHD) has been described by patients as a great friend in indeed. This qualification is a result of the symbiotic relationship the unit shares with its registered patients living with diabetes.

Mr. Mbanye Lucas, Nurse in charge at the clinic, says, "Besides the duty we owe to the patients in providing medication, health education, and lifelong care, we are always in constant communication with them even after their routine checks and visits to the clinic."

## SW Team Presents Scorecard Assessment of Viral Load

The third 90 of the ambitious treatment targets to end the AIDS epidemic is depended on viral load and most patients need to do the viral load to be able to evaluate it. The plans to scale up viral load testing in most facilities in the Southwest Region and nationally precipitated the assessment of facilities' readiness to do the viral load testing.

From May 22 -24, 2018, ten health facilities in the Southwest Region were assessed using the Viral load scale-Up Clinical Facility Readiness Assessment Tool V 2.0., developed by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A service note from the Regional Delegate of Public Health was sent to all the facilities concerned. These 10 sites were selected based on their current treatment and accessibility with respect to security.

The scorecard had six sections but in the facilities in the Southwest only three sections were applicable, that is; the clinical care, laboratory and monitoring and evaluation. Some questions were asked and observations were made in order to score the facilities.

The result of this assessment was presented in a meeting in Yaounde on August 16, 2018, that brought together the four PEPFAR regions, Global Health Systems Solution (GHSS), and Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI).

Summarily for HIVF SW all 10 facilities scored 2, indicating Moderate Readiness for viral load testing following the four score levels. Some findings from assessment were that there is limited staffing for follow up of clients especially with unsuppressed viral load. The laboratories too did not have Algorithm, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to carry out the test, a storage system and a means of transportation for facilities that did not have 'bikers for health.'

Meanwhile in monetary and evaluation (M&E), there was no unsuppressed viral load register in any facilities even though few facilities indicated the viral load result. Recommendations were made which the auditors will use to improve on the facilities' ability to do the testing.

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## Prayer Concerns

1. Thank God for the successful Presidential Elections that took place in Cameroon on October 7, 2018.
2. The heart of kings is in the hands of the Lord and He wills it to the direction He wants. Therefore, it our duty to pray for the President Elect to submit to the will of God.
3. Continue to pray for the socio-political upheavals in the Northwest and Southwest regions. Pray that calm will return to both regions.