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

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Bible Verse of the Month

“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father”. Matthew 24:36 (NIV)

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ACHAP Celebrates Role, Renews Commitment to Accelerate Efforts as Champions of Primary Health Care in Africa



ACHAP 2019 Promised to redouble efforts to improving Primary Healthcare in Africa

Participants to the 9th Biennial Conference of the Africa Christian Health Association Platform (ACHAP) have recognized and celebrated their contributions and role as co-creators and champions of Primary Health Care (PHC). In spite of the journey covered so far, ACHAP says much still needs to be done to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

They came from twenty Sub-Sahara African countries to converge at Mont Febe Hotel Yaounde, Cameroon from February 25 to March 1, 2019 under the theme, “Re-igniting Primary Health Care: The Role of ACHAP” with the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services (CBCHS) as host.

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We need to move away from curative care and focus more on prevention, keep people well to minimise high cost in treatment (Prof. Tih Pius Muffih)

In his welcome address, the Director of Health Services (DHS), Prof. Tih Pius Muffih thanked ACHAP for choosing Cameroon to host the biennial conference of 2019. He presented his organization, which became a member of ACHAP in 2015.

The CBC Health Services, Prof. Tih said, is a leading health care provider in Cameroon operating 7 tertiary hospitals, 30 Integrated Health Centers, 52 Primary Health Centers, a pharmaceutical procurement, production and distribution unit, a robust HIV and AIDS and prevention program, Training Schools for Health Personnel, residency programs for surgeons and internal medicines, a Center for Clinical Pastoral Education and a comprehensive program that addresses the health and socio-economic needs of persons with disabilities. The CBCHS recently received government authorization for an Institute of Health Sciences.

On this premise, the DHS hailed this conference theme as timely for two reasons: firstly, the conference was holding on the heels of the commemoration of the Alma Ata Declaration that took place in 1978 during which similar calls were made for governments to reignite PHC and secondly, the theme is coming at a time when Cameroon is working toward Universal Health Coverage within a 10-year strategic plan (2017-2026).

Prof. Tih also lamented that government subventions have not been available to Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), at least in Cameroon, despite the huge contributions in implementing government health priorities. He said faith based health systems have not only spearheaded innovative strategies to offer quality care at the grassroots, but also have used the limited resources in an accountable manner to reach more populations.

The public health expert said, to implement PHC for UHC, governments of countries of Africa must not ignore the role of FBOs. He urged the Ministries of Health in various countries to partner with experienced FBOs towards Universal Health Coverage.

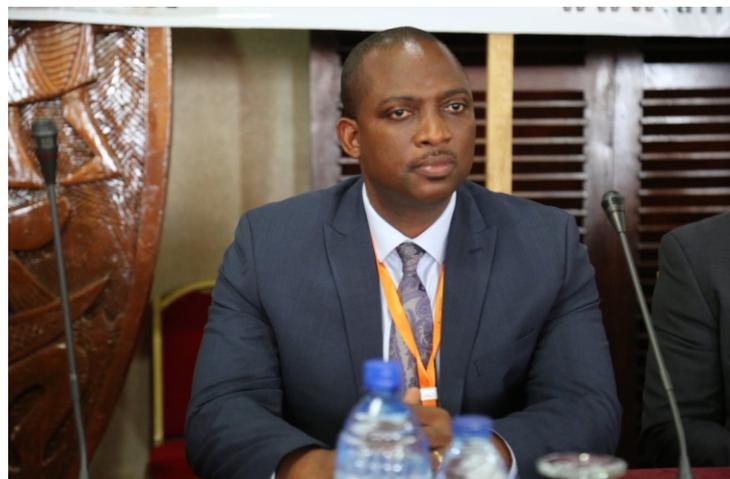
Enter ACHAP Chairman

Ghanaian born, Mr. Peter Yeboah, Chairman of the Africa Christian Health Association Platform (ACHAP) took the discussion further in his keynote address. He traced the foundation of ACHAP to the 1970s inspired by Christ's healing ministry to work and advocate for health for all guided by the principles and values of equity, justice and human dignity.

Although global health has undergone rapid transformation over the past two decades, Mr. Peter Yeboah noted that the contrast is so striking in Sub-Sahara Africa where communicable, maternal, nutritional, and newborn diseases continue to dominate, and still remain the top drivers of health loss, especially in lower-income countries. "Sub-Saharan Africa continues to bear the larger share of the global burden of disease with avoidable intraregional differences in diseases, injuries, and risk factors," Mr. Peter Yeboah lamented.

In the context of re-igniting primary health care and universal health coverage in connection to the Conference theme, the ACHAP chairman challenged participants to go beyond imperatives and ideals to the need for reality checks.

"Our primary health care is underdeveloped and underfunded in many countries, and facing a severe workforce recruitment and retention and systematic challenges. Amidst these challenges, there is fragmentation, duplication and inefficiencies in our fragile health systems undermining progress".



As co-creators, historic champions, advocates and staunch supporters of PHC and UHC, Mr. Peter Yeboah said ACHAP has a sacred role and moral responsibility to bring the PHC vision forward.

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Government Response

The timid presence of the Government of Cameroon and the WHO at the ACHAP Conference were felt by the representatives of the Minister of Public Health and that of the Governor of the Center region. Mrs. Onguele Aurelie, Chief of Service in-charge of National Partnerships, in lieu of the Minister of Public Health, expressed the honour of the Government of Cameroon to host the 9th Biennial Conference of ACHAP. The government representative highlighted and appreciated the fact that Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) serve 40 percent of the population of Cameroon.

The Minister's representative reiterated government's role to support FBOs in overcoming their principal weaknesses in the provision of health care. She challenged the Christian Health Association participants to redouble efforts in sensitizing and educating the communities on basic primary health care options. She urged ACHAP to work in synergy in sharing ideas and experiences in surmounting their challenges.

Workshops

A total of 4 workshops held with several break-out sessions and panel discussions to elucidate and shed more light on the conference theme, "Re-igniting Primary Health Care: The Role of ACHAP". The participants visited two Faith Based facilities at Etoug-Ebe Baptist Hospital Yaounde and the Presbyterian Health Center Nsimeyong to observe how health care is dispensed in Cameroon.

Spiritual Touch

Rev. Nditemeh Chalemagne, Yaounde Field Pastor and representative of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Executive President at the ACHAP Conference and the Rt. Rev. Fonki Samuel, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) held Conference participants spellbound in their thought provoking devotionals. The church leaders were unanimous that African problems require African solutions. "Africa will remain poor if we Africans cannot change it," they insinuated. They hailed the ACHAP initiative but tasked them not to rest on their past achievements. They challenged them to do even more in providing health care to African communities, especially the rural areas that are in dire need of primary health care which is preventive and cheaper than curative care and treatment.

Drawing inspiration from Jeremiah 8:32, Rt. Rev. Fonki Samuel lamented on the plight of Africa under the topic, "Is there no Cure in the Continent of Africa?" He wondered aloud why Africa, 50 years later, is still a complaining continent plagued by war, diseases such as HIV and Ebola, dwindling economy, starvation, genocide, suffering from all forms of depravation, poorest of the poor and still lagging behind in basic quality health care. "Why is it so hard for the highly qualified personnel we have in Africa to comply to basic health care practices," he interrogated. The PCC Moderator who doubles as CEPCA President prayed that ACHAP 2019 will truly ignite primary health care in Africa. The Choir of PCC Nsimeyong graced the event with melodious renditions.

Final Recommendations/Key Messages

The 9th Biennial Conference of the Africa Christian Health Association Platform (ACHAP) rose with the following take-home messages read out by Dr. Mwai Makoka from the World Council of Churches:

1. Christian Health Associations (CHAs) need preparedness to mount resistance to any outbreak of diseases.
2. Scale up water, sanitation, hand hygiene, health care waste management and environmental cleaning practices (WASH) in all CHAs.
3. Document and disseminate good practices on financing.
4. Promote and disseminate good devotionals on social media.
5. CHAs should engage church leadership at national level.
6. Develop MOUs with partners on specific domains.
7. Compile inventories of all tools and disseminate.
8. Be more assertive in engaging governments on PHCs.
9. Strongly explore a regional project to enhance ACHAP.
10. CHAs to promote low take interventions such as Male as Partners

Closing Note

In his capacity as host, the CBC Director of Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih appreciated the leadership of ACHAP for choosing the right theme and the right people to handle the topics under review. In this regard, he encouraged participants to move away from curative care, which is expensive for the average African, to prevention, which is cheaper and affordable to all. He prescribed that people should adopt healthy lifestyles, and the populations should be educated to adopt good and healthy practices. Prof. Tih challenged ACHAP 2019 participants to follow up and implement the resolutions as the only means of igniting primary health care in Africa.

Closing Note

In a rare display of mental fit, ACHAP President, Mr. Peter Yeboah rendered what he termed, the 'Yaounde Declaration':

"We, the members of the Africa Christian Health Association Platform (ACHAP) in conjunction with our development partners meeting in Yaounde from 25th February to 28th February 2019 met to deliberate, discuss and resolve on the theme, "Re-igniting Health Care: The Role of ACHAP". Having had intensive discussions, we affirmed the principles, ideals and values as contained in the Alma-Ata Declaration of 1978 and reconfirmed in Astana in 2018. In the event thereof, we identified the following:

1. That, we the Faith Based Organizations reaffirm primary health care as the pathway to promoting Jesus Christ's healing ministry. In particular, we accept our role as the pacesetters, as actors, as advocates and strong supporters of primary health care and resolve thereof to ensure that everyone living under this earth will have access to quality, and affordable comprehensive primary health care service, which is acceptable and treated in dignity of our Lord Jesus Christ. In particular, we also recognize the role and responsibilities assigned to our partners.
2. Regarding our partners, we affirm that, indeed, our partners have distinctive roles in promoting the ideals and values of Universal Health Coverage. We resolve thereof that our partners cooperate, collaborate with us in the spirit of partnership to ensure that we mobilize resources and ensure equitable resource allocation in the spirit of contain where they all also encourage ACHAP to come together in what can be termed as ACHAP-Partner Network, emphasizing unity.
3. To all our actors in place, we also emphasize the need to ensure that primary health care becomes the center piece of country health systems. Therefore, we call on governments to ensure active practical partnership with FBOs to ensure that we are respected, recognized and accepted as integral stakeholders in the country primary health care systems.

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1. We resolve therefore to strengthen the partnership between FBOs and governments recognizing that governments have the primary responsibility and role for ensuring the provision of equitable health services for its citizens. We FBOs promise and pledge our support and collaboration to ensure that we supplement and complement government health services.

In all these, we recognize the fact that the universality in primary health care as contained in universal health coverage means that it is a business for all. Therefore, we pledge and promise thereof to comply with all resolve the Yaounde Declaration to explore all avenues, processes and opportunities enabling to ensure that the roadmap of

all the resources we make will be actualized in the Name of Lord Jesus Christ in the Year of our Lord 28th February 2019. So help us Lord, ACHAP"

Partnership

ACHAP signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with two partner organizations namely, World Vision and American Leprosy Mission. The last ACHAP Conference held in Lesotho in 2017 and the next one will hold in a country still to be decided by the ACHAP Board.

CBC Health Services Leaves Footprints at ACHAP

The presence of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services at the Africa Christian Health Associations Platform (ACHAP) 9th Biennial Conference, hosted in Cameroon was quite visible.

From secretarial duties, registration, media coverage, Information Technology (IT) and Security Support services, CBC Health Services workers were present.

Prof. Tih Pius, Director of CBC Health Services in appraisal noted that it had been a long journey of several months of preparation prior to the conference. He noted that the staff kept the steam of hard work alive during the conference which was indeed a success.

Besides the support services offered by the CBC Health Services at ACHAP 2019, some workers featured prominently in the breakout sessions and discussions.

The CBC Health Services as one the robust providers of holistic health care in Cameroon had a lot to show for at the conference in matters of primary health care, which was at the epicenter of discussion at 9th Biennial Conference.

One of the outstanding exhibitions the CBC Health Services presented was a concept known as 'Maternity Waiting Homes'. The project was aimed at encouraging the uptake of antenatal service by women in rural



communities in Cameroon. The presentation highlighted successes recorded on improving infant and maternal child health.

The 'Maternity Waiting Homes' as highlighted by Eugene Foyeth and Dr. Francios Chimoun, all from the CBC Health Services, is a proven strategy in encouraging many more women to enroll in antenatal clinics during pregnancy and after birth, and to follow up with the immunization calendar for their babies through infant welfare clinics.

Mobilizing finances to fund major healthcare services in Africa by Christian Health Associations (CHA) remains a huge barrier to universal health coverage. Hence it was incumbent on the CHAs to draft and discuss new ways of mobilizing financial resources to promote healthcare in the communities.

In this light, Esther Kuni, HIV-Free Project Adviser took to the rostrum to elucidate on some of the financial models CBC Health

Services used in the Local Capacity Initiative (LCI) to scale up HIV testing, screening, and testing amongst community leaders.

One the major outcomes at the breakout session on "Financing Models for Primary Health Care and Universal Health Coverage" was a call on CHAs to be financially accountable to donors who are reliable partners in meeting health needs of the population.

Last but not the least was the presentation on "Optimizing Health Workforce for PHC" by CBCHS LAP Administrator, Peter Kakute and supported by Godlove Nkuoh. The two presenters highlighted the pros and cons of building, planning, and optimizing a PHC workforce health worker life cycle approach within the LAP and Nutrition Improvement programs of the CBCHS.

CBC Health Services Receives another Set of Achievement Awards amidst Crisis

HI Television, a Buea based media outfit has joined the ranks of other reputable media organs in Cameroon in recognizing the tremendous strides being made by the CBC Health Services and her Director, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih in the provision of quality healthcare, especially in the crisis regions of the Northwest and Southwest



The Award is an appreciation to CBC Health Services' Commitment in providing Quality Health Care to All

Prof. Tih received two Achievement Awards from the TV House on March 5, 2019 at the Baptist Center-Nkwen in Bamenda in recognition of CBC Health Services' huge impact in the provision of quality healthcare in

Prof. Tih received two Achievement Awards from the TV House on March 5, 2019 at the Baptist Center-Nkwen in Bamenda in recognition of CBC Health Services' huge impact in the provision of quality healthcare in Cameroon in 2017 and 2018 especially in crisis regions and to Prof. Tih Pius for being the best Director in the provision of health services in communities in the country.

Handing over the award, Peterkins pointed out that "These awards are in recognition of the wonderful services rendered Cameroonians and even foreigners by the CBC Health Services led by Prof. Tih Pius Muffih. The Director, whom he described as a workaholic and a force to reckon with, has over the years, improved on the lives of Cameroonians especially during this crisis periods by ensuring the continuous provision of health services to all."

Baptizing the Director "a Civil Engineer," Mr. Peterkins Manyong appraised the modern health infrastructures built in all parts of the country by the CBC Health Services, adding that it only takes a visionary leader as Prof. Tih to realize these. He goes on to explain that these awards are intended to encourage him and his leadership to continue to do more for Cameroonians in the light of the provision of health services and infrastructure.

Though awarded in 2019, these awards were meant to be given in 2017 and 2018

respectively, but due to the crisis and insecurity in the region, the award giving ceremony was postponed to 2019.

Speaking to the press shortly after the award, the Director of CBC Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius expressed gratitude while explaining the significance of the award to the CBC Health services. "I want to thank the HI Television, for honouring the CBC Health Services with these awards. The awards are recognition of work we've done and that we'll still continue to do.

This award is an encouragement for people to perform better. Our services will continue to attend to the people of Cameroon by offering quality health care to all who need it as an expression of Christian love. We'll do that without discriminating and with happiness that we're serving humanity," said the public health expert.

On a personal level, Prof. Tih noted that the awards are an encouragement to him as a leader, to the CBC leadership team, the Christians, and the CBC Health Services workers who have been praying for the CBC Health Services to continue to do more in her provision of health services to all as an expression of Christian love. He then encouraged everyone to embrace preventive over curative measures in handling health challenges in Cameroon.

The Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Executive President (EP), Rev. Dr. Ncham Godwill took turn to appreciate the gesture of the HI Television and other media present at the award ceremony. "This is a very humbling privilege, and honour to one of the CBC Departments. This award is not only for Prof. Tih Pius, but also to the entire CBC. The award will spur us as a team working

with Prof. Tih, spur him up as a person and also spur up the Health Services to do more in providing health services to all as an expression of Christ love," expressed the EP.

The awards come barely days after the organization was declared winner of the Guardian Post 2018 Best Community Health Outreach Program during a ceremony dubbed, "2018 Achievement Award" organized in honour of the Guardian Post's 16th Anniversary in Ebolowa.

Unanimously nominated and voted by readers, renowned jurists and journalists, this well-deserved honour was presented to the CBC Health Services in appreciation for her remarkable efforts towards championing awareness campaigns against HIV/AIDS and Cancer in Cameroon.

Mr. Abanda Alphonse, Communication Supervisor of the HIV-Free project and Head of the Grants Department of the CBC Health Services represented Prof. Tih Pius Muffih, Director of CBC Health Services, at the ceremony in Ebolowa.

At such a time when the country is undergoing political and economic crisis, especially in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon and strongholds of the CBC Health Services facilities, the organization has continued to stay true to her mission statement of ensuring that all have access to health care. It is reassuring and encouraging as such a time, to know that someone is watching and appreciative of the work this faith-based organization had and still continues to render in improving the lives of Cameroonians.

Enhancing Inclusive Education for the Visually Impaired



Assistive devices help the visually impaired use the computer with little or no challenge.

Digital technology has great control on today's 21st Century every work day life. Governments and education stakeholders consciously, must restructure education policies that will empower and include students with disabilities.

People living with different forms of disabilities are often sidelined and not given the opportunity to explore their talents, thus are left behind and seen as burden to their families, communities.

Conscious of this, the Empowerment Disability Inclusive Development (EDID) program of the CBC Health Services have created a center for computer learning for students with visual impairment in Lycée Classique de Bafoussan, Cameroon. This is thanks to support from the Lillian Foundation in the Netherlands through a project dubbed "Quality Education for All". The project, which aims at fostering inclusive education, is a first in his kind in the French sub system of education in the country.

Boyo Mourine, Project Officer of the Quality Education for All project, EDID program says the project is improve on the education outcomes of visually impaired students. This she added that the visually impaired are often left behind during class and examination assessments as a result to the time it takes to write and translate the braille.

"For example, it takes a mini second for a sighted student to that. But for a visually impaired student to write letter 'A' the child needs to juggle between six dots just to write a single letter.", She said.

Mourine further notes that the computers are equipped with assistive devices and customized software that help the visually impaired to type their notes and prints in the shortest possible time, and surf the internet with little or no challenge.

"The computers have programs like JAWS, NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access), Screen reader, Optical Character Recognition (OCR),

Adaptable keyboards and other software that help students navigate the computer independently. The JAWS program translates the text and icons on the computer to speech to the hearing of the visually impaired. The Screen reader reads other forms of text to braille", she adds.

It is a new and exciting experience to the students. Lowe Pani, a student with visual impairment tells me that "these computers will enable us study and grasp knowledge with ease. This brings relief to us. I am forever thankful to the Lillian Foundation Programme that we can now use the computer like other mates.

"Today an illiterate is not someone who has not gone to school, but the one who doesn't know how to use the computer", said Lowe TLE E1student.

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Enhancing Inclusive Education for the Visually Impaired

Dabou Emanuel, Discipline Master, and Simo Lyssete - Vice Principal at Lycée Classique, both lamented the fact that some teachers and other stakeholders are still not intentional in protecting and empowering children living with disabilities. Both focal persons of the project wish everyone is involved in making the lives of persons with disabilities better and inclusive.

The school authorities reveal that there are close to 40 students with visual impairment in the school, yet over 80 percent of the teachers do not demonstrate real patience and proper follow up of the students. Most of them do not understand braille.

However, the inclusive computer lab also has an embosser that prints the braille, with the help of a braille translator that translates the braille to other languages. This save the huge time and cost to type and translate exam papers of students who are visually impaired before assessment.

Madame Fondop Anne has 11years experience translating braille in Lycée Classique and CISPAM. "These computers and the embosser (braille printer) are a great rescue to us. Students with visual impairment are always left behind because of the extra

time and cost it takes to manually type and translate their papers.

This process of translation has kept the fate of many visually impaired students in the hands of the translators, since a bad or wicked translator may interpret the student wrongly. This can be costly to the student's result", regrets Madame Fondop.

"The braille printer is effective and gives just what the student wrote. With the presence of these computers, students can type and translate their papers themselves.

It takes about 45minutes to manually type and translate a braille paper. But with these assistive computers and braille printer, it takes just about 10minutes" she revealed. Fondop Anne is passionate in braille translation; she says braille teachers are very few in Cameroon, and only the passionate ones will settle for the pay package. Braille printers are not common to find in Cameroon. It is possible to have just one in a whole region. Just recently CBC Health Services has become the sole supplier of braille printers in West and Central Africa, thanks to a partnership deal with the Swedish firm Index Braille.

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According to Mrs Agho Glory EDID Program Manager, the Quality Education for All is currently running in 17 pilot schools in the North West Region of Cameroon implementing inclusive programs for persons with disabilities.

She adds that similar projects have been established in Government Bilingual High School (GBHS) Bamenda, CBC Integrated Braille Center, Baptist Comprehensive High School Nkwen-Bamenda, and others.

The project has also been extended to some university students. Zama Walters and Mishie Blaise both visually impaired students from the University of Bamenda recently received a laptop each with assistive devices to empower them with computer skills and better carry on their studies.

Madame Bonjao Lennis. Principal of Lycée Classique de Bafoussam is highly motivated with the works of the CBC Health Services in her school. She and the school administration have pledged full collaboration with the EDID program, but wish governments and other stakeholders give disabilities issues the priority they deserve, as stated in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Five Siblings Screened with Albinism in Ngounso Baptist Health Center

Life in the family of 42 year-old Kwame Desire had not been the same since Mr. and Mrs. Kwame received the news that their children were screened with albinism. Albinism is a rare group of genetic disorders that cause the skin, hair, or eyes to have little or no colour. Albinism is also associated with vision problems. This couple have leaved all their life since after marriage in doubt as to why they will have five children with albinism.

Mr. Kwame recounts the trauma his children brought to his life as an individual and to his family as a whole. "Having 5 children out of 11 with albinism brought a lot of trauma in our lives. After giving birth to the children with albinism, I could no longer bear the pains and stigma of being a father to children with albinism. So I decided to get married to a second wife with whom I he believed could

deliver children without albinism." Explained the father of 11 children. For once Mr. Kwame smiled when his thoughts came to reality as the second wife gave birth to 4 children without albinism. This never completed his joy as he saw his 5 children with albinism struggled through life and suffering with low vision and difficulties interacting in the society.

Mr. Kwame for years has wrestled with questions on the future of the children given their difficulties especially in school to be able to read and write. He has often wondered if the low vision aspect of it can be handled and if it can be handled, it may only be done in big cities like Yaounde and Douala which will limit him from going there due to financially challenges.



Five Siblings Screened with Albinism in Ngounso Baptist Health

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"I a farmer and I depend on my children to assist me in my farm work so that we can raise money for their education. Yet with their albinism nature, it is difficult for them to be effective in farming." Regrets the old man.

It was on a faithful day that the CBR field worker during his field visit to the palace where he created awareness on disability issue, that the Fon quickly referred the 5 children with albinism to Ngounso Baptist Health Center. "When my wife and I learnt of the fact that the situation of our children could be managed, it brought us hope as we anxiously waited for the visit of the Low

vision therapist to the Health center." Corroborated the parents.

On their arrival at the Ngounso Baptist Health Center, the therapist screened the children and provided them with Filters and Monocular Telescope all low vision devices which were funded by the EDID Program of the CBC Health Services.

Talking to Mr. Kwame after consultation and screening of his children, he was hopeful that with the devices, the children will be able to study effectively like their peers and better function like the other children at home.

Despite the depressed mood these parents and children came with to the hospital, Mr. and Mrs. Kwame left the hospital happy as they could only pay a little token for consultation but went home with very expensive devices. They appreciated the EDID Program for bringing hope to them and their children.

Back to their community in Menda in the Noun Division, Mr. Kwame and his family shared the good news with the community members who immediately referred 4 other children with albinism to the health center.

CBCHS Commits; No More Pain, No More Losses to Childhood Cancer



The Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services has pledged to reduce the burden of childhood cancers in Cameroon and the entire sub-region. This commitment was made during the commemoration of the 2019 International Childhood Cancer Day (ICCD). Activities to mark the day in all hospitals and health centers of the CBC Health Services were centered on raising awareness on childhood cancers which is a public health problem worldwide.

Statistics from ICCD revealed that each year, more than 300,000 children ages birth to 19 years are diagnosed with cancer around the world. Approximately 8 in 10 of these children live in low and middle-income countries where their survival rate is often near 20%. This is in plain contrast to high-income countries, where cure rates exceed 80% for many common childhood cancers.

There is a great disparity in the chances of survival from childhood cancers in high-income countries and middle-income ones like Cameroon. Glenn Mbah, Oncology Nurse and Coordinator of the Childhood Cancer Program of the CBC Health Services says this disparity is largely attributed to the low level of awareness by the population. "Sadly, medical personnel most often don't suspect cancer early in children, leading to late diagnosis which further limits the chances of survival," corroborates Glenn.

In order to abet the trends of childhood cancers in Cameroon, the CBC Health Services put in place a Child Cancer Program, which has over years been involved in education, diagnosis, and provision of curative treatment to all childhood cancers.

Larrissa, Cancer survivor, 21 years old today, was opportune to have been diagnosed of cancer early and still vividly remembers, "I was diagnosed with Burkitt's lymphoma at my twelfth birthday in 2010 at Mbingo Baptist Hospital (MBH). It all started with a swelling on my right jaw."

My parents took me to the hospital where the doctor operated the mass swelling. A month later, the swelling resurfaced and was far bigger than the first. We were referred to MBH where it was diagnosed to be cancer. I received chemotherapy for 4 months and continued with full treatment. Since then, the mass has not reemerged again. "I am today healthy and

going with my activities unperturbed," rejoiced Larrissa

The Childhood Cancer Program of the CBC Health Services since inception in 2003 prides herself of having treated 1,700 cases. The Program Coordinator notes that these successes are tied to early diagnosis and appropriate treatment. By and large, it is incumbent on health personnel to step-up suspicion rate of cancers just like they do for common ailments in order to prevent avoidable deaths in children from cancer.

Childhood cancers certainly have predisposing factors. Dr. Kouya Francine, Oncologist observes that only a few known risk factors for cancer have been identified, which include: problems with development in the womb, medical conditions, exposure to infections and radiation, previous cancer treatments, etc. "To a large extent doctors believe that genetics may play a role in the development of childhood cancer," underpins Francine.

The work of the CBC Health Services' Childhood Cancer Program is in line with the target goal of the WHO Global Childhood Cancer Initiative to eliminate all pain and suffering of children fighting cancer and to achieve at least 60% survival rate, for all children diagnosed with cancer around the world by 2030. This represents an approximate doubling of the current cure rate and will save an additional one million children's lives over the next decades.

CBR Records Fresh shifts to other Regions of Cameroon

The Program Manager of the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disability (SEEPD) program has expressed gratitude for the results and feedback recorded by the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) field workers in the Adamawa and West Regions over the past 4 months. Awa Jacques Chirac was speaking during the first coordination meeting for the CBR field workers for 2019. The meeting which had as objective to review projected activities and plan for upcoming ones, took place on February 11, 2019 at the Director of Health Services (DHS) Hall at the Baptist Center Nkwen, Bamenda.

Awa Jacques acknowledged the difficulties that the field workers are facing in their new stations but applauded them for braving through. He noted that "The Director of CBC Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih is committed to improving on your work experiences to ensure good quality of work. You have to identify and explore new opportunities in your new sites," implored the SEEPD Program Manager.

The CBR Supervisor, Mr. Kenchi Joseph, revealed that the orientation for work this year for the field workers will have a new dimension which will ensure quality and not quantity. In this light, they were given orientation on the projection for 2019 which is a planning year ahead of the 4th phase of the program expected to kick-start in January, 2020.

Even though the field workers have not worked very long in their new stations like Fombot, Banyo, Ngounso and Nyamboya, the success stories recorded in such areas are amazing. An amazing example is that of Adjjatou Dada, a child with mobility impairment who had not been able to go to school because of lack of assistive devices but today, the child can go to school and even participate in the Youth Day activities of February 11, like his peers, thanks to the provision of a wheelchair by the CBR.

Like Adjjatou who is happy being part of her peers, many families in the Adamawa and West regions are happy with the work that CBR is doing in their regions.

During the meeting, the field workers shared their challenges which were addressed and some promised to be taken to the highest authority within the program.

The SEEPD Program Manager at the close of the meeting, told participants that a context analysis will be carried out in the Northwest, Southwest, West and Adamawa Regions in the days ahead which will inform planning for the next phase.

The interventions in the regions are carried out, thanks to support from Ausaid, CBM and the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services.

Service Providers Trained on PMTCT Cohort Monitoring

The HIV-Free Southwest Project has trained services providers on how to follow up HIV positive mothers and their infants. The two-day capacity building workshop kicked took place off at the Health Services Complex Mutengene, Southwest Region from January 30-31, 2019. The workshop rallied service providers from 12 high volume sites selected for the pilot phase. Participants were antenatal care nurses and psychosocial counselors, otherwise, known in its French acronym as APS.

The objective of the training was to equip the service providers to adequately follow up the HIV positive mother and her infant. "More specifically it was to help service providers improve on their understanding of PMTCT and the activities involved, understand the steps in the follow up of the mother infant pair until determination of the final outcome of the exposed infant, understand the source documents and have good understanding of the PMTCT Cohort Monitoring tools and a mastery of their

use," says the Manager, HIV Free Southwest Project.

According to reports, over 90% of new pediatric HIV infections occur through Mother to Child Transmission (MTCT) of HIV and without specific interventions the cumulative risks of MTCT of HIV ranges from 25-45% if breastfeeding is up to 12 months. To ensure an HIVF generation, it is important to actively follow up our HIV positive pregnant woman (PW) and their babies hence PMTCT Cohort Monitoring. This comes to ensure that the final outcome is a negative infant born of an HIV positive mother which is the ultimate goal of the HIVF Project since inception.

The participants were drilled on an overview of PMTCT, and PTMCT Cohort Monitoring documentation and reporting. Given that the program went underway in January 2019, the cohort monitoring team in each facility is to track and register HIV positive women and HIV exposed infants. They are equally expected to uphold and

contribute to this ultimate goal.

The program started in the Centre and Littoral regions in October 2017 and in January 2019 in the Southwest and Northwest regions. Dr. Tumasang Florence, Gynaeco-obstetrician and workshop facilitator announced that there are hopes that the Ministry of Public Health Cameroon will extend it to the other six regions of the country.

PMTCT Cohort Monitoring strategy is important because it is a tool that will be used to measure the impact and monitor the outcome of the PMTCT. It should be noted that cohort monitoring will provide documentation which the country needs for WHO validation in the elimination of mother to child transmission of HIV.

LAP Graduates 38th Batch of Health Promoters

The graduating Health Promoters promised to put the knowledge acquired to practice in their different communities of service



Some nine village health workers otherwise called, health promoters have completed the basic course and received attestations to enable them provide primary health care services in their communities. The graduation of the 38th batch of LAP promoters took place on March 1, 2019 at Allat Integrated Health Center in the Adamawa region. Our LAP correspondent, Godlove Tabah reports that the training held far away from the usual place of training at the Life Abundant Primary Healthcare (LAP) facility in Bamkikai owing to the socio political crises rocking the North West and South West regions since November 2016.

LAP Spiritual Supervisor, Pastor Ringwi Joseph represented the LAP Administrator at the graduation ceremony, which took

place under the watchful eyes of the Administrator of Baptist Hospital Banyo, the Chief of Center of Allat Baptist Health Centre and the CBC Field Pastor of Mayo Darley among others.

The dignitaries took turns to encourage the students to bring about a positive change in their various communities which should result in the reduction of morbidity and mortality especially amongst the vulnerable such as the under five children, pregnant women and the elderly. The students were also encouraged to know their limit and uphold their professional ethics while remaining current by studying consistently. The LAP Administrator's representative also appreciated the facilitators for the knowledge impacted on the students.

The LAP Promoters basic training took place for 8 weeks during which the student were trained on reporting, teaching, diagnoses, treatment and referrals to IHCs and hospital for better management.

The communities to benefit from the services of the 9 promoters are Nkfui, Pinying, Mboungam, Bapi, Bamukumbit, Kurt, Tibati, Mbah. The graduating students promised to put the knowledge acquired to practice in their different communities.

LAP Bursary Changes Hands

Madam Nene Mereline is the new bursar at the LAP Center in Bamkika'ai. She took over command on February 26, 2019 from Mrs. Lenteng Margaret who has served in that capacity for over six years. Mrs. Linteng moves to take up new assignment at the CBCHS Central Administration Finance Department in Bamenda.

The handing over exercise took place at LAP Bamkika'ai under the supervision of the Assistant Administrator in charge of

Finance of BBH, Mr. Weyih Godfrey and LAP the Chaplain, Pastor Shey Felix who sat in for the LAP Administrator who was unavoidably absent.

In his speech, the BBH Assistant Administrator in charge Finance appreciated Madam Lenteng Margaret for her dedicated services to LAP. Mr. Weyih encouraged the LAP staff to give the same cooperation to the new Bursar, Madam Nene Mereline to help her adjust in the

new function as the LAP Bursar.

The same appreciation to the outgoing bursar for dedicated services came from the representative of the LAP Administrator who wished her well in her new assignment in Bamenda. The two bursars, in their responses, recommitted themselves to remain as faithful stewards in their difficult and tempting task. A well-deserved launch at the LAP Canteen crowned the brief ceremony.

Banso Baptist Hospital (BBH)

Find Strength in the Joy of the Lord, BBH Leaders Told

The Administrative staff of Banso Baptist Hospital (BBH) have been prescribed the joy of the Lord as a prerequisite for strength and success in the discharge of their duties. Rev. Tani Moses made this call during a one-day retreat for BBH leaders on January 28, 2019.

According to the prelate, the joy of the Lord empowers those in positions to operate at their best as they serve. Sermonizing from verse 9-11 of the Old Testament book of Nehemiah 8, the seasoned bible scholar and for CBCHS Chaplaincy Coordinator underscored that "If we [leaders] yearn for a reign void of

challenges and regrets, then we must seek strength from God". He noted that as they receive people who are troubled, depressed, discouraged and tossed, they have to give them hope. This can only happen if your hope and joy is unwavering," he emphasized.

Rev Tani urged all leaders to draw their inspiration from Nehemiah, a politician in a corrupt society who stood tall in righteousness. He told BBH leaders to have courage, foresight, make clear decisions and possess empathy.

The leaders took turns to pray for peace in the restive English speaking regions of

Cameroon and for the services of the CBCHS throughout the national territory.

BBH Senior Administrator, Mr. Wirba Samuel thanked the chaplaincy for organizing the retreat and choosing an experienced and eloquent speaker to handle such a powerful subject. He thanked the leaders for the massive turnout urged them to read and meditate on the word daily.

During the retreat, the CBCHS press reporter for BBH, Wirngo Amos presented the latest edition of the Health Mirror magazine and called on leaders to subscribe for their personal copies.

KBHC Acquires New Generator

The incessant power cuts experienced by Kouhouat Baptist Health Center (KBHC) will now be history, thanks to a newly acquired generator. The electrical power generator capable of producing an output of 30 kvh (kilovolts per hour) was dedicated for use last January 19, 2019.

Receiving the power source from a team from Director of Health Services (DHS) Office in Bamenda, the Chief of Center on behalf of the staff appreciated the Director of Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius for his resourcefulness to have identified their need in time.

Officiating at the dedication exercise, Chaplain Pastor Gur Ernest stated that a dedication is an act to put God's things for service. He used the opportunity to refer staff to the DHS' end of speech in which he admonished staff to depend on Jesus Christ as the solution to all life's glitches.

Clients who had turned out for medical care at the Outpatient department (OPD) could not be indifferent as they joined the entire staff body in chanting songs to for the new power source.

It is worth noting that many health center appliances depend on electrical energy to

function. Hence, the acquisition of the 30 kvh generator is a 'stitch in time' to the many roadblocks that could have limited the quality delivery of healthcare.

In a separated development, KBHC has successfully hosted the first Doctors support visit for 2019. In all, a total of 170 clients were consulted for various health challenges during the visit. The massive turn out is an indication that the population is yielding to health talks and education carried out by the center in that community.

Etoug-Ebe Baptist Hospital Yaounde

The Administrator of Etoug-Ebe Baptist Hospital Yaounde (EBHY), Mr. Yongwa Zacks says continuous improvements are being made to providing quality services to the increasing number of clients, especially with the influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the troubled Northwest and Southwest regions into Yaounde. He disclosed to CBCHS Press that observation spaces have been provided with 32 beds for men, women and children. The hospital operates on 24/24 in

three shifts to receive emergency cases, especially accident cases from bike riders.

Another area of improvement is the acquisition of new equipment at the eye, dental and laboratory departments to boost services that are being appreciated by the patients and the community especially CBC Christians. The Administrator is grateful to the committed and supportive staff that have been very hardworking.

However, EBHY still faces the perennial challenge of space to fully accommodate expansion and the demand for more services as the construction of the medical block is still being awaited. Patients' waiting time is still present with limited number of staffing to effectively cover the shifts.

KBHC Acquires New Generator

The transfer of Ekounou Baptist Health Center to their permanent site at Ekoundoum has come with significant improvements as well. As the health center is rapidly transiting into a full-fledged hospital, patients' attendance is significantly on an increase to show for this.

An x-ray department has been installed to serve the health center, Nkoabang Baptist Health Center and Etoug-Ebe Baptist Hospital Yaounde. The transfer of an internist and an ophthalmologist gives the

center a better image for quality care. The theatre is undergoing restructuring and partitioning for eye and general surgery. The maternity operates 24/24 while the other departments operate a two-shift system plus a call shift.

Although the center is in her permanent structure, there is still need for more space to accommodate the demand for other specialized services and need for more staffing as well.

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Prayer Concerns

1. Thank God for the successful holding of the ACHAP 9th Biennial Conference in Yaounde from February 25 to March 1, 2019.
2. Thank God for journey safety to the participants to and from the Conference.
3. Pray that the outcomes of the ACHAP Conference will be implemented by African countries so as to re-ignite the notion of primary health care into their health systems.
4. Thank God for his hand of protection over the populations of the troubled Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon.
5. Continue to pray for God to use the best means possible to bring an end to the crisis in these two English speaking regions.
6. Pray for the thousands who are internally displaced, for those who are refugees in neighbouring countries, those whose houses and property have been burnt or destroyed and for those whose relatives and loved ones have been killed as a result of this crisis.
7. Pray for the Government of Cameroon that they will put on humane face and muster courage to end this crisis.



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