



CAMEROON BAPTIST CONVENTION HEALTH SERVICES

# The Health Services CHRONICLE

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**New Page Opened for Reducing  
HIV Burden in NW: Concerted  
efforts Prescribed...** page 2

## In this Issue

**CBR Strategies Result in Hope to a  
Young Girl with Impairment...Pg 3**

**CBC Health Services in Partnership  
with vital Strategies (Links) acquires  
new NCD Paraphernalia... Pg 4**

**Save the Life of a Young Girl...pg 8**

**STOP  
Press**

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

**Bible  
Verse**

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew  
you, before you were born I set you apart; I  
appointed you as a prophet to the nations."  
Jeremiah 1:5 (NIV).



## New Page Opened for Reducing HIV Burden in NW: Concerted efforts Prescribed

*continued from pg 1*

Health providers in the Northwest (NW) Region of Cameroon have been called to work in synergy in the fight against HIV. Prof. Tih Pius Muffih, Principal Investigator of the HIV-Free Project Cameroon made the clarion call at the launch of the new phase of the HIV-Free Northwest Project last October 24, 2019, in Bamenda.

**Northwest Regional Delegate of Public Health commends CBC Health Services for relentless work in the fight against HIV in the country**

Cameroon currently has the second-highest HIV (Human Immune Virus) prevalence in West and Central Africa. The country had 5.3% prevalence in 2004 which later dropped to 3.4% in 2018 due to several programs and projects implemented at the regional and national levels. The Northwest Region alone has an HIV burden of 5.1% with women shouldering much of the burden. The HIV Prevalence in women in this region is five (5) times higher than it is in men.

Conjecturing from the HIV prevalence in the region, Prof. Tih prescribed concerted efforts and teamwork for the region to be HIV free. "Every health care provider should work in a concerted way in the region. This project is one for the entire region and everyone should be a part; so that we can reach epidemic control," he said.

**will be implemented by the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services in 30 health facilities, in 15 Health Districts, representing a total of 80% of Persons Living with HIV (PLHIV).**

Dr. Albert Bako, Technical Director says the project's principal goal is to expand access to comprehensive HIV/AIDS care and treatment, and TB (tuberculosis) prevention services to clients in a bid to reach epidemic control by the end of COP20. "For this to be achieved we need to identify and place over 30,000 new PLHIV on treatment," he stressed.

It is worth stating that the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services is the lone national (local) organization retained as implementing partner of COP19 under PEPFAR's new decision to scale up the HIV-Free Project to all 10 regions of Cameroon. The country has been structured into four strategic zones. The Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services will be supporting three regions; West, Northwest, and Southwest.

Declaring official the launching of COP19, Northwest Regional Delegate of Public Health

Dr. Kingsley Che Soh said they rely on the resources and experience of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services to lessen the burden of HIV on the population. He further called on health providers to respect the uniform guiding principles in the HIV response. "We have to respect one agreed on national action framework for coordinating all activities of implementing partners, one national AIDS coordinating authority and one country-level monitoring and evaluation," he noted.

Given the urgency to reduce considerably new HIV infections in the region, Dr. Nkome George, Manager HIV-Free Northwest says staff already deployed in the earmarked sites will pay focused attention on index testing. "With targeted testing and immediate placement on treatment if tested positive, we reach epidemic control," he added.

It should be noted that the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services is the oldest provider of HIV related services in Cameroon. The HIV-Free project is one of the moves aimed at supporting the National AIDS Control Program in the Northwest under the leadership Cameroon's Ministry of Public Health.

**This phase of the HIV-Free Northwest Project under the Country Operational Plan (COP19) is sponsored by the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the Center for Disease Control (CDC). The project**



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# CBR Strategies Result in Hope to a Young Girl with Mobility Impairment

In a context characterized by dwindling funding opportunities, negative attitudes towards children with disabilities, poverty, and neglect, children with disabilities and especially girls experience the double spell of vulnerability.

**T**he Empowerment and Disability Inclusive Development (EDID) program of the CBC Health Services with funding from the Liliane Foundation is using the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approach to build the capacity of key stakeholders resulting in tangible interventions in the community.

CBR field worker, Mrs. Akwayi Florence Esah of the Regional Delegation of Social Affairs for the West Region, a Partner Organization (PO) of the EDID Program, has been putting into practice skills she has acquired from this training. With the help of CBR strategies, she responds on multiple fronts to overcome the challenges she encounters in the course of implementing program activities.

This training enabled her to come out with her community mapping, which set out a network of stakeholders and collaborators as an impetus to fight for the rights of children with disabilities through legal action, local resource mobilization, advocacy and sometimes lobbying. Her efforts soon paid off when she engaged in a legal battle to defend a beneficiary whose Sexual and Reproductive Health rights were being violated as a result of her disability. Akwaya also goes into a resource mobilization action to come to the rescue of her client.

**The said beneficiary, MAFO Chantal Joelle, 18 year old girl with paralysis of the lower half of the body has attended school due to her disability. Upon her identification, the PO, in line with the EDID program's core approach of child development and enabling environment, enrolled Chantal in a Government Primary School in September 2018 to enable her to read and write before proceeding to livelihood opportunities, considering her age. Also, a toilet was constructed to suit her disability while a tricycle was given her to facilitate her move to and from school.**

Unfortunately, during the academic year, she became pregnant by a man who did not want to be openly identified with her. The fieldworker relates: "When Chantal's parents knew about her condition, they immediately called me. My first reaction was to ask her if she knew the author of her pregnancy. To my relief, she did. But our joy was short-lived as the author, a married man with three children vehemently refused his paternity. To make matters worse, his family joined him in derogatory comments about Chantal and her entire family because of her disability," laments Florence Esah.

"I was faced with two problems," Florence explains. "Naturally, Chantal could not give birth normally and her parents could not foot her bills given their financial situation. I took a resolution: The man who took advantage of her in the dark but could not mingle with her in the day will not go unpunished".

In collaboration with the Parents Support group, Florence chose to tackle the issue of pregnancy amicably. "So a delegation of members



Chantale breastfeeding her healthy looking son

of the Support Group in my community went to the quarter head to seek an amicable arrangement. There, we were lambasted by the accused and his family to the amusement of the quarter head who seemed to take pleasure in every insult dumped on us. From there, we went to the Police Station where the accused did not even turn up after receiving the summons. The matter was sent to court where hearings are currently taking place".

Florence continues her narration: "On the second front, I decided to attend a village development meeting to talk of the need for community members to respect the rights of children with disabilities and to be involved in their lives to attain true inclusion. I used the forum to present Chantal's case. It is during the session that a local businessman opted to take care of her delivery bills,"

**The joy of Florence heightened when on Friday, August 16, 2019, Chantal entered into labor. The businessman personally transported her to the hospital where she was successfully operated upon. He took charge of all related bills, which amounted to two hundred and twenty two thousand, three hundred francs (2.22, 300 FCFA, 339.1 €). In total, a sum of 450,000 FCFA was raised for the family from diverse sources. A birth certificate was established for the male child to start his life on a better footing than that of his mother who did not have one.**

Today, like Florence, many field workers and parents can stand up for their children, either to seek repairs when their children with disabilities are abused or to mobilize resources locally to complement funding received from the Liliane Foundation for the betterment of the lives of their children

These strides are already successes in themselves, as more people are beginning to understand that children with disabilities are simply part of human diversity with rights that must be respected. All this wouldn't have been possible without CBR capacitation under the EDID program. Knowledge, they say is power!



Chantale before her pregnancy

# CBC Health Services in Partnership with vital Strategies (Links) acquires new NCD Paraphernalia

The Keito Scale Machine, is a first of its kind in the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services that permits the screening of body parameters of clients in a space of three minutes. This equipment is currently being used in five health facilities of the CBC Health Services namely: Bafoussam Baptist Health Centre (BBHC), Mboppi Baptist Hospital Doula (MBHD), Ekoundoum Baptist Health Centre (EBHC) and Baptist Hospital Mutengene (BHM) and Nkwen Baptist Health Center (NBHC)



The equipment was dedicated to God Almighty by the chaplain of the Nkwen Baptist Health Centre and the staff called upon to use the machine to **diligently serve clients**



*The Keito scale machine measures weight, height, blood pressure, pulse rate, and body fat index with within 3minutes.*



The CEO of TEK Engineering and Licensed representative of Keito Manufacturers for Cameroon, Mr. Tekap Rodrigues, gave a detailed orientation on how the equipment operates, the services it offers, and ‘the dos and the don’ts’ when using the equipment. His orientation was concurred by Dr. Njume in an eloquent tone gave the health personnel present, a lecture on the use of the machine in the screening for NCDs. “The machine is intended for clients interested in screening for NCDs.

The device will facilitate the Know Your Numbers screening (body mass index, blood pressure) and in addition, give an estimate of the percentage of body water and body fat content,” Njume pointed out while stating however that blood sugar testing, and waist circumference measurements will still be done through the normal procedures.”

The equipment is, however, not to be used by pregnant women and clients with heart implants, any devices which emit electric currents, because it uses electrical signals which go through the body and could be harmful to fetuses and cause a malfunctioning of any electrical implants. Regardless, I advise everyone to make use of this opportunity, to come do their test in a short space of time to know their risks of NCDs,” Dr. Njume added. Dr Njume reiterated that the machine does not perform a “medical act” and must only be used for screening purposes and the results explained by health personnel.m

As regards the use of the Keito Scale Machine, “It can be operated by the user as it is interactive; however, someone versed with operations is required to guide users through the various steps.. “The first step is by inserting a “coin” into the appropriate slot and second is to step on the platform (don’t carry any objects like bags, phones or wearing a cap, or bracelet or watch on left wrist before mounting the platform) to have your weight and height measured, the third step is to insert your bare left forearm into the space with a cuff for measuring blood pressure. The fourth step is to hold on to metallic frames on the sides to enable measurement of body water/fat percentage, and the last step is to step off the platform, and collect your results and belongings.

The device guides the user and/or operator through the steps by a voice output and picture display.

The equipment was dedicated to God Almighty by the chaplain of the Nkwen Baptist Health Centre while the Administrator of the Health Center called on staff to use the high-tech with care and to serve the public in order to Client checks out his results produced by the Keito machine at Nkwen Baptist Health Center reduce the incidence of NCDs in the country and region in particular

The Keito scale machine measures weight, height, blood pressure, pulse rate, and body fat index within 3minutes. At the end of the process, the results are printed to a ticket(s).



Client checks out his results produced by the Keito scale machine at the Nkwen Baptist Health Center

# CBC Health Services Spiritual Emphasis 2019:

## Nkwen Health Services' Staff Beseached to Pursue Righteousness

The staff of Nkwen Baptist Health Centre and those of the CBCHS Central Administration have been entreated to pursue righteousness above anything else. This call was made at the belated session of the Cameroon Baptist (CBC) Health Services' Annual Spiritual Emphasis in Nkwen, Bamenda under the theme, "Kingdom Life: Living Counter Culturally."

Preaching at the event, Rev. Mbongko George, Pastor of Berean CBC Church Bayelle, charged staff to live right for God. According to Rev. Mbongko, living counter-culturally entails moving against the values and standards of this world. He further stressed that God has called us to be kingdom citizens; to live a life of happiness, and to enjoy the privileges of [our] that citizenship. Drawing inspiration from the New Testament Book of Mathew 5:1-13, Rev. Mbongko opined that kingdom citizens are those who are sensitive to sin, dependent on God and strive daily for righteousness.



Health Services Staff encouraged to live as kingdom citizens

For the three days that the spiritual emphasis lasted, the Guest Speaker's messages could be summed as: "We are kingdom citizens who need to live the kingdom lifestyle, bearing in mind that kingdom life is a life of happiness especially for God's elect".

"We are distinct Christians, who are to be broken for Jesus and unique in our lifestyle as people associated with the kingdom of God. We must seek ways to run away from sin and lead a lifestyle that points us towards heaven. Kingdom people are those who crave, thirst and go for everything godly," he said

"We are living in challenging times and must mark ourselves different by the way we

approach matters of life," cautioned Rev Mbongko.

Quizzed on take-home message, Mrs. Erica Wepngong, participant and Chaplain at Nkwen Baptist Health Center said, "We are not supposed to be comfortable with sin as believers. As such we must endeavor to be happy no matter the circumstances around us".

Speaking at the close of the event, Mr. Warri Denis, Chief of Administration and Finance appreciated the Guest Speaker for availing himself to preach the word to staff. He pledged the organization's support to the Rev. Mbongko's ministry. The CAF called on staff to use the lessons learned during the spiritual

emphasis as a kicker to better articulate the mission statement of the organization while serving the community in dire need of exemplary health care.

For his part, Mr. Kangong Joce, Administrator of Nkwen Baptist Health Center labeled the spiritual emphasis as a unique attribute that distinguishes the CBC Health Services from other organizations in the country.

The three-day spiritual emphasis from October 16-18, 2019 was interspersed with choral music from Nkwen Baptist Health Center and DHS Central Administration Choirs.

## BBHD Holds First-ever Spiritual Emphasis

It gone has down history books that Bonaberi Baptist health Center Douala (BBHD) has organized her first Spiritual Emphasis. The exercise which is a déjà-vu to other hospitals and health centers across the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services was first of its kind at BBHD given that she is quite new and yet to celebrate her first [birthday] anniversary.

During the Emphasis, Rev. Nchambali Ezekiel, Senior Pastor at Trinity Baptist Church, Mboppi Daoula as Guest Speaker, called the staff of BBHD to be model after Christ and exemplify godly character to the clients who

come for services. Expounding the 2019 Spiritual Emphasis theme, Pastor Nchambali said the staff must rise above world standards that are different from kingdom life. To him, living counter-culturally is to shun sin in pursuit of holiness.

"The Spiritual Emphasis was indeed a blessing to [my] staff as, after each session, they will seek to have copies of the sermons for studies at home," says Chaplain Toh Samson. "The messages and events were timely," he added.

In a separate development, a staff of the

health center has received the sacrament of water baptism. The said staff went through inquirer lessons at the center's chaplaincy and when he was due for baptism, he was handed to a local church for the exercise. The baptismal ceremony held in September.

According to Chaplain Toh, the special inquirer class is to enable very busy staff to still study the Bible and fulfill this very important Christian requirement. At press time another candidate was due baptism.



# Save the Life of a Young Girl

## A CRY FOR HELP

**M**y quest to stay healthy is a daily struggle. Tablets, injections, and dialysis have become part and parcel of my life for the past 8 years. I am called Ndum Mildred, I am 22 years old. I am hypertensive, anemic and to crown it all, I have kidney failure.

My ordeals started in 2012 when I was barely 14 years old. I developed high blood pressure, while I was still struggling to swallow that pill, the complications got worse, with further diagnoses proving that I had kidney failure.

My journey hasn't been easy. I depend on dialysis two times a week to stay alive. This process comes with a cost as I have to spend at least 10 thousand FRS CFA each week for my treatment. Having lost my dad early in life, my peasant mother can't shoulder the financial burden. I depend on my salary and donations from well-wishers to cover the expenses. To all these people who have stood by me all these years, I wish to heartily thank you.

Presently, the dialysis no longer guarantees my survival since the fistula which was used on my hand for dialysis got damaged beyond repairs. This forced the doctors to take the last option which was to place a catheter in my chest. The catheter is very fragile and in case of any malfunction, I will die.

As it is said that every cloud has a silver lining, one of my cousins has volunteered to donate his kidney. After a series of tests run to ascertain our compatibility, I was referred to a hospital in India for my operation since such operations can't be conducted in Cameroon.

For our flight (myself and the donor), operation, and 6 weeks' stay in India, I will need 14,300,000 FRS CFA that is about \$ 24,000 to make this dream come true.

Any donation of any type will go a long way to keep me alive. I will be grateful if you spare your penny, lunch, comfort to help me stay alive.

My life depends on you #rescueayounggirl



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# Private-Private Collaboration Against NCDs

From October 1-5, 2019, the CBC Health Services NCDs program in collaboration with ECOBANK Cameroon undertook a series of activities to mark ECOBANK DAY 2019 in 3 cities of Cameroon namely: Bafoussam, Douala, and Yaounde.



**Ecobank Celebrates Ecobank Day 2019 by fighting Against NCDs**

The Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) Control and Prevention program of the CBC Health Services is leaving no stone unturned to liaise with every initiative that identifies with the program's vision and goal. From October 1-5, 2019, the CBC Health Services NCDs program in collaboration with ECOBANK Cameroon undertook a series of activities to mark ECOBANK DAY 2019 in 3 cities of Cameroon namely: Bafoussam, Douala, and Yaounde.

In 2012, in line with its corporate social responsibility, the ECOBANK group launched the Ecobank Day, a day when all 'Ecobankers' come together to show their gratitude to the communities in which they operate, by carrying out company-wide activities to help improve lives in the community.

This year, the Ecobank group decided to turn the landscape of the Ecobank Day into a three-year campaign to add its voice to that

of the Global NCD Alliance whose mission is to unite and strengthen civil societies to stimulate collaborative advocacy, action and accountability for NCD prevention and control. The intentional move aimed at increasing awareness on NCDs, especially on breast and cervical cancers amongst its staff, clients and the community. The activities included; health walk, physical exercise, health talk on NCDs; their risk factors, prevention, and screening.

Addressing participants of the Health Walk on Saturday, October 5 in Douala, the Managing Director of ECOBANK Cameroon, Mrs. Gwendoline Abunaw, said the scale of Ecobank's vision and mission is carried by the participation of all 33 countries celebrating and focusing on the same course and on the same day to ensure a commendable impact for Africa. "At Ecobank we are not immune to the impact of NCDs in our lives and the

communities in which we work and live. Thus, Ecobank staff have decided to break the silence about NCDs and join the global NCD movement, health advocates, experts, people living with NCDs, civil society organizations, etc. to get involved in pushing for progress on NCDs ... there's no better course than preserving lives," the ECOBANK Cameroon Managing Director remarked.



On Saturday 5th of October, Ecobank had a walk-show across Africa, as part of a three-year campaign to raise awareness about Non-Communicable Diseases. The walk took place on Ecobank Day, an annual initiative when Ecobank and its staff give back to their local communities.



## Braving the Odds in Providing Quality Care to All

Providing health care in rural communities in Cameroon is a daunting task. This process becomes more complex in a war-torn area like Bambui, North West Region of Cameroon. With the emergence of the crisis in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon, the HIV-Free staff have braved challenging situations, devised different coping mechanisms and enacted strategies to meet the needs of the people they are called to serve.



**O**n March 28, 2019, Evelyn, one of the HIV-Free North West Index-Testers received a call from a Contact who had resisted to be tested for HIV but finally made up his mind to get tested. The job of an index tester entails; following-up the list of sexual contacts and/or injecting drug partners willingly given to them by a client who tested HIV positive for eventual HIV testing. On this fateful day, the index contact gave details of his location and invited Evelyn to help him know his status.

**“I was so excited to have succeeded to break the chain of HIV at this end; I knew well that whatever the outcome, my client will now make informed**

**decisions. This drive was the motivation that pushed me to take the bull by the horns.”**

“We left for Bambui – Tubah Sub Division, where he directed that we will find him. We were still in transit, heading to the rendezvous point when we heard some thunderous male voices ordering our bike to stop; “Freeze! Freeze!” the voices thundered. The automatic stop of the bike almost landed us on the ground. They asked us to present our ID Cards. We quietly followed this heavily-armed unknown man to where we were ordered to throw our National ID Cards to the ground under duress.”

“After a thorough examination, the guys searched our bags. To corroborate our story,

they asked us to call the client we came to test for HIV to come over. Without a clue of our company, he came carrying his farming machete which made his interrogation so intense. I tried to recall the strategies given to us by management to tackle such situations and I guess it worked as we succeeded to not only ensure that our index contact knew his HIV status, but also, 6 of the armed men also volunteered to know their HIV status. As difficult as the experience was, I was glad to have helped 7 persons know their HIV status, which is the starting point of breaking the chain of HIV”.

Like Evelyn, over a hundred service providers in the North West Region risk their lives daily to offer health care at the doorsteps of its community members.

## HIV-Free Southwest Project Team Tasked to Work in Synergy

**T**he staff of the HIV-Free Southwest project has been told to work as a team to meet new project goals. Ernest Banlack, Assistant Project Manager made this call last October 9, 2019, in the Project Head Office at Health Services Complex (HSC) Mutengene. “Transitioning from the Country Operational Plan (COP) 2018 which phased out last September 29 to COP 2019, has brought several changes to the project. Hence, our staff on the ground must work in synergy to meet set goals,” said Ernest.

In COP 2018, we were providing Technical Assistance for Services Delivery, which is mainly supporting facilities to offer services to clients not necessarily being there to consult patients daily. But with COP 2019, we are now charged with the responsibility of Direct Services Delivery (DSD). We will be based on the sites [facilities] to consult patients and render the services that should be offered them, he detailed.

Given this transition from technical assistance to direct service delivery, the project team has readjusted its monitoring duration from a

monthly exercise to a weekly schedule. Secondly, the project staff has been placed in strategic positions and some reassigned to the sites to do the work.

By and large, being aware of the challenges that come with staff movement and reassignment, the Assistant Project Manager is encouraging staff to collaborate and take up the new task with optimism to be of service to the clients.



# World Mental Health Day 2019

## CBC Health Services Staff Commit to Break Silence, Prevent Suicide

Workers of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services have committed to promote mental health and prevent suicide in the community through awareness-raising. The commitment was part of the activities marking the World Mental Health Day 2019, last October 10.



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), suicide is a global public health problem claiming over 800,000 lives every year; 'with someone somewhere losing his life every 40 seconds'. "Suicide affects people of all ages in all countries. However, nearly 80% of suicides occur in low and middle-income countries, owing to limited mental health services and resources for assisting and supporting those in need," details WHO.

It should be noted that out of every one completed suicide, there are over 20 more attempts. People who survive the first attempt are at high risk of making a further attempt, so, particular attention is needed for providing ongoing support. On the contrary, often in our society, survivors of suicidal attempts and the families of those who complete suicide are the object of scorn and suffer a great deal of stigmatization.

Despite the threat suicide poses to the community, there is widespread silence on the problem. Etheldreda Ndong, Nurse Practitioner, in charge of Mental Health Services at BHM says the untold silence is, as a result, of certain myths.

"Most often suicide is likened to be a minute problem, in some cases, people think to talk about it will encourage those who attempt suicide to actually try it out, at times people think suicidal behavior is just attention-seeking, while others think once someone is considering suicide there is nothing I [we] can do about it. These are just some of the myths," she said.

Given the gravity of the problem, Etheldreda says it is time to no longer consider suicide as a taboo subject but admit that people do harbor suicidal thoughts, and having open discussions will protect those at risk. "It is time to erase the stigma around suicide....," she added.

The focus at this year's World Mental Health Day was "Mental health promotion and suicide prevention". In line with suicide prevention, WHO is calling on all to take 40 seconds of action to; improve awareness of the significance

of suicide as a global health problem, improve knowledge of what ought to and should be done to prevent suicide, reduce stigma and support those struggling with suicide.

**"Suicide is preventable and can, therefore, be avoided, which is why all of our efforts and public policies should focus on prevention," says Dr. Alberto Trimboli, President of the World Federation for Mental Health.**

It's worth stating that suicide is death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result.

Presenting the Director of Health Services' address to all institutions of Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services, Mr. Nfor Gamgong Emmanuel, BHM's Assistant Administrator in charge of Personnel stressed that suicide is a health problem which deserves the attention of all actors including mental health specialists, scientific and professional organizations, universities, service users and families to create an enabling environment that can embrace mental health services.

The commemoration of this year's World Mental Health day was within a peculiar context bedeviled by the socio-political unrest in the Northwest and Southwest Regions.

Conjecturing from the current situation which can be at the root of a 'Mental Health Crisis' in the country, Prof. Tih Pius, Director of Health Services calls on all, especially health workers to always be alert. "We should be equipped to identify early signs, provide basic management and make appropriate referrals when and where necessary," advised the Public Health expert.

World Mental Health Day is an annual event set aside by the World Federation of Mental Health to raise awareness about Mental Health and to break the stigma associated with services and patients.



*Many people think people who attempt suicide are just trying to seek attention, not knowing it is a stage of mental disorder that has to be address. If not the victim will actually do it someday*



The good news is that mental illnesses such as depression, trauma, anxiety, and mood disorders, can be treated. Musa said if people could love more, think positively, free their minds from worries, do regular physical exercise, the global burden of mental illnesses will greatly reduce



## BBH Advocates Against Depression

Banso Baptist Hospital (BBH) on October 10, 2019, recognized the World Mental Health Day (WMHD) 2019 by an advocacy event, educating staff and individuals on the dangers that follow mental illnesses such as suicide.



Staff of Banso Baptist Hospital educate the public on possible signs of mental illness for immediate care

**M**usa Ibrahim, Psychiatric Nurse said many people around us demonstrate the symptoms of mental illness such as depression, trauma, forgetfulness, anxiety, and mood disorders but not taken seriously, only to be discovered in helpless states. BBH Mental Health Department during celebrations staged a play that focused on forgetfulness, one of the most common forms of mental illness around us.

Yukin Odette, 24 years has been successfully treated from depression at BBH. "I was thinking a lot about my mother's health and my future. That afternoon I had a severe headache. I couldn't go to school the next morning. I sat indoors, wearing and changing several dresses, not knowing what I was doing".

"Grandma had not seen me pass in front of her door to school that morning and came looking for me. She found me inside my room and noticed I had two dresses on me. She noticed something was wrong and called my dad".

"My father took me to our home in Romajai, where I was first taken to the St. Elizabeth General Hospital, Shisong. The case persisted; everything looked irretentive and worthless to me. Many people avoided me," Odette said.

**She continued, "After a long struggle we were directed to BBH where I was admitted. The doctors accepted me. They took care of me like a child. From time to time they will pray with me, and encouraged me especially Aunty Josephine, and now I'm fine".**

Tah Josephine, Chaplain at the Mental Health Unit at BBH and Psycho-Spiritual Counselor to Odette told us how much Odette's mental condition affected her. "Odette had symptoms of delusion, insecurity, and disorders. She felt everyone was against her, plagued with a feeling of worthlessness, and sadness. "She sometimes called me her

God during therapy. Even though she kept away from almost everyone, she felt more secured with me, and smiled each time I opened the door to come in".

Josephine told us that Odette's condition was managed for over 6months until they got positive results. "I can testify Odette is a career woman. She has regained the stability she needs to pursue her dreams. Interestingly, she passed all her two public exams this year".

**Her family has been very supportive throughout, and was quick to rush her here, if not she would have been in a devastating condition," the Chaplain added.**

**Musa Ibrahim, said depression is mostly caused by genetics, (inherited from a parent), emotional or sexual abuse, conflicts, loss of a dear one, drug abuse, relationship problems, poverty, personal problems, and other stressful events.**

The Psychiatric Nurse remarked that "People with depression often have mood disorders, such as being sad, constant forgetfulness easily irritated, loss of interest, excessive loss of weight, inability to do work on time, feeling of hopelessness, and many others".

Reports say melancholic depression has proven to be the leading cause of suicides. This type of depression is manifested by a feeling of constant worry, hopelessness, isolation, and sleeplessness. Such patients see suicide or death as the only solution to their problems," the psychiatric nurse noted.

The good news is that mental illnesses such as depression, trauma, anxiety, and mood disorders, can be treated. Musa said if people could love more, think positively, free their minds from worries, do regular physical exercise, the global burden of mental illnesses will greatly reduce



**Yukin Odette, 24 years old gives her testimony at BBH after being treated of Depression at Banso Baptist Hospital. Odette is advising people out there that mental health conditions can be effectively treated in CBC Health Services Health Facilities. Odette said when family members notice their love ones behaving strange or abnormal, it is not for them to run away from such person and Isolate him/her. Such person should be rushed to the hospital because mental health conditions can be treated if well managed.**

## Four CBC Health Services Leaders Gain Skills at MDI Lagos Nigeria

Four CBC Health Services Leaders (an Administrator, a Program Analyst and two Supervisors of Nursing Services) have benefited from additional skills from the Management Development Institute (MDI) Program for managers and leaders in Healthcare Organizations. The MDI is a health leadership and management development program sponsored by Johnson and Johnson for countries in Africa in collaboration with Lagos Business School (LBS) and other top African Education partners.



Speaking to CBCHS Communication Unit, one of the participants, Mr. Wango Wabua Barnabas said the training, which ran from October 13-19, 2019 in Lagos, Nigeria had a very rich and intensive one week curriculum. The modules taught included: Leadership and Human Resource Management, Organisational Planning, Project Management, Social Marketing, Health Economics, Financial Management, Operations Management, Program Monitoring and Evaluation, Governance and Ethics, Health Information Systems, and Problem Solving and Decision Making.

The beneficiaries attest that their skills have been advanced and they are more equipped than ever before in putting to use the skills they acquired during the training to improve on the quality of services they offer throughout the CBC Health Services facilities.

The four leaders from the CBC Health Services were the only international participants as the rest of the 50 were from the host Country, Nigeria. At the end of the day, one of CBC Health Services participants, Mrs. Tamon Evelyn was voted as the Public Relations Officer (PRO) for the alumni of the 2019 batch.

The CBC Health Services Chief of administration and Finance (CAF), Mr. Warri Denis facilitated the travelling of the selected beneficiaries who were; Tamon Evelyn Mfiekwe (Supervisor of Nursing Services of Mbingo Baptist Hospital), Monjuh Anthony Vishi (Supervisor of Nursing Services of Mboppi Baptist Hospital Douala), Ndzi Samuel (Program Analyst of the Life Abundant Primary Healthcare Program in Bamkikai) and Wango W. Barnabas (Assistant Administrator/PRO at the CBCHS Central Administration).

## BBH Braving Hitches to Provide Patient Care Despite Instabilities

In spite of the socio-political crisis in the country with highly affected areas like the Kumbo-Bui Division, the Bansa Baptist Hospital (BBH) has been scaling through to keep the mission statement of the CBC Health Services of providing quality health care to all alive.

The Senior Administrator of the Hospital, Mr. Wirba Samuel Mbuyeh told the CBCHS Communication Unit that despite the challenges resulting from the instabilities in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of the country, the hospital staff and administration have remained resilient to providing patient care.

**He said, "Patients find it difficult to come to the hospital because of gunshots and frequent lockdowns. Most roads that link the hospital to neighboring towns have been blocked and many inhabitants have moved to other towns".**

The Senior Administrator revealed that roads from Ndu, Nkambe, Sabongari, and Foumban where a majority of patients to BBH come

from have all been blocked. Even the roads to surrounding villages linking to Kumbo have been blocked. Only bikes are allowed to navigate these roads which are highly unsecured and very costly. Mr. Wirba lamented that a road distance that usually costs 1.500 FCFA to get to the hospital now costs 25.000 FCFA, too expensive for most patients to pay.

Some patients die and pregnant women give birth on these roads even before they make it to the hospital. We manage to pay bikers huge sums of money to get to these areas and bring patients to the hospital," Mr. Wirba said.

BBH Assistant Administrator in-charge of Finance, Mr. Lukong Frankline confessed that the insecurities have also brought untold hardship to the local inhabitants now left with mostly the old people, most of them not able to pay hospital bills.

"We work closely with the churches and community heads that facilitate the payment

of some hospital bills," Mr. Lukong noted.

Talking about other challenges at this time, Mr. Lukong said the hospital has been facing unstable power supply requiring them to resort to other forms of energy such as a generator, which is too costly for clients, especially those on oxygen. He explained that when there is a power failure, we [they] switch to more expensive tank oxygen. To avoid using the giant generator that is costly to run, Mr. Lukong revealed that they have acquired smaller generators for us [them] in some key departments of the hospital to limit fuel consumption.

The BBH Administration is thankful to God that despite the insecurities surrounding the hospital environment, no patient or staff has ever been killed or injured by any stray bullet. At the time of this report, reasonable calmness had regained in the hospital environment and the staff is determined to provide quality care to all who need it as an expression of Christ's Love.

# BBH Women Health Program Giving Quality Health to Women Amidst Adversities

The Women Health Program (WHP) at Bansa Baptist Hospital (BBH) is leaving no stone unturned in providing health care to women in the Bui Division despite the challenges posed by the ongoing crisis. Fakeh Juliet Nfor, Coordinator of the Women Health Program (WHP) at BBH says the department has witnessed an increasing number of women interested in cervical and breast cancer screening. "In August this year we received close to 120 women who turned out for screening compared to 25 in February," she rejoiced.

Reports say the program launched campaigns for cervical and breast cancer screenings in communities and churches and received impressive turnouts. According to Fakeh, the women were happy to be educated about cancers and said they have been waiting for us. Many of them came, testified and appreciated the difference they

experienced. Health conditions like breast cancer are common for women, but the women's health expert says it can also affect men.

During such campaigns, screening cost is reduced from 3000FCFA to 2000FCFA. The program intends to set up mobile clinics soon to enable them to reach out to more women in the communities.

Women's health is much talked about, but there is a need for intentional actions especially against Non- communicable diseases like breast cancer and cervical cancer. In this regard, the CBC Health Services is setting a significant pace in fighting against these diseases to ensure better health for women in Cameroon. Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women both in the developed and less developed world. WHO says about 500,000 women die every year due to breast cancer.

Although breast cancer is thought to be a disease of the developed world, almost 50% of breast cancer cases and 58% of deaths occur in less developed countries like Cameroon.

The risk factors for breast cancer include smoking, obesity, gender, physical inactivity, and many others. Meanwhile, HIV positive pregnant women and women with multiple sexual partners are 5 times higher risk of developing cervical cancer.

Health campaigners like the American Cancer Society say regular physical exercise, regular screening, and other preventive measures are the best methods of preventing breast and cervical cancers.

## Prayer Concerns

- 1.Thank God for sustaining us as individuals and as an organization even in the midst of intense challenges.
- 2.Pray for Cameroon.

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