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CBM International donates COVID-19 Prevention Kits to CBCHS Facilities ...Cont Pg7

IN THIS ISSUE
CBCHS making In-roads into Far North Region .....Pg 2
Nursing and Midwifery is not a business; it’s a call....Pg 4
SEEPD, Partners embark on Campaign to promote Inclusive Response to COVID-19 ...Pg 8

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BIBLE VERSE
"Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready; after that, build your house". Proverbs 24:27 (NIV).

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CBCHS making In-roads into Far North Region

Maroua, the capital city of the Far North region is the latest destination where the CBC Health Services’ train carrying Christ’s love via the provision of compassionate care has landed. At a time when many NGOs in the Northwest and Southwest regions are breaking under the weight of the ongoing armed conflict, God is opening a wider door to the CBCHS into yet another crisis-stricken region of the country. The Far North has been plagued by the infamous Boko Haram onslights for about five years now. God knows how to protect his own, so there is no reason to panic!

In the words of Prof. Tih Pius Muffih, Director of Health Services (DHS), “The hospital we are receiving in Maroua is a gift!”

As the story goes, the Medical Centers for West Africa – better known in French as the Centre Médicaux de L’Afrique de L’Ouest (CMAO) was created as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) by missionaries from the USA and registered as a foreign Association with legal status in Cameroon in 1993. It officially started operating in 1994 to make healthcare services accessible to the inhabitants of the Far North region of Cameroon who were highly underserved.

Before the Boko Haram (BH) insurgency broke out and intensified CMAO provided healthcare services via its facility in Meskine and also supported a Leprosy village and primary school - both of which started in the locality in 1952 and 2014 respectively.

The Meskine is a health area in the Extreme North of Cameroon under the Maroua I, Health District with a population estimated at 28,120 (2017). The hospital has a 125-bed capacity, 130 staff, and currently provides only basic healthcare services. Before the BH insurgency intensified in the area, Meskine hospital served as a major referral hospital in the region and to neighboring countries such as Chad, Central Africa, and Sudan. By 2016 the facility received in total 1,339 pregnant women and registered 1,317 live births.

However, the hospital’s operational capacity and performance began to drop significantly following the Boko Haram insurgency that broke out in the region. As for now, its structures (covering three out of the twelve hectares of total hospital land) are in an advanced state of dilapidation. In 2014, the missionaries decided to leave the region as a result of increasing insecurity resulting from the BH activities and to transfer the facility to local management. Initially, the missionaries used indigenous church leaders to ensure the management of the hospital. As this approach did not prevent the hospital from recording low performance, the missionaries then decided to completely transfer the facility to local ownership – preferably to a credible indigenous faith-based organization.

Late 2019, the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services (CBCHS) was approached to take over the management of Meskine Hospital. In January of 2020, transfer to the CBCHS began while in the same period, CBCHS management also started exploring ways to upgrade and revitalize the facility. An Administrative, technical, and clinical mission was carried out in the hospital to assess the facility which is now called Meskine Baptist Hospital, Maroua (MBHM). During this assessment mission, CBCHS’s staff reviewed the hospital management, clinical operations, the state of infrastructures, and equipment. The assessment revealed critical gaps in staffing, management systems, equipment, and infrastructure that require urgent corrective measures. If adequately upgraded MBHM will be able to deliver services in alignment with global standards and with the country’s Health Sector Strategy.

The first visit took place on December 27, 2019. The Director of Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih, the CBC Director of Evangelism and Missions, Rev. Dr. Paul Wose Mokake, the Chief Medical Officer of Mbingo Baptist Hospital, Dr. Nora Talla and the Administrator of Etoug-Ebe Baptist Hospital Yaounde, Mr. Yongwa Zacccs made the inaugural visit. This team received the hospital and took control effective January 1, 2020.

The second visit took place in stages with the arrival of various teams from February 28 through March 3, 2020. Messrs Yongwa Zacccs and Nformi Nickson were the first to arrive followed later on by Prof. Tih Pius, Chiambah Abraham, Toh Orlando, Kinen Emmanuel, and Fombe Justin. This technical and clinical team observed and noted what to applaud and maintain and what to fix in the new hospital to match up with CBCHS standards of care and operations.

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Structure hosting Meskine Baptist Hospital

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Acosted, Messrs Nfomi Nickson and Yongwa Zaccs confided to CBCHS Communication Unit in Yaounde shortly after arrival from Maroua that the CBCHS is going to the Far North region on prepared grounds. They observed that the new CBC hospital in Maroua will serve as a springboard to invade the northern part of Cameroon. The hospital will give more visibility to CBC churches in that part of the country that quite often considers mushroom churches as sects, stemming from the bad example portrayed to the people before by some exploitative NGOs.

Despite the huge infrastructure in place, the working team observed the need for improvement by renovating and remodeling to accommodate specialized services such as eye, dental, surgery, etc, which are absent for the moment. The existing staff is very cooperative and welcoming. There is a need to integrate the staff as CBCHS workers and redefine the administrative structure for better coordination.

At the time of this report, one of the indigenous doctors at the hospital in Maroua was gaining orientation in CBCHS hospitals in Mboppi, Nkwen, and Mbingo.

The Management and staff of the CBC Health Board Pension Plan (HBPP) have been congratulated for working hard to sustain the scheme at a moment when many financial organizations are almost folding up under the weight of the deepening economic and socio-political crisis in the country. HBPP Board Chairman and Director of Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih made the commendation on June 11 in Bamenda during the Annual Board Meeting for 2020.

Tih on behalf of the HBPP Board noted with satisfaction the statistical evolution for 2019 as a clear indication that the staff has been working hard to grow the scheme from a mustard seed into a dependable structure. In 2019, the over 3000 clients of HBPP improved in their contributions by 8 percent, loan evolution increased by 18 percent and clientele grew from 3.165 in 2018 to 3.227 in 2019 representing 2 percent.

Tih wished he was still younger and entering service to make better use of the scheme whose objective is to accompany CBCHS staff to prepare for retirement without stress by saving and receiving good loans to enable them to carry out capital projects such as building a house. On this premise, the Board chairman challenged delegates to the HBPP Board to encourage those staff who are still dragging their feet to enroll and take advantage of their membership. He regretted the absence of delegates from Banso and Mbingo Baptist Hospitals who could not attend due to circumstances beyond their control.

In his report, HBPP Manager, Mr. Kwieh Elvis Mboundsa announced that the scheme realized 80 percent of the nine goals set in 2019. “The present balance sheet is a testimony of the path covered over the years. Today, the balance sheet of the scheme is more stable and keeps improving,” Elvis noted to the satisfaction of the Board.

The HBPP Manager looks up with optimism to administration and clients to embark on the 10 goals set out for 2021. These include among others, timely disbursement of cash on approved receipts, granting of eligible loans by 100 percent, increase membership by 12 percent, intensify education and sensitization through training programs and periodic visits to the field and work with management to increase office space among others.

It should be recalled that the HBPP is a common initiative banking structure within the Health Services of the Cameroon Baptist Convention, showcasing the fundamental principle of Christian values in the banking sector. The scheme has over the years nurtured and matured her clients, who are drawn from all the levels of the CBCHS, economically and socially. HBPP currently has five staff to serve her clientele spread in all the CBCHS institutions in Cameroon.

Delegates to the HBPP Board are lead staff representatives from CBCHS major stations, representatives of medical doctors, Hospital Administrators and bursars, the Internal Auditor, the Personnel Manager, the Chief of Administration and Finance, and the Director of Health Services. The Board validates the activities of the management team, takes a decision for implementation by the management team, and approves goals for the scheme. The mandate of Board members is 4 years renewable.
Nurses and midwives of Nkwen Baptist Health Centre have recommitted themselves to be symbols of hope to patients. The commitment was stated on June 18, 2020, a day set aside by the facility to mark the International Day of Nurses and Midwives.

Chimi Emmerencia, Supervisor of Nursing Services (SNS) in an elaborate charge, urged nurses and midwives to use every workday as an opportunity to demonstrate love and care for every one of their patients. “Be available every minute you can. Being around with your tenderness, patience and touch greatly reassures the patient. Your minute by minute presence or contact with patients, your care and concern make you the nurses the veritable Florence Nightingale of yesterday, today and tomorrow,” admonished Mrs. Chimi, who herself is a nurse par excellence.

She further encouraged her peers to be of good cheer and be permanently on their feet in the face of the coronavirus, the killer-pandemic of the time. “You are at the center of every solution to a wide range of health challenges staring the world to its face today,” added Mrs. Chimi.

Expounding on the nurses’ pledge, Mrs. Nana Philippa, Nurse-In-charge of Burkitt’s lymphoma, said nurses must pay particular attention to confidentiality as regards patients’ health information; they should commit to constant learning and ready to question any procedure, drug administration or treatment protocols when in doubt if they want to serve faithfully.

The International Day of Nurses and Midwives was instituted by the International Council of Nurses way back in 1974. The day is also in observance of the 120th anniversary of the International Council Nurses and the 200th birthday of the founder of modern nursing, Florence Nightingale.

Addressing the cream of nurses, the Director of Health Services (DHS), Prof. Tih Pius Muffih called on them to use their day to reflect on the pledge and call to duty they took upon leaving the nursing school. “Nurses [you] are very important, they [you] are front liners. When one comes to the hospital the first person they want to meet and see is you. You are the pillars of our health system. Through your hands, one comes to the world and in your hands, they depart. You are heroes indeed,” said Prof Tih.

The DHS used the opportunity to call on nurses of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services, in general, to be cautious of infectious diseases and take precautions; especially using protective gear constantly. “Do not be careless with your lives. If you are not there our services will suffer. Therefore, amongst yourselves prevent, amongst your patients prevent, and in the general public prevent. Let prevention be your watchword,” cautioned the public health expert.

On his part, Personnel Manager of CBCHS, Mr. Ndosak George entreated the nurses to continue to brighten the corners where they are with exemplary health care. “The world is looking for nurses now more than ever. In the face of COVID-19 where everyone is vulnerable, the world is looking up to the nurse as a source of hope and health, so be that nurse! Be committed to your task, fight COVID-19 and make the distinction so the world will know that the CBC Health Services’ nurse even in crisis is different,” he said.

The Nurses and Midwives’ day at Nkwen Baptist Health Centre was an event of its kind. The nursing force clad in their white gowns and scrubs, through sketches and academic papers, reflected and renewed their faith in best Nursing and Midwifery practices.
CBCHS Resource Center of Excellence Mvan, Yaounde Provisionally Received

The doors of the Rest House Block of the CBC Health Services Resource Center of Excellence Mvan, Yaounde have been officially opened. The Director of CBC Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih received the facility on June 9, 2020, from the contracting company, ESSOKA in the presence of a host of administrative and technical staff, and other visitors.

The reception ceremony comprised of a tour and a video projection of the facility, the signing of the provisional reception document as well as the handing over of the keys of the facility.

Speaking during the ceremony, Prof Tih Pius thanked the entire team members for supporting the project. He said the key to the rest house is a symbol which indicates that anyone who visits the facility will be blessed.

For his part, the team leader of the ESSOKA Group, Ndukong Amos said, “While working with the CBCHS within the 5 past years, we’ve learned that work is not just business but a ministry and service to humanity. The ESSOKA Group has acquired added value working with the Health Services which goes beyond money and we wish that other privileges of this nature be given to us. In a nutshell, we are thankful to God for putting us in contact with the CBCHS. It has been a very cordial relationship. ”

Going by the Assistant Administrator of the CBCHS Resource Center of Excellence Mvan, Mr. Kadzem Claude, the rest house will provide an opportunity to host at least 30 persons and the multi-purpose halls 200 persons respectively.

He elaborated that the architectural jewel encompasses: the VIP rooms with a kitchenette and a high standard semi VIP rooms. The rest house also comprises a floor for offices that are available for rent to other organizations that are noted for reputable work in the country.

Situated at Ndam youth in the Mvan neighborhood, Yaounde, the CBCHS-owned rest house has 31 well-furnished rooms, 18 offices, multi-purpose halls comprising of quality sound systems, video projectors, security cameras, flat-screen TVs and standard furniture. The four-floor building also has two levels of parking space that can contain at least 30 vehicles.

CBC Health Services Shines Light on Sickle Cell Anemia

The Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services has shone the light on Sickle Cell Anemia, to bring to the fore, knowledge and understanding of the disease as well as challenges experienced by parents, families, and caregivers. This was during a ceremony on June 26, 2020, to make this year’s Sickle Cell Awareness Day at Nkwen Baptist Health Centre (NBHC).

Speaking at the event, Mrs. Chimi Emerencia, Supervisor of Nursing Services at NBHC, called on parents and caregivers to respect all pieces of advice and instructions dished out by health personnel at the facility’s Sickle Cell Clinic, on keeping sufferers healthy, to live a better quality of life. “If they say the [your] children should drink much water during the day, encourage them to do so. Be supportive of them; in their education support them, in their feeding patterns support them and in their day to day life support them,” advised Mrs. Chimi.
The 2020 Sickle Awareness Day at NBHC saw the distribution of COVID-19 Prevention kits to Sicklers now termed, ‘Warriors’ to combat the coronavirus diseases. The kits were donated by the Joy2Endure Foundation.

Jennifer Mukenyu, representative of Joy2Endure Foundation says our primary reason for donating these prevention kits is because people living with sickle cell anemia are one of the high-risk groups, which may get severely sick if they contract COVID-19. “This donation is to help us [warriors] to stay safe,” adds Jennifer, being a warrior herself.

Joy2Endure Foundation is an organization with the mandate of raising awareness about sickle cell anemia and helping warriors live a better quality of life. It is worth mentioning that the establishment was founded by Arrey Echi, a sickle cell warrior too.

The donated COVID-19 prevention kits comprised of masks, alcohol-based hand rubs, and folic acid.

Sickle cell Anemia (SCA) is a heritable genetic and sometimes fatal disease that causes red blood cell disorder. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Sickle Cell is one of the main causes of premature death amongst children under the age of five in various African countries. In Cameroon, it is a public health challenge and health experts say education is key in curbing the disease.

The burden of Sickle Cell Anemia is borne by the entire family, Dora Wirba, mother of five says “I almost when into a trance when my fifth child was diagnosed with sickle cell anemia. I felt frustrated and asked a lot of questions. However, when my husband and I did a sickle cell screen and found to be carriers, we had no choice but to stick to health advice, to help our daughter,” detailed Dora.

Today, having adhered to health advice from the Sickle Cell Clinic at NBHC, where her five-year-old comes for monthly checks, Dora with a broad smile on, says my daughter is fine. Sickle Cell is like any other disease. I want to thank the nurses, doctors, and nutrition counselors who have to help me to stand by my daughter with courage.

Worthy of note is the fact that Dora’s daughter was diagnosed with sickle cell anemia when she was barely seven months old. Today, aged five, and running around at the clinic is telling how much support the family has given her. “I make sure she feeds well, take in enough fluids in the day and honour her rendezvous to the clinic always,” stressed Dora.

World Sickle Cell Day is a United Nation’s recognised day to raise awareness of sickle cell at the national and international levels. The United Nations General Assembly on December 22, 2008 adopted a resolution that recognises sickle cell disease as a public health problem and “one of the world’s foremost genetic diseases.”

Eight Councils renew Commitment to foster Inclusive Development in their Municipalities

Eight (8) Councils; seven in the Northwest and one in the West Region have renewed their commitments with the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services to promote disability and inclusive development in their different municipalities. The Memoranda of Understanding was signed on June 12, 2020, at the Baptist Center Nkwen Bamenda after both parties carefully studied and reviewed the documents.

The signing of the MoU was marked by a 3-day workshop organized by the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SEEPD) program for Mayors and Secretary Generals of Bamenda City, Bamenda I, II, III, Tubah, Fundong, Santa, Jakiri, Magba, Bafut and Nkambe Councils. The workshop took place under the theme, “Leave No-one Behind”.

Mue Peter Ngha, CBM Director for West and Central Africa facilitated the 3-day workshop, whose concept was new to many of the participants. This background knowledge necessitated the selected Councils to sign the MoU with an already mapped out implementation strategy from the workshop. Like other documents signed sometimes and kept under the cupboard, the Mayors who signed on behalf of their Councils noted that inclusive development is the only way to go in development given that they have to move along with everyone. They have thus committed themselves to review their action plans to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.

It was on this hopeful note that the Director of CBC Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih pledged the willingness and readiness of the CBC Health Services in supporting the Councils to implement their responsibilities stated on the MoU.

Earlier at the start of the workshop, Prof. Tih applauded the Mayors for partnering with the CBC Health Services in its vision of promoting disability and inclusive development. He drew their attention to the fact that the focus of the SEEPD program has changed over the years and the present phase is seeking ways to enhance capacities of strategy development actors to enable them to build their communities to accommodate everyone.
Speaking at the close of the workshop, the Regional Delegate of Decentralization and Local Governance who presided over the opening of the workshop and the signing ceremony, applauded the Australian Aid and CBM for supporting the Government of Cameroon to implement inclusive development at all levels. Dr. Essimo Sylvia appreciated the CBC Health Services for imparting useful knowledge on the Mayors which will go a long way to boost their development plans. She challenged the Mayors to effectively implement the MoU and provide her with updates on the implementation given that inclusion is part of the strategic focus of her Delegation.

The workshop has come and gone, MoU has been signed, commitments have been made, but all of these will only be evident when persons with disabilities experience inclusion at different development actions in their communities.

It should be noted that the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services was signing the MoU with Councils for the second time, thanks to support from Australian Aid. In the first phase of the SEEPD program, she successfully worked with 21 Councils in the Northwest Region.

Staff of the Services for Persons with Disabilities (SPD) program and some projects under it are expected to offer quality services that promote Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID). For 2 days, 29 staff were trained on how to mainstream disability in their work in a capacity building workshop organized by the Socio Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SEEPD) program with funds from Australian Aid. The workshop, which took place in Bafoussam from June 18-19, 2020, had as purpose to critically reflect on the concept, barriers, and strategies for Community Inclusive Development.

Opening the workshop, the SPD Coordinator, Awa Jacques Chirac explained that there has been a shift to CBID and as development workers, there needed to build the capacity of staff so that they are equipped to render better services as they work with persons with disabilities and stakeholders.

During the workshop, participants were schooled on the evolution of inclusion which started from persons with disabilities being kept in special settings to integration where they are not included from the beginning of development to mainstreaming and now the shift to inclusion which is where advocates are focusing.

The facilitator, Mrs. Agho Glory called on the participants to ensure that they work and preach the inclusion of persons with disabilities. “It is the dream of the disability community to one day have a society where everyone in the community is considered at the beginning of every process,” she reiterated. Participants were also equipped with legal tools that will enable them to carry out advocacy with and for persons with disabilities as they do their work.

The workshop allowed staff to share their experiences and exchange ideas on the challenges they face in the community and the best ways in which these can be handled.

At the end of the workshop, participants were challenged to facilitate social change in the community because community members already have a solution.

This was the third workshop funded by Australian Aid in the last two months to build the capacities of stakeholders. The series of workshops began with the training of CBC Health Services Administrators, and another one for Councils and NGOs and lastly the one for staff. The expectation is that these stakeholders are well equipped to drive across the concept of CBID in their work so that persons with disabilities are included in development actions.

CBM International has through the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SEEPD) Program donated emergency kits to 7 health facilities of the CBC Health Services (CBCHS) worth over 16 million fcfa. The objective of the gesture is to collaborate with the CBCHS in providing an inclusive response to COVID-19.

The distribution exercise in some of the benefiting facilities wrapped off on May 29, 2020, with the handing over of the kits to Mbingo and Banso Baptist Hospitals and Nkwen Baptist Health Center. The handing over ceremony took place at Baptist Center Nkwen Bamenda at the close of the CBCHS’ Goals and Budget meeting. Presiding over the event, the Director of CBCHS, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih commended CBM for assisting CBCHS in the fight against COVID-19. He called on the health facilities to use the kits judiciously to protect staff and patients.
The distribution of the items came on the heels of a 3-day workshop organized by the SEEPD program with funds from CBM International for Trainers on Infection Prevention and Control and WASH to fight COVID-19. The participants made of doctors and health care providers were selected from the CBCHS facilities.

At the start of the workshop, the Chief of Administration and Finance applauded CBM International for supporting the CBCHS in her striving to promote inclusive response to COVID-19. Mr. Warri Denis emphasized that the CBCHS is intentional in ensuring that health care providers offer inclusive services that take into consideration the needs of persons with disabilities.

The participants trained are expected to train their colleagues back in their different health facilities to enable them to provide safe and holistic health care to all clients. The participants were unanimous that they have acquired knowledge that will enable them to improve on service delivery.

It should be noted that since the outbreak of COVID-19, CBM International has been intentional in supporting the CBCHS to ensure the safety of staff and patients.

Some partner Councils of the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SEEPD) program of the CBC Health Services in Mezam Division have been schooled on strategies to ensure the promotion of campaign on the inclusive response to COVID-19. The Australian Aid sponsored the one day workshop that held recently at the Baptist Center Nkwen, Bamenda in the North West Region of Cameroon.

The SEEPD program partnered with the Coordinating Unit of Association of Persons with Disabilities (CUAPWD) to organize the workshop as a way of strengthening systems to promote inclusion.

During the workshop, one of the main facilitators and Coordinator of the CUAPWD, Mr. Nyincho Samuel led a session during which participants identified challenges that persons with disabilities face during the COVID-19 pandemic such as non-access to information, and limited access to humanitarian aid amongst others. As someone who wears the shoes by living with visual impairment, Mr. Nyincho Samuel called on Councils to mainstream disability in their COVID-19 response adding that the Councils have a great responsibility to play. Participants also had the opportunity to refresh their memories on Disability and Inclusive Development.

The workshop provided an opportunity for CUAPWD to strengthen its partnership with the Councils. Strategies such as awareness-raising on the prevention to COVID-19 were mapped out amongst other measures to be implemented in the different Council areas. The Council stakeholders present appreciated the organizers for drawing their attention to the needs of persons with disabilities which have often been missed out.

At the close of the workshop, the SEEPD Program Manager, Awa Jacques Chirac commended the Councils for their availability in collaborating with the CBC Health Services to mainstream disabilities in their municipalities.

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The workshop was preceded by a Press Conference organized by CUAPWD in partnership with the SEEPD program which took place at the CUAPWD office. The event brought together over 10 media practitioners from private and community media organs. CUAPWD President, Chick Sama, Coordinator, Nyincho Samuel, and Program Manager, Ndi Veronica, and a representative of the SEEPD program granted an hour press conference. They decreed the fact that persons with disabilities do not have access to information which makes them vulnerable to the deadly Coronavirus, and the fact that humanitarian interventions are not extended to many of them amongst others.

According to Chick Sama, the CBC Health Services has stood with persons with disabilities during the pandemic by making information accessible to them, and donating kits amongst other inclusive actions. The media men and women were thus called upon to use their pens and microphones to draw the attention of stakeholders and the public to the needs of persons with disabilities, especially during this time of the pandemic.

SEEPD, Partners embark on Campaign to promote Inclusive Response to COVID-19

The Administrator of MBH, Mr. Nji Richard Nkeh noted with thanks that the items will greatly help the hospital at a time like this when such items are either expensive or scarce to get. Like him, Administrators of the other health facilities, in the course of the distribution exercise, expressed similar gratitude to CBM International for the laudable gesture. The items distributed consisted of infrared thermometers, hand sanitizers, liquid soap, buckets, disposable gowns, and gloves amongst others. On behalf of the Bamenda City Council (BCC) Mayor, the DHS also handed food items to MBH donated by the Council.

SEEPD PM commends Councils for mainstreaming disability

The Health Services Chronicle
EDID Program Pays Courtesy Call to Partner Organizations

The EDID (Empowerment Disability Inclusive Development) Program has paid a courtesy call to all her Partner organizations (POs) in the West Region of Cameroon. The 4-day-visit from May 26-30, 2020 was to accompany POs in carrying out advocacy, introduce them to new reporting tools as well as review annual plans implemented amidst COVID-19.

During the visit, a multidisciplinary team from the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services’ EDID Program paid particular attention to how the POs were responding to the challenges posed by COVID-19.

Some of the response measures currently being implemented by the POs to limit the spread of the Coronavirus range from the provision of faucet-adapted-buckets, Savon, and hand sanitizers to intensify sensitization and education with the use of brochures, my hero booklet, and flyers.

Thus far, over 750 children with disabilities and their families have been educated and supported to fight COVID-19 with funds from the Liliane foundation through EDID Program. It is worth noting that as the Liliane Foundation Strategic Partner Organization (SPO), the EDID program has the mandate to carry out supervision and monitoring visits to her POs regularly.

On the sidelines of the visit, the EDID team made a stopover at Bafoussam 1, Foumban, and Balachi Councils. In the course of the advocacy meetings, the mayors expressed readiness to collaborate with the EDID program in mainstreaming disability in all development efforts. Focal persons were assigned to work with the EDID team to formalize the partnerships through a Memorandum of Understanding.

The POs local resources mobilization and advocacy plans were also reviewed and updated. Bafoussam Baptist Health Center, West Regional Delegation of Social Affairs, Filles de la Charite in Foumban and Choose Life Generation in Bangang were the POs visited.

Blood Donors of Nkwen Celebrated for ‘Precious Gift’

Nkwen Baptist Health Centre (NBHC) has thanked Blood Donors for regularly donating blood to the facility’s blood bank, which goes a long way to save the lives of people in life-threatening situations and emergencies. The Donors were recognized during a come together at NBHC on Saturday, June 13, 2020, as part of commemorative activities for the 2020 World Blood Donor Day.

In the heated discussions at the meeting, the Donors charted out strategies to encourage other people to come on board and donate blood freely and regularly. One of the strategies was to encourage every family member of the one receiving the blood to see the need to donate as well.

NBHC has a functional Blood Donor Association with a membership of 55 through whom the lives of many have been saved by their gift of blood.

Chongwain Stella, Laboratory Technician said the donations made to the blood bank of NBHC are often transfused immediately due to high demand. “At the start of the Association in May 2019, only 15-pints of blood were transfused in a month. But today as of June 2020, 93-pints of blood are transfused,” Stella revealed.

NBHC’s call on others to come on board the ‘Blood donation train’ was in perfect symphony with the World Blood Donor Day’s call to action for governments, national health authorities and national blood transfusion services to provide adequate resources and put in place systems and infrastructure to increase the collection of blood from voluntary, unpaid blood donors.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the “adequate supply of blood and blood products can only be assured through regular blood donations, by voluntary unpaid blood donors. The emphasis on unpaid donors is hinged on the fact that blood is a universal need that cannot be produced in any laboratory; hence, donors cannot be adequately compensated for this life gift.”

NBHC’s Blood Donor Association restate commitment to donate safe blood for all

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During the meeting, Mr. Kangong Joce, NBHC’s Administrator said the demand for blood in the health center is on the increase due to in-patient admissions and the increasing number of surgeries. “Given this need, we must be on wait to donate as often as we can. We do not want our caregivers to go through the stress of going about looking for a donor when their loved ones require a transfusion,” stressed the Administrator who is also a Donor.

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The Health Services Chronicle
All against COVID-19 at BHM

Like in all other CBCHS institutions, all hands are on deck at Baptist Hospital Mutengene (BHM) to prevent the wide spread of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. The Administrator, Mr. Loke Samuel acknowledged receipt of a consignment of hygienic kits in the fight against COVID-19 recently from CBM Cameroon via the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SEEPD) program. The items included amongst others hand gel and masks.

Similarly, the hospital received water buckets from the government. Through the initiative of the Technical Services Department, some special foot-operated machines have been fabricated locally for water and liquid soap for handwashing. Water points with soap have been installed in every strategic location of the hospital, for which the Administrator encourages both staff and clients not to ignore as a way of respecting WHO and government guidelines to bar the transmission of COVID-19 pandemic.

NIP contributing to the health of Malnourished Children

The Nutrition Improvement Program (NIP) in BHM is upbeat in making efforts to reviving the poor health of malnourished children despite the challenges compounded by the outbreak of the COVID-19. Reports say the program received a consignment of items from UNICEF in May to support malnourished children identified and assessed in the department. These included: pediatric foods such as plumpy nuts, parameters as muac tapes, electronic scale, stadiometer (for measuring height), and drugs.

Following a recommendation from the Performance-Based Financing (PBF) initiative, a separate room has been set up at the OPD where malnourished children from 0 to 5 years are assessed before they are given the support.

Equally, the five NIP staff who are at BHM led by Tamfu Florence, assess children with Burkitt Lymphoma and prepare food for their nutrition as well as teach the parents of these children to be able to continue in the preparation of this food back home. The NIP staff also give health talks at the ANC and Infant Welfare Clinic on proper hygiene and feeding as their way of supporting the hospital in her COVID-19 drive.

Quizzed on their challenges, the NIP staff were unanimous that the outbreak of the Coronavirus has greatly limited the proper assessment of poor women. She says it is difficult to maintain social distance with over 100 women during ANC and IWC. This is because they are more impatient to follow instructions. Although they put on their masks, they fail to understand that their babies don’t also put on masks and risk contracting the COVID-19 when they are not patient to keep a social distance. Despite this challenge, the HOD assures that all is going on well at BHM PMTCT department.

Social Services making Impact in Difficult Moments

The Social Services department of the CBC Health Services is seeking new avenues of acquiring assistance to needy and social cases that are increasingly on the rise in the current socio-political climate in the Northwest and Southwest regions. The weak social climate is further compounded by the advent of the deadly COVID-19.

The department’s Supervisor, Mrs. Kyota Therese revealed that the Service is now approaching international and local NGOs with similar objectives to support some of the needy cases that come to the One-Stop-Shop located in BHM. The One-Stop-Shop provides social and para-legal services almost free of charge to clients who suffer undue abuses. The social workers mentor community agents on lessons to create awareness in the community via churches, schools, and social gatherings under normal circumstances.

In other news, the Social Services department is impacting the lives of female staff of the CBCHS through the organization of Confident Women Conferences. Quizzed, the Social Services Supervisor told CBCHS Communication Unit that the Conferences have been paying off based on the testimonies from the participants including some female doctors, nurses, and social workers who are equally tempted and rent social context requires the need for more training with clear career development.

BHM Eye Department

BHM eye department has continued to serve as a practicum site for eye nurses on training at the Baptist Training School for Health Personnel (BTSHP) Banso. At the time of this report, two groups of students were on an internship at the department. Six Assistant Ophthalmic Medical Assistants (AOMA) practiced from April to June 30, 2020, while five Optometry Assistants will stay from May 18 to July 31, 2020.

The head of the department, Mr. Fai Samuel noted that the presence of the students is a booster to the staffing situation but regretted the absence of a resident ophthalmologist to conduct surgeries. He noted with dismay that no surgery has taken place since March due to blocked roads that could not enable the visiting ophthalmologist from BBH, Dr. Beri Ngong to come out of Kumbo to attend to planned surgery session at BHM. Despite this setback, the HOD assured that all other activities at the department are faring on well.

The Social Services Supervisor said the current social context requires the need for more social workers who are equally tempted and needed by emerging NGOs. On this score, she is advocating for better treatment of the social workers in service with the CBCHS.

BHM Dental Department

The head of the department, Moyeh Mercy says despite the Coronavirus challenge, patients are still accessing dental services in good numbers. She reports that the department now sees an average of over 200 clients per month down from about 300 before the pandemic. Since October 2019, Dr. Ewang Abraham took up services to boost the number of operating staff.
The Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services’ (CBCHS) Central Pharmacy under the leadership of Dr. Ngah Edward Ndze is responsible for the pharmaceutical supply chain that provides health commodities to over 60 healthcare institutions run by the CBCHS spread across 8 of the 10 regions of Cameroon including 8 hospitals, 25 Integrated Health Centers, 15 Health Centers, and over 20 Primary Healthcare units. Its activities meet the health needs of especially the underserved populations.

Since 2012, the CBCHS attends to over 1.2 million patients yearly and reaches out to various communities through its numerous community-based initiatives. Apart from pharmaceutical supply chain activities, the Central Pharmacy is also involved in the manufacture of infusions, sanitary products (like hand sanitizer, soaps, liquid detergent, and disinfectants), and other medicines. Other support services include the fabric workshop that engages the production of essential hospital needs.

Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic the CBCHS Central Pharmacy has stood actively in contributing to the fight to ensure that the health care workforce is safe while battling the scourge and reaching out to communities with relevant products to help prevent the spread of the virus. Measures have included the following:

1. Significantly stepping up the production capacity of alcohol-based hand sanitizing gel and alcohol hand rub from 320L and 150L per month to 4,000L and 2,000L per month respectively within the last 3 months.
2. Stepping up the production capacity of liquid soap and liquid detergent to ensure availability, accessibility, and affordability for both the CBCHS workforce and the wider public, promoting regular handwashing habits.
3. The improved production capacity of chlorine-based disinfectant (bleach) for cleaning and decontaminating surfaces especially in health care facilities to limit the chances of spreading the virus.
4. Designing, sewing, and distribution of face masks for use.
5. Working hard to secure and ensure regular supply of sufficient stock of the PPEs (gloves, surgical masks, goggles, disposable wears, etc.) for the frontline staff.
6. Designing and preparing emergency kits to ensure prompt response where there is an urgent need.
7. Capacity building seminars for supply chain staff to ensure an appropriate response in case of need and on infection prevention measures.

Going by the above measures, the CP General Manager adds, “We continue to look for ways to improve our response to the pandemic through networking with our partners both within and without the country and exchange of information to ensure our readiness. Despite logistics challenges due to limited movement and difficulties receiving supplies from overseas, the CBCHS Central Pharmacy is leaving its mark in the response to this pandemic”. He notes that suggestions, initiatives, and partnerships to foster and or improve the response will be welcome.

The Non Sterile Unit of CP is at the center of the massive production of hand sanitizer, which is very much in need in the fight against the Coronavirus. The Unit Manager, Gwagsi Faith says the challenge is huge for the 5 staff at the Unit to meet up with the high demand given that all their processes are done manually. She said the Unit urgently needs machines for mixing, bottling, and labeling of the product.

In a similar dimension, the CP Tailoring Workshop is buried into the production of face masks. The Workshop head, Fabian revealed that the 5 tailors currently on board are not sufficient to meet up with the demand for face masks from CBCHS institutions, individuals, and other organizations and groups. They produce an average of 300 face masks per day.

Quizzed on the quality of the face masks, Fabian assured with optimism that the terga material they use is durable and well tested. Moreover, they double the material such that transmission is impossible if the mask is properly put on. Some of the external groups that have ordered and received face masks from CP include Yamba Community – 2000 masks, and Babanki Community – 1500 masks, individual families, organizations such as the EDID Program, and the HIV Free project.
PRAYER CONCERNS

Thank God immensely for sustaining and expanding the CBC Health Services even in times of crisis to prove that He is truly the God of the Church.

Thank God for the visionary leadership and dedicated staff in place to carry the vision and mission of the CBCHS in difficult times and into difficult places.

Particularly pray for God’s leadership, wisdom, and provision as the CBC makes in-roads into the Far North region of Cameroon.

Pray for the world that is going through a serious health crisis in the face of the novel Coronavirus. Pray that people would be disciplined to abide to the safety measures outlined by WHO and Governments around the world.

HOW TO USE HAND SANITIZER

1. Dispense the hand sanitizer on your palms.
2. Rub well over palms, back of hands and fingernails until dry.
3. Waterless use for refreshingly clean hands.

CP steps up Production of Infusion Fluids

The CBCHS Central Pharmacy (CP) has commenced using the Clean Room for the production of sterile products such as infusion fluids (IVs) and eye drops for her hospitals and health centers. CP General Manager, Pharmacist Ngah Edward says the trial phase, which began on May 28, 2020, is going on smoothly without any technical hitches yet.

The General Manager revealed that the Clean Room can produce 4000 IV bags per batch up from 650 bags as before. In effect, the Clean Room produces three batches per day making a total of 12,000 IV bags. However, this normal condition is hampered by constant power outages, water, limited staffing, and space. For the space challenge, a classroom has been rented at CBC School Mutengene where the IVs are stored for distribution. A class of pharmacy technicians is also in training for 3 years to assuage the staffing need to an extent.

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