



COVID-19 Weekly Bulletin

Virus strikes at the heart of the response

With Covid-19 spreading rapidly in the communities, maybe it was just a matter of when it would strike at the heart of the response. Now, a number of staff in the project facilities, as well as in other facilities run by ACHAP-affiliated CHAs, have either tested positive of the virus, or have been exposed to it.

In three of the five project facilities under CHAG, staff have tested positive. "In one other CHAG facility in the Central region, which is not one of the implementing facilities, 15 staff have tested positive," said James Duah. So far, they are all asymptomatic and contact tracing is ongoing. At one of the facilities under CHAK, some staff have been exposed to the virus. "PCEA Kikuyu Hospital staff have reported that they were exposed to COVID-19 after they attended to a patient who tested positive," said Anne Kanyi. Three of them have been put in isolation pending testing.



Laboratory staff briefing at a facility in Cameroon.

Cameroon's Etoug Ebe Baptist Hospital has also reported one case of a staff member testing positive, with CBCHS' Eugene Foyeth noting that: "The staff have received counselling after one of them tested positive". At King Badouin Hospital, a project facility in the DRC, two doctors, two nurses and two support staff have been infected. The six are undergoing care and are responding well.

Despite these infections, there is a glimmer of hope. A few weeks ago, one of the project facilities in Nigeria reported handling a positive case. Following the death of the patient, the facility was closed and staff asked to self-isolate for 14 days. "The facility was reopened on May 28th with no staff infected. The hospital remains grateful and attests to the fact that the donations have aided their medical capacity to attend to patients," said CHAN's Kelechi Utoware. Unfortunately, at another facility in the country, one staff member has tested positive, but the infection is believed to have been through community transmission. Even so, some of the staff members have been placed under observation.

These infections among health workers are worrying, and it is hoped they will not become a trend. Even so, they could be pointing to a need for increased IPC training and awareness, as well as more PPE for the staff. The move by CBCHS to provide counselling for affected staff is also to be emulated so as to ensure staff stay motivated despite the risks of infection that they face.

Facilities receive PPE and other supplies

Project facilities continue to receive PPE and other supplies bought through the IMA support as well as from other sources. Those who have already received them continue to put them to use to ensure the safety of staff as well as patients visiting the facilities.



Bishop Dr James Bukomeko officiates a donation by UPMB.



Staff prepare supplies for donation by CHAK.



BUFMAR PPE donation at one of the facilities.



Caritas Congo donates masks in Kinshasa.

Summary of cases and actions taken per country

Ghana

CHAG response:

- All facilities picking their donations at CHAG HQ.
- Developed posters in 5 thematic areas to be shared with the communities.
- Messages reach: 5 health workers; 1 faith leader, 5 CHVs and 5 HFs pushed messages to CHVs.

Government response:

- Tax waiver to all health workers paid by government, also to get 8% increment.
- Testing facilities increased from 3 to 7.
- All health workers who are infected to be treated under cover funded by the government.
- Plans to build 88 new hospitals across the country; CHAG has asked that none of these be built near its facilities to avoid role duplication.
- Churches, mosques to reopen on June 5, trainings/conferences also allowed.

Cameroon

CBCHS response:

- All project facilities have received their donations.
- All payments for April and May have been done.
- Visited the project facilities.
- Messages reach: 10 health workers; 11 faith leaders, 12 CHVs and 5 HFs pushed messages to CHVs.

Government response:

- Schooling has resumed for candidate classes.

Nigeria

CHAN response:

- Linkage officers visiting community heads to conduct advocacy.
- Continuing with dissemination of IEC materials.
- Ensuring donated PPE and other supplies are being put to use.
- Messages reach: 13 health workers; 12 faith leaders, 10 CHVs and 30 HFs pushed messages to CHVs.

Government response:

- Easing of lockdown continues, with schools, churches, mosques and air travel set to resume.
- Researchers are developing a low-cost test kit.
- One project facility has been upgraded to cater for Covid-19 patients, including a new ICU bed.

Kenya

CHAK responses:

- PPE and other materials to the 5 facilities have been dispatched.
- IEC materials also sent to the facilities.
- Training for 20 facilities on IPC has commenced.
- Messages reach: 190 health workers and 20 faith leaders.

Government responses:

- All restrictions set up by the government are still on but are set for review over the weekend.

Rwanda

BUFMAR response:

- Community sensitization on Covid-19.
- Messages reach: 15 health workers and 5 faith leaders.

Government response:

- Preparations for further easing of restrictions ongoing.

DRC

UPMB response:

- Installed hand washing points at the project facilities.
- Health workers and other staff trained and are now enforcing preventive measures, including wearing of PPE provided through the project.
- Messages reach: 10 health workers; 10 faith leaders, 5 CHVs and 5 HFs pushed messages to CHVs.

Government response:

- 10 out of 26 provinces affected by the pandemic.
- Difficulties in contact tracing as those who do not believe the disease exists threaten the security of health workers.

Kindly share experiences and responses through email on communications@afriachap.org or via WhatsApp on +254726797558.