



The ACHAP QUARTERLY

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AFRICA CHA PLATFORM

Word from the Chairman

Dear Friends,

ACHAP members have been actively involved in various Covid-19 response actions in collaboration with partners at the global, country and community levels. With this newsletter, we are pleased to share with you some of these engagements.

As ACHAP, we believe that the path to full global recovery from Covid-19 is comprehensive response. We, therefore, call on our members, partners, and all people of goodwill to:



1. Promote vaccine uptake by providing education, dispelling myths and misconceptions and leading by example. WHO approved Covid-19 vaccines have been shown to significantly reduce illnesses, hospitalizations and mortality;
2. Advocate equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines to promote vaccination coverage, especially in sub-Saharan Africa;
3. Promote continued adherence to the prevention measures, as prevention is always better than cure;
4. Support efforts to strengthen faith-based health systems for effective Covid-19 response and continuity of basic essential health services, especially for underserved populations;
5. Document and share lessons and experiences to inform national policy interventions towards building a responsive and resilient health system in our quest to achieve universal health coverage (UHC).

Thank you, as always, for being with ACHAP!

Peter Yeboah

Chairman, ACHAP Board

A glimmer of hope –The Covid vaccine is here!



After rapid development and rigorous testing, a variety of Covid-19 vaccines have been approved for mass production. On February 15, WHO issued Emergency Use Listing (EUL) for the AstraZeneca vaccine, which was the first brand adopted by African governments.

Being at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic, health workers were vaccinated first and now continue vaccinate the rest of the population and provide essential healthcare services with confidence.

The approval and administration of Covid-19 vaccines has marked a major step towards ending the pandemic, bringing hope of a return to normalcy after more than a year of lockdowns, curfews and other virus control measures that have negatively impacted social and economic lives around the world.

Remember: Wash your hands, wear a mask, stay six feet apart, and GET VACCINATED!

ACHAP at the forefront of the Covid response

Projects

In the last quarter of 2020, in partnership with IMA, ACHAP launched Covid-19 response projects in five countries across Africa: Malawi, Zimbabwe, Chad, Nigeria and Burkina Faso.

The Malawi project, championed by the Christian

Health Associations of Malawi (CHAM) came to a close in March 2021. Through the project, a number of facilities in the country were provided with medical supplies for the management of Covid-19 and health care workers trained to manage isolation and treatment areas. Sensitisation campaigns were also held in the community even as health care workers were trained to empower communities and build their confidence in vaccines.

Apart from offering training in infection prevention and control (IPC), the Zimbabwe Association of Church Related Hospitals (ZACH) also printed and distributed information, education and communication (IEC) materials on Covid-19 prevention measures as well as undertook awareness campaigns through radio adverts, social media and newspaper articles on Covid-19 and gender-based violence. PPEs and IPC commodities were provided for health workers to prevent exposure to the infectious disease.

In Nigeria, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CHAN) was mandated to strengthen Covid-19 response activities in select health facilities. Activities included provision of motorised boreholes, establishment of hand-washing stations, formation and training of IPC committees and procurement and distribution of buckets for waste segregation.

Now, health workers and patients can easily access water, with a WASH assessment at the sites showing waste management and hand washing practices have greatly improved.

Vaccine hesitancy survey

Due to a number of factors, including the speed of development, health workers and the public have been hesitant to take the Covid-19 vaccine across the world.

ACHAP conducted a rapid Covid-19 vaccine confidence and hesitancy survey among health workers in March to determine their attitude towards the vaccine and its roll out. The findings revealed that although information was widespread, a significant number of respondents had doubts about efficacy and the thoroughness of the clinical trials. Therefore, getting the right information out is key to vaccine acceptance.

ACHAP remains committed to addressing information gaps and misconceptions about the vaccines, and will continue to encourage healthcare workers to get vaccinated in order to inspire confidence in the population.

Spotlight on members

Kenya

The CHAK Annual Health Conference 2021 took place on April 27 and 28 under the theme *Covid-19 pandemic: Building resilience for faith-based health services*. The meeting appreciated the role that faith communities have played in the fight against Covid. Visit <https://www.chak.or.ke/>.

Uganda

ACHAP congratulates Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau (UPMB), this year's recipient of the Outstanding Social Innovation in Health Award from the Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI) Hub in Uganda. Visit <http://upmb.co.ug>.

Zimbabwe

ZACH has partnered with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in a five-year HIV care and treatment project that is supported through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Visit <https://www.zach.org.zw>.

Lesotho

Makatleho Mohasi has joined the Christian Health Association of Lesotho (CHAL) as the Executive Director. She previously supported Lesotho to protect human rights and uphold the best practices of good governance. She is keen on human rights and the Christian values of caring and giving, and has great passion for reading, travel and discovery of new things. Welcome to the family, Makatleho!



Visit <http://www.chal.org>.

ACHAP Afya

According to USAID, community engagement in the health system contributes to better population-level health outcomes with equity and at low cost; improved performance, reach and responsiveness; and sustainable development benefits.

Therefore, while many maternal and child health care interventions focus on health facilities, ACHAP Afya is taking a different approach – targeting the community.

And there is no better evidence of this difference, than the involvement of men. That is why 50 men were trained in Kilifi, Kenya and equipped with social and behaviour change communication skills to address the social and gender norms that impede the uptake of maternal and child health care.



The 50 male champions undergo training in Kilifi.

It is expected that these champions will work to change the attitudes of other men in their communities, resulting in positive health outcomes for mothers and their children.

In May, ACHAP Afya brought together community gatekeepers in Nebbi District, including religious leaders and Health officials to introduce the project focus and together map a way forward in the implementation of the program. Stakeholders committed to support the project.



Monsignor Emmanuel Odaga speaks at the ACHAP Afya meeting in Nebbi, Uganda.

USAID's Momentum

Moving Integrated, Quality Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and Family Planning and Reproductive Health Services to Scale (MOMENTUM) Integrated Health Resilience (IHR), or MIHR, is a USAID global project. Its goal is to reduce maternal and child mortality and increase the self-reliance of families, communities and nations. It has so far received buy-ins from South Sudan, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania.

The project has kicked off country-level implementation in South Sudan, DRC and Niger. Implementation will begin in Burkina Faso and Mali before the end of this year. The project's implementation will focus on strengthening quality voluntary family planning and reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health service delivery in fragile settings.

UNAIDS Framework for Dialogue

The framework for dialogue provides an opportunity for faith communities, health stakeholders and people living with HIV to identify ways to work better together to eliminate stigma and discrimination. It is anchored on three key principles: evidence, dialogue and action.

In Kilifi County, Kenya, a committee was constituted to oversee its implementation. The common goal is to build new or stronger partnerships encompassing both collaboration and dialogue, among networks of people living with HIV, faith-based organisations and religious leaders.

The committee participated in the planning for stigma assessment in health care settings organising a two-day face-to-face meeting. Focused group discussions were conducted with participants drawn from PMTCT mothers, youth, men only and general population. The findings will be shared during the face-to-face dialogue meeting.

Member engagement

Mapping facilities

ACHAP, with support from the World Council of Churches (WCC) and technical assistance from the Christian Medical Association of India, is undertaking a mapping of CHAs and their member health facilities. This exercise, in addition to highlighting our contribution to health care, will enable evidence-based decisions at all levels. ACHAP estimates that there are more than 5,000 health facilities in the network contributing to better health care on the continent. We urge the M&E leads of CHAs to support the completion of this exercise.

Webinar series

ACHAP held a three-part webinar series in March themed *Sustaining gains made in the response to Covid-19: Lessons learnt from ACHAP's response*. This informative series was conducted by nine presenters across the ACHAP membership and the recordings can be found on our website.



Upcoming monthly webinars will focus on the following key themes:

- Covid-19 vaccine preparedness – Access, supply chain, mobilisation and cost
- Leadership and linkage to health systems strengthening
- HIV/AIDS injectables
- Organisational capacity – Preparedness for grants
- External partnerships and networking
- RMNCH
- NCDs
- Knowledge management and organisational learning

Parting shot

The pandemic shook the world, making us stronger in the process. The past few months have seen a paradigm shift in the field of public health, with tremendous efforts being channeled toward beating Covid. Through consistent engagement with members, we are working to empower health workers around the continent. Our goal is to create future-proof systems to ensure that the measures we put in place today will outlive this pandemic.

We continue to encourage health workers to mobilise communities and inspire confidence in the vaccine. Getting vaccinated is our contribution to flattening the curve.