



COVID-19 Weekly Bulletin

Innovative training in these social distancing times

As she watches the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic spread ever closer to her hospital in Bomet County in Kenya, a recent infection prevention and control training helped Mercy Chemutai to see she still has work to do. “We have already set up a COVID-19 isolation ward,” the practitioner said of her facility, Litein Hospital. “Now we know where we need to improve in order to successfully handle any case of COVID-19.”

As experts project COVID-19 to have [a significant impact on the African continent](#), members of the Africa Christian Health Association Platform (ACHAP) are taking advantage of training and other opportunities that may thwart the novel coronavirus’ spread. Training has been made possible by longtime ACHAP supporter, IMA World Health.

“The hospital IPC checklist presented and discussed with us by the trainer has greatly assisted us to identify the IPC gaps in our facility,” Chemutai said. The Bomet facility is one of 20 Christian Health Association of Kenya sites brought together under the ACHAP banner, and the first of several trainings made available. “When other ACHAP members found out this training was possible, we were able to make connections quickly,” ACHAP Coordinator Nkatha Njeru said. “The connections made through the ACHAP platform open doors to training and resources that otherwise might not be possible.”

ACHAP members in Cameroon and Tanzania have already been in touch with the wider organization about securing a version of the training for their facilities. All told, the ACHAP network represents more than 5,000 health facilities in 43 countries that provide most of the access to health services in poorer, fragile settings.

The IPC trainings offered by CHAK equipped trainers who will help to cascade the information to others

at the facility level and beyond, racing to beat the disease before it takes root in vulnerable communities often served by Christian Health Associations.

“Infection prevention and control, if well implemented, is the magic bullet that will help us in Kenya put a stop to this pandemic,” said Stephen Gitonga of Maua Methodist Hospital in Meru County, Kenya.

Due to the difficulty of accessing PPE materials, the CHAs in the ACHAP/IMA project expressed need for a training on advocacy to help them engage with governments to get supplies.



Biting shortage of PPE and other resource

As with all other health facilities, those under various CHAs are eager to offer help to the government and the citizens in the fight against Covid-19 infections. Unfortunately, this is being thwarted by a biting shortage of PPE for staff.

In Nigeria, the government has opened up the handling of Coronavirus cases to mission hospitals. “A government official visited one of our facilities and endorsed it as a treatment center about 7 weeks ago. He promised to send materials for management of the disease, but so far, they have not received anything,” said Kelechi Utoware of CHAN. She added that the facility was very glad to receive PPE support from the ACHAP/IMA project.

The case is no different from Ghana, where the government has designated some 10 CHAG health facilities as treatment centers. “Even though this has been communicated to the facilities, there has virtually been no support from the government in terms of what is to be done at the local level,” said James Duah. The organization is therefore looking for partners to get these designated facilities running. CHAG facilities have also reported cases of the virus, including 2 staff members.



Donation of PPE by CHAN

CBCHS in Cameroon is also experiencing a biting shortage of PPE for hospitals and face masks for the public. This is despite increasing infections after the government relaxed restrictions. “The biggest problem we currently face is low availability of PPE and face masks,”. With patients visiting hospitals without face masks, he added, staff and other patients are highly exposed to possible infection.

Summary of cases and actions taken per country

Cameroon

CBCHS response:

- There have been 675 suspect cases handled by facilities and 175 of these have been confirmed positive.
- 11 staff have also been, unfortunately infected with the virus.
- PPE distribution to facilities is ongoing.
- Messages sent by ACHAP/IMA and own messages have been shared and translated to braille and French.

Nigeria

CHAN response:

- Distribution of PPE and other materials started on Monday 11th.
- Developed template for reporting, as well as action plan for the five facilities
- CHAN officials visited facility in Jos to present materials.
- Communication materials distributed to linkage officers for onward sharing; 20 faith leaders reached.

Government response:

- Mission institutes to help handle patients.
- Masks made mandatory in public.

Ghana

CHAG response:

- Conducting advocacy and providing technical support at the national level.
- 27 facilities for testing TB are to be used to test for Covid-19, awaiting approval from government for 10 of them.
- Visiting facilities to increase awareness outside of main cities.
- Distribution of Veronica (hand washing) buckets to project facilities and other facilities.
- To distribute resources from the government to its network.
- Organizing a meeting involving Ghana Health Service and other stakeholders to develop IEC materials with the aim to reach 50,000 households. IEC materials have to be approved by GHS.

Kenya

CHAK responses:

- Supporting facilities with PPE, training and IEC materials, and conducting advocacy for facilities to receive PPE.
- Some facilities have set up isolation centers.
- Distribution of PPE and other materials to 5 facilities to commence after drawing up delivery schedule.
- Messages from IMA/ACHAP pushed to 20 religious leaders, not yet pushed to medical health workers and community health volunteers.

Government responses:

- Curfew and restriction of movement in 5 counties extended for 21 days.
- Borders with Tanzania and Somalia closed.
- Truck drivers to be tested at least 48hrs before travel and issued with certificate valid for 14 days.

Rwanda

BUFMAR response:

- 3 out of 5 facilities have received supplies.
- Carrying out public education.
- Messages to be shared this week.

Government response:

- New cases going down

Uganda

UPMB response:

- Distribution of PPEs under the project ongoing
- To conduct sensitization through religious leaders who are expected to cascade to congregants, and directly to communities this week

Government response:

- Lockdown to be reviewed.
- Masks made mandatory throughout the country, but there are fears over quality of masks.

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