

EDITORS NOTE

Welcome to this quarter's newsletter.

Highlights in this issue include the innovative approaches that are employed by Lighthouse in order to reach the 90 90 90 targets, Lighthouse's participation in the candle light memorial ceremony and the Lighthouse's passion in providing youth friendly services.

Enjoy reading

Lighthouse taking ARVS to the Community

In June 2016, Lighthouse started recruitment processes for the first cohort of clients who will be receiving their Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) in the communities they reside under Nurse-led Community ART Program (NCAP).

As part of its strategic approach of being a model site for interventions, Lighthouse Trust has introduced NCAP, one of the "Differentiated Care Models" that WHO is promoting. This is an initiative in which stable adult ART patients will collect their medications within their communities from Lighthouse community nurses.

According to the Community Health Services (CHS) Coordinator for Lighthouse Trust, Daneck

Kathumba, the initiative aims at decongesting the clinic and encourage long term retention to care of stable clients on ART by eliminating some of the barriers to ARV drug access and adherence.

"This program will reduce travelling expenses for our clients and their time spent on the queue at the Lighthouse operated clinics. Clients in this program, if they continue to be stable, will not need to visit the main clinic," he says.

Kathumba added that the program will give an opportunity to the clients to support each other in terms of adherence



Currently (CHS) nurses like Sam Truwa above assist clients on palliative care in their home

and retention in care since members receiving their medications in their communities will get the drugs at a central point, together,

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Over 400 clients start ARVs through "test and treat"

Lighthouse has initiated over 400 clients on (antiretroviral therapy) ART in May and June this year through the "test and treat" strategy adopted by the Ministry of Health.

Since May 2016, Lighthouse has been following an opt-out approach to providing HIV care for all clients who are HIV positive, regardless of their health condition, to start ART at its centres of excellence found at Kamuzu central Hospital and at Bwaila Hospital.

At Lighthouse, this strategy has facilitated the initiation of ART to 230 clients who could not have

started ART if the previous eligibility criteria was being used.

As indicated in Malawi's 2015—2020 HIV National Strategic Plan, the national 'test and treat' strategy aims at initiating HIV treatment to all persons who are diagnosed with HIV. 'Test and treat' is also one of the ways to eliminate diagnostic hurdles for early ART initiation.

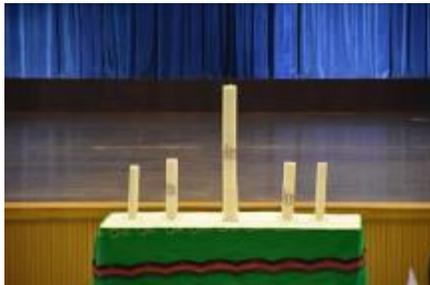
Lighthouse clinical advisor, Dr Thom Heller says that Lighthouse has not yet encountered major problems. He however indicated that the institution is

geared to tackle issues of adherence that may arise in the due course. "since we are initiating clients who are not sick they may not appreciate the need to be adherent but we are already enhancing adherence even at initiation." he says

The national adoption of this approach has come after Ministry of Health launched the 90-90-90 HIV campaign. The 'test and treat' approach is a big step towards the goal of initiating on ART 90 percent of people who are found HIV positive.

Candlelight Memorial to Engage, Educate, and Empower

By Miriam Chipanda



Lighthouse staff members joined the commemoration of the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial (IACM) coordinated by the Malawi Network of People Living with HIV (MANET+) and the National Task Force (NTF). This annual mobilization campaign takes place on the 3rd

Sunday of May. This year, it was themed “Engage, Educate, and Empower: A call to renewed commitment towards the HIV response” or in Chichewa “Tikambirane, Tiphunzitsane ndi Kulimbikitsana; Tisafooke polimbana ndi HIV”, an extension of the global theme “Engage, Educate, and Empower”.

The commemoration which was presided over by the Minister of Health, the honorable Dr. Peter Kumpalume, M.P., began with a solidarity walk from the National AIDS Commission (NAC) headquarters to Bingu International Convention Cen-

tre (BICC) where the viewing of exhibitions took place before the start of the memorial itself. Lighthouse Trust was one of the organizations exhibiting at the pavilions and providing HIV Testing services on the day. On display for the Lighthouse Trust Exhibitions were materials that feature services for HIV Testing Services (HTS), Early Infant Diagnosis (EID), general clinic services and adolescent program. Products of Community Based Organizations (CBO) that work in partnership with the Lighthouse were also featured at the event.



The Lighthouse team that took part in the Candlelight Memorial



Lighthouse staff members took part in the solidarity walk



The honorable Dr. Peter Kumpalume, M.P. (center) viewing some of the products on display



Some of the products displayed by CBOs that work in partnership with the Lighthouse

Lighthouse taking ARVS to the Community (from page 1)

which would allow clients to discuss and also follow up with one another in cases where they seek support.

Currently, over 124 clients from support groups working in partnership with the Lighthouse are being assessed to benefit

from this initiative. One of the criteria being used for enrollment in this program is a laboratory test confirming that levels of HIV in one's blood are very low (viral suppression – third 90).

These clients are registered with Light-

house clinic at Kamuzu Central Hospital and Martin Preuss Centre at Bwaila Hospital. They live within the Lighthouse catchment areas including Chilinde, Kawale, 23, Kaliyeka, Chimoka, and Area 50.

Tiwale Adolescent Services at Lighthouse *by Douglas Damba*



Adolescents and mentors during one of the sports days

Adolescence brings physical, behavioral, cognitive and psychological changes in youths between the ages of 10 to 19. This stage is when adolescents learn to think abstractly which then allows them to focus and plan for their future. As these adolescents are beginning to form their identities, being HIV positive may tamper with their confidence of seeing the future with a positive eye. This is why Lighthouse, through the Tiwale Adolescent Services, started embracing and promoting adolescents' rights to quality health, education, information,

being free from violence and discrimination. This service is open to adolescents who are registered in the Lighthouse HIV cohort and reside in Lilongwe City.

Started in 2008 with the objectives of enhancing ART adherence, encouraging disclosure, and promoting positive living among HIV positive youth, the Tiwale adolescent service has provided support to over 575 HIV positive youth. To date, 110 have graduated to youth friendly adult HIV services. Currently, there are about 466 adolescents accessing Tiwale services and are grouped into five. Each group is designated a Saturday once in two months where adolescents are able to refill their ARVs, have clinic check-ups, adherence and viral load monitoring, family planning services and STI services based on their need. In addition to accessing clinical services, they also have ample time to learn several topics, share experiences with their peers and have fun

through various games. More importantly, considering the fact that there are more social than medical issues that adolescents meet in their communities, Lighthouse engages youth mentors who competently attend to adolescents' questions and problems accordingly.

"I feel more comfortable and relaxed at the clinic than at home. I was once raped by my late step-dad when I was in standard 5. I believe it's him who passed on the HIV to me. I could not have been taking these drugs if it wasn't for him" sadly described one of adolescents (name withheld). Such stories are very common amongst the adolescents at the clinic, which is why mentorship is aimed at making adolescents with similar cases to become more assertive and self-reliant.

A pat on staff members' backs

By Miriam Chipanda

As the quarter came to an end, the Executive Director, Prof Sam Phiri, finished the last general staff meeting with words of encouragement. He reminded all staff members of the importance of discipline, culture and

togetherness as principles that were to be followed for the continuation of good service provision to clients. He also added that the future of the Lighthouse looks good and promising because of everyone's contributions.

As the meeting came to a conclusion, he went on to congratulate all members of staff for the tireless effort and dedication they have given to their work, noting that the future of Lighthouse is indeed in their hands.

Eight Months at Lighthouse



By Frank Pondani

Celebrating my 38th birthday on 22 June this year, also marked eight months of my work at the Lighthouse. I am a Clinical officer trained at Malamulo College of Health Sciences. I have worked at several clinics but my

ical Assistant. That was my push to go for Diploma in Clinical Medicine at Malamulo after which I applied six times to the Lighthouse and eventually got the job.

Working in the Lighthouse clinic is making me grow in identifying and managing HIV related health problems clients come across. Although I came to Lighthouse with 11 years of work experience in the health sector, I take it that am still on orientation regarding HIV management. As such, I take each day separately because it teaches me unique lessons and that makes me love my job even more.

Obvious as it may sound, securing a job at Lighthouse is the greatest achievement in my life. Now that I assist HIV positive individuals, I feel fulfilled even though I lost my dearest relative. Apart from that, my secondary school recognized me as a role model the moment they learnt that I am working at Lighthouse Trust. Currently, I have a quarterly schedule for career talk for respective classes in the school.

I always salute the cordial relationship of Lighthouse staff members, their understanding and support. I also feel that I am not done yet professionally. This July I will start studying a degree in Health Systems Management so that I should also possess administration skills that can be applied in HIV management as well. I encourage others who work in this field to always have the patient at heart.

eight months at Lighthouse has brought in me more passion to my work than ever before.

Years back I lost a very close relative who suffered from AIDS. Unfortunately, I was in secondary school at that time and I helplessly watched her condition deteriorate day by day until she died. Frankly, I wish I was working at Lighthouse back then. After her death I promised myself that I will not let other HIV positive individuals suffer like her without a bit of my effort.

During my ART attachment at Lighthouse in 2006, I realized that I found the place that I am destined to work in. However, I learnt that back then I was not eligible for recruitment because I was a Med-

Editorial Team

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“It is not the years in your life that counts. It is the life in your years; Abe Lincoln

Our Vision

To be a recognised leader in the provision of high quality HIV services and to improve the lives of people affected by HIV

Lighthouse Trust

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Our Mission

The Lighthouse trust contributes to Malawi's national response to HIV as a model in providing a continuum of high quality care and building capacity in the health sector

LIGHTHOUSE