

LIGHTHOUSE

JANUARY – MARCH 2016

EDITORS NOTE

Welcome to this quarter's newsletter.

In this issue we highlight the need for a market for products that volunteers are making in the communities, expansion of Lighthouse to other districts as well as adoption of moonlight testing.

In addition this issue will also give updates of the LighTen Study



Clients have already started enjoying the service

Lighthouse in Three More Districts

Lighthouse is now supporting HIV Testing Services (HTS) in Mchinji, Ntcheu and Dedza districts in collaboration with Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF).

Lighthouse is a renowned local Public Trust that has been working with Malawi government in HIV service provision, model interventions, operations research and capacity building with over 27,000 clients receiving life saving Antiretroviral drugs (ARVs), over 8,500 clients tested for HIV

every month at Lighthouse centres of excellence and over 13,000 tested in Lighthouse supported sites. However the high quality HIV services provided by this institution have primarily benefited those who live in Lilongwe.

Since July 2015 Lighthouse has extended its support to HIV management by employing HIV Diagnostic Assistants (Counselors) who are deployed to 42 health centres in the three districts with the aim of



“districts are now able to do provider initiated testing to clients at a larger scale” Nyirongo

strengthening health systems specifically in provision of HTS for both in and out patients initiated

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Extra Pulmonary TB detection simplified at KCH

Eleven clinical staff from Lighthouse and Kamuzu Central Hospital (KCH) can now ably detect Tuberculosis (TB) infection that develop in areas outside the lungs without making referrals to radiography department.

The team comprising clinical officers, doctors and consultants underwent the internationally recognised Focused Assessment Sonography for TB/HIV (FASH) training in March this year facilitated

by Lighthouse Clinical Advisor, Dr Tom Heller, who is also the author of both the FASH protocol and training materials.

Senior clinical officer at Lighthouse, Joe Gumulira, says the training equips the team to use the Ultra sound machine within the clinic rooms to investigate and detect TB outside the lungs without sending suspected patients for an x-ray.

Gumulira says this is a huge step for patient management within Lighthouse as the training will reduce patient waiting time since they will only queue at the clinic

rooms. Patient waiting at the radiography department will also slightly reduce.

Without this training clinical officers or doctors used to send patients suspected to have these problems to a different department in KCH for an x ray and expected the patients to bring back the results to the clinical personnel for interpretation.

Several other problems of organs like the liver kidney or spleen can also be identified using this protocol.

All they need is a Market

Volunteers in Community Based Organisations (CBOs) that work in partnership with the Lighthouse are now making quality products which they would sell and bring income to their CBOs. All they need is a reliable market to sell these products.

Lighthouse has provided various trainings and sponsored educational exchange visits for volunteers from the 19 CBOs it works with. This has been done with the aim of drilling the CBOs to become self-reliant.

This initiative has yielded quite a lot such that volunteers in these CBOs have skills to translate locally found

raw materials into quality products that are worth to be on the commercial market.

Some of the products made by these groups are flower vases, watering canes, knit wear, slippers, food products and others.

Currently most of these CBOs sell their products within their communities.

Knitwear products of some of the groups have also caught the eyes of a United States of America (USA) organisation called Knit Around the World which sells these products in USA and it also linked the CBOs with gift shops around Four Seasons in Lilongwe.

This organisation uses

knitting as a framework to create social, therapeutic, and economic opportunities for HIV positive individuals, their families, and their communities, worldwide.

These products can easily compete on the market if some of them are being bought internationally. However, the current demand available for the products is minimal. Lighthouse calls upon local marketers to invest in these products as well.

Lighthouse also plans to take a step further and facilitate linkages of the CBOs with investors; an effort towards making the CBOs independent .

Individuals interested in assisting these CBOs can contact Danneck Kathumba on 0888346049 or email d_kathumba@lighthouse.org.mw



Flower pots decorated by sand



Mango Archer



Laundry soap

Reaching more, where they are

Since March 2016 Lighthouse has started providing HIV Testing and Counseling Services during late afternoon and night times in strategic public places like entertainment and market areas within Lilongwe.

As Malawi government is promoting strategies aimed at testing 90% of people who are HIV positive, Lighthouse has employed the moonlight testing strategy which targets at individuals who have challenges in accessing integrated health systems like

med, key populations like sex workers and their clients, drug and alcohol users and other most at risk groups found in these areas and hot spots.

Using a mobile van, in collaboration with MACRO, these services are provided from 4pm to 10pm on Tuesdays and Fridays every week with the aim of allowing more people to access HIV testing services at their convenient time.

Lighthouse is implementing this strategy to contribute towards the first 90 of the



Clients at one of the hot spots waiting to be tested

present 90 90 90 HIV management strategy adopted in the Malawi National HIV Strategic Plan. The strategy is about identifying 90% of HIV positive individuals in Malawi, 90% of whom must be linked to HIV care., initi-

ated and retained and finally making sure that 90% of those in sustained ART have low levels of HIV virus in their bodies.

Van Kabowa, a counselor who took part in the

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Lighthouse in Three More Districts (from page 1)

by clients themselves or health service providers, Support Early Infant Diagnosis (EID), adherence counselling and Viral Load sample collection.

According to District HTS Support Program Coordinator, Zion Nyirongo, the district support program has improved HIV testing access to clients. "One of the major achievement of the program, so far, is that the districts are able to do provider initiated testing to clients in the wards and also to those who have come to get other medical services now at a larger scale." She says.

Nyirongo adds that there are counselors going around the key sec-

tion of the health centres every day unlike in the past where one counselor was expected to cover all sections of the health centres.

She further says that there has been improved linkages from HTS to ART services. Adding that Lighthouse prides in the good coordination it has with EGPAF and the District HTS team of the respective districts as well as the dedication of HIV Diagnostic Assistants working there.

However Nyirongo points out that there are still challenges Lighthouse is working with government to rectify. "Though the program is making a difference in the districts' HTS, we are still working together with the District Health Offices to resolve challenges like stock out of test kits and inadequate space for provision of HTS in the health centres

which inhibits us from testing the targeted number of clients." she says.

Adding that there is still a gap between those referred for ART services and those started on ART.

The district support program complements 90 90 90 Malawi strategy to enable 90% of HIV positive people know their HIV status.

The Lighthouse has the capacity to successfully implement this program in the said districts and even beyond since it has experience and technical expertise in a similar program it has been implementing since 2008 in Lilongwe urban and rural health facilities. Currently Lighthouse continues to support 10 health facilities in Lilongwe.

Reaching more, where they are

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first moonlight testing day, says the people converging in these places and hot spots are receptive of the service. "This is a voluntary service, as such testing 125 people within 6 hours, on the first day is surely good reception of the service." He said.

In March 2016, 639 people have been tested at Chigwirizano, Chinsapo, Devil Street in Lilongwe main Market, Kandikole and Phwetekere.

The expectation of this strategy is that most of the key populations found in these places should receive counseling and testing at the same time those found HIV positive could start ART as soon as possible.

Lighten Study updates

There is limited knowledge concerning the prevalence of chronic kidney disease in sub-Saharan African, and even concerning effects Tenofovir (TDF), an antiretroviral (ARV) drug, has on kidneys of black African Individuals .

Since TDF is one of the drugs found in Malawi's current first line ARVs, Lighthouse is doing an operations research called Lighthouse Tenofovir Cohort (LighTen) whose aim is to describe baseline clinical characteristics and long term outcomes of patients using TDF based antiretroviral therapy at its clinic found at KCH.

The study is expected to enroll 1500 people who are being initiated into ART and are above 18 years old.

As of now 944 people have been enrolled in the study of which 821 are active participants, 39 transferred to other clinics, 25 died whilst 29 withdrew and 30 were lost to follow up from ART care.

As clients are in this study the function of their kidneys and Liver is monitored. At the same time problems that are discovered through this monitoring are treated as soon as possible. Other areas that are monitored are the amount of HIV in the blood, average levels of blood sugar, CD4 count and general health of participants through Full Blood Count test.

Meanwhile recruitment of participants is projected to finish in January 2017 whilst follow up of study participants is expected to go up to at least three years

Staff Corner with Ellen Makawa

Tell us about yourself?

I am an enrolled nurse, currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science (honors) in Health and social systems Management at Mildmay University in Uganda. I also hold an advanced diploma (with distinction) in HIV and AIDS management obtained from the University of Malawi, Centre for continuing Education, as well as an institutional diploma in leadership and management from the Norwegian Institute of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Sciences. In June this year, I will clock 10 years working at Lighthouse as a Home based Care Nurse.

Accomplishments so far?

In 2013 I mentored 4 CBOs in proposal writing and all submitted proposals passed. In addition, the Trophy for the “best CBO” award was my idea.

Any Memorable moments at Lighthouse?

Getting sponsorship from Lighthouse to pursue my BSC lives a big mark in my memory. I also travelled to the USA for the 2012 International AIDS Conference sponsored by Lighthouse. I was also among those selected to do a one year diploma in Leadership and management.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy reading health published Author articles, travelling and writing.

What advice can you give to fellow staff?

Work hard, be patient, do not work to impress but to make a difference and bring change. Also take challenges as stepping stones to greater opportunities.

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“It will be impossible for us to eradicate HIV as long as any corner of the world is cut off from the education and services that we know helps stop the spread of this disease.” Alex Newell

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

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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

L I G H T H O U S E

