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Papua New Guinea

July 2019 Newsletter

In this issue, I am happy to share some of the great successes being made across all of our projects; from training health care workers on family planning in rural Maprik and Aitape, to reconnecting patients to vital ART in Port Moresby, and setting up a new directly

observed treatment site in the Moresby South (MS) electorate.

The biggest highlight has been the success of the integrated GBV/HIV service at Tokarara clinic. Read this month's update to find out how patients are benefitting.

Warm wishes,



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Country Director

Supporting GBV survivors at Tokarara Clinic to stay on ART

In March 2018, gender based violence (GBV) services were integrated into HIV/STI services at Tokarara clinic to great effect. Since rolling out this approach, the clinic has reported a total of 371 cases accessing post-GBV services.

Among patients accessing the service is a 36-year-old female GBV survivor. She came to the service after being diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) and subsequently referred for HIV testing where she tested HIV positive. On disclosing her status to her husband, who she knew had multiple partners, she was physically abused and her HIV medicine was destroyed. She returned to the ART clinic for her routine monthly follow-up with multiple bruises resulting from the physical assault from her husband.

The client knew that her husband would not let her leave the house to honour her ART

appointments so she asked the nurse to grant her flexible ART appointments so she could come to collect her medication whenever it was possible for her to sneak out of the house. Her request was granted and the nurses listed her as a priority case so that there was no barrier to her accessing the service. At subsequent visits, she disclosed that her husband has been searching her bilum and throwing away her medicine. To avoid this, she resorted to hiding some of her medication with her family. In support of her ingenuity, the nurse ensured that she was always given extra medication to keep with her family who were supportive of her status.

The empathy and support provided by the ART nurse helped ensure that the client completed her TB medication and remained adherent on ART. The patient has since left her husband and is staying with her relatives for fear of losing her life.

Training health care workers on family planning in Lume, West Sepik province



Family planning is one of the most effective ways of reducing maternal and child mortality. In PNG, only 37 percent of married women use any form of family planning. In young women aged 15-19, rates are even lower with just 18 percent using traditional or modern family planning

methods. Part of the reason for the low uptake is the lack of capacity on the part of health care workers (HCW) to deliver these important services. To address the capacity gap, FHI 360, in collaboration with Marie Stopes PNG, conducted family planning training in February and May for 20 HCWs in Maprik and Aitape. This was the first training since 2017 and the first time HCWs had been trained on the administration of implants. Following the training, HCWs working from clinics in the two rural locations (including faith-based clinics), have provided modern contraception services to 576 women in just three months.

Active case management reconnects patients to vital antiretroviral therapy

FHI 360 is implementing active case management (ACM) in nine antiretroviral therapy (ART) clinics in Port Moresby, under the USAID funded, HIV Support in Papua New Guinea project. ACM is a client-oriented approach to better respond to patient needs during treatment on ART. The approach identifies, supports and monitors people living with HIV (PLHIV) who are at risk of dropping out of treatment and aims to reduce loss-to-follow-up at each stage of treatment. In June-July, 2019, 375 PLHIV who missed appointments and loss-to-follow were tracked. 301 of the PLHIV were reconnected to treatment services.

Pari urban clinic becomes community DOT site

Continued patient support and care is vital to ensuring successful treatment outcomes for patients diagnosed with TB. As part of community-based TB treatment in the National Capital District (NCD), FHI 360 implements three directly observed treatment (DOT) options in the Moresby South (MS) electorate; facility, home, and community-based DOT. Following an FHI 360 request to the NCD Health Services, Pari urban clinic has been established as a community DOT site in MS. Within three weeks, the site was transformed from a non-TB providing service to an aspirational TB DOT awareness site. To date, a trained community treatment supporter is providing DOT to four TB patients and conducting home visits twice a week to seven patients. In addition, once confirmed for TB, Pari people can access their full course of TB treatment at the DOT site and only attend follow-up and other required visits at Kaugere Clinic, the closest registered Basic Management Unit.

