

In Malawi, tuberculosis (TB) is a major cause of morbidity and mortality, especially among people living with HIV/AIDS. Project HOPE initiated a five-year project in 2006 in the Mulanje and Phalombe Districts of Malawi to support the National TB Program (NTP) and improving TB case management and treatment outcomes. Project HOPE is also working directly in the communities to increase knowledge about TB, to ensure that people with TB get into treatment as soon as possible, and to reduce stigma associated with TB and HIV. Through training health care workers, improving the quality of lab networks, setting up community sputum collection points, and mobilizing the community around TB and the related HIV infection, Project HOPE and the NTP are working together to better control TB.



Training Health Care Workers



Project HOPE working with the National TB Program staff in Malawi to train and strengthen the capacity of health care workers to diagnose and treat TB and TB-HIV co-infection. Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs), as the cornerstone of community health service delivery in Malawi, are also trained. Training is provided in the areas of TB, case management of TB patients, and management of patients co-infected with both TB and HIV. Following training, Project HOPE collaborates directly with the NTP staff to provide regular supervision and on-the-job training for continued support. All training materials and trainings are

developed and conducted jointly with the NTP.

Improve Quality of Laboratory Network

To strengthen and expand laboratory services, Project HOPE has both increased the number of laboratories in the two districts and trained HSAs on the use of microscopy for diagnosing TB. Coordination between the laboratory network, health facilities and communities, is leading to more rapid response time. Regular supervision and mentoring visits to laboratories are conducted jointly with NTP staff to ensure the level of quality is sustained.



Community Mobilization

The community is an essential partner in increasing the detection of TB cases. Project HOPE is building knowledge about TB through a variety of methods:

- Community education sessions
- Drama and dance performances
- Orientations for:
 - Community Leaders
 - Traditional Healers
 - Shop keepers



Themes of the education sessions and orientations include basics on TB signs, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment, and how to help people in the community access free testing and treatment services for TB and TB/HIV. Traditional healers and shop keepers use referral slips and cough registers to help direct people with TB into the NTP system for treatment and are supervised by trained HSAs. In support of the NTP, Project HOPE is also training and supporting volunteers to help detect people who have TB symptoms in their communities and to work with them to provide counseling and coordinate testing and results.



Community Sputum Collection Points (CSCPs) sites have been introduced to facilitate greater access to TB diagnosis, under the NTP national policy of Universal Access to TB testing and with support from Community Leaders. Volunteers are trained to use infection control practices and transport the sputum to the laboratories to a microscopy center for diagnosis. CSCPs are supervised and most collection sites are currently receiving sputum results on a timely basis.

Program Results

Through the combined efforts of the NTP and Project HOPE, the TB treatment success rate in the Mulanje and Phalombe districts has increased from 60% in November 2006 to 89% in January 2010. The case fatality rate has decreased from 20% to 13% during the same time period.

The availability of microscopy services in the two districts has increased from the original four sites to 10, with 10 HSAs trained as microscopists. The 60 community sputum collection sites have also greatly increased access to TB diagnosis. The percent of TB patients who are tested for HIV has increased from 49% to 87% and the percent of registered TB patients who are tested for HIV has increased from 49% to 87% from November 2006 to January 2010. To date, over 63,000 community members have attended health education sessions on TB. Over 800 traditional healers and shop owners have been oriented and mentored and over 300 volunteers have been trained and mentored.



For more information, visit www.projecthope.org