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Center for International Health,
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At a

GLANCE

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TRACK Routine Immunization Evaluation in Siaya to Inform Routine Catch-up Policy and Schedule for Kenya



CIHEB-Kenya's TRACK program with funding from and in collaboration with Center for Disease Control and Prevention, is conducting a study on routine immunization dubbed "Assessment of Strategies to Strengthen Delivery of Routine Catch-up Immunization among Children below 60 months of age in Siaya County, Western Kenya." The aim of the study is to improve timely vaccination of children by facilitating their full immunized by 60 month of age, and to inform routine catch-up policy for Kenya.

Catch-up vaccination refers to vaccinating an individual who, for whatever reason, is missing or has not received doses of vaccines for which they are eligible, per the national immunization schedule. An effective immunization program should have a catch-up vaccination schedule, policy, and operational instructions to support ongoing catch-up vaccination strategies.

To achieve this, CIHEB-Kenya is working with the National Vaccines and Immunization Program (NVIP) to understand routine immunization uptake and practices in Siaya County. In a meeting with the Head of NVIP, Dr. Lucy Mecca, discussions on the program's implementation and how other counties will benefit were discussed. Dr. Mecca lauded the innovative strategies to reach the target population and bridge the gap of high numbers of unvaccinated children under five years of age and reiterated the government's commitment to developing policies that ensure that all children receive the recommended vaccinations ensuring

they are protected against vaccine preventable life threatening illnesses.

On November 14 and 15, the program trained research assistants and sub-county Public Health Nurses from Ugenya, Ugunja, Alego Usonga, Bondo, Rarieda and Gem, and Siaya County Immunization Lead. The training was facilitated by the Principal Investigator (PI) Dr. Pierre Muhoza from CDC and CIHEB Kenya TRACK Program Staff.



During the training, the TRACK Program Director, Dr. Christina Mwachari, noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had interrupted immunization services, caused delays in seeking immunization services, resulting in increased children missing their doses of recommended vaccines. Thus, there is a need to generate information on the feasibility, processes, outcomes, and costs of routine catch-up vaccination to inform decision-making at the country level to support routine catch-up vaccination. *[cont pg 2]*



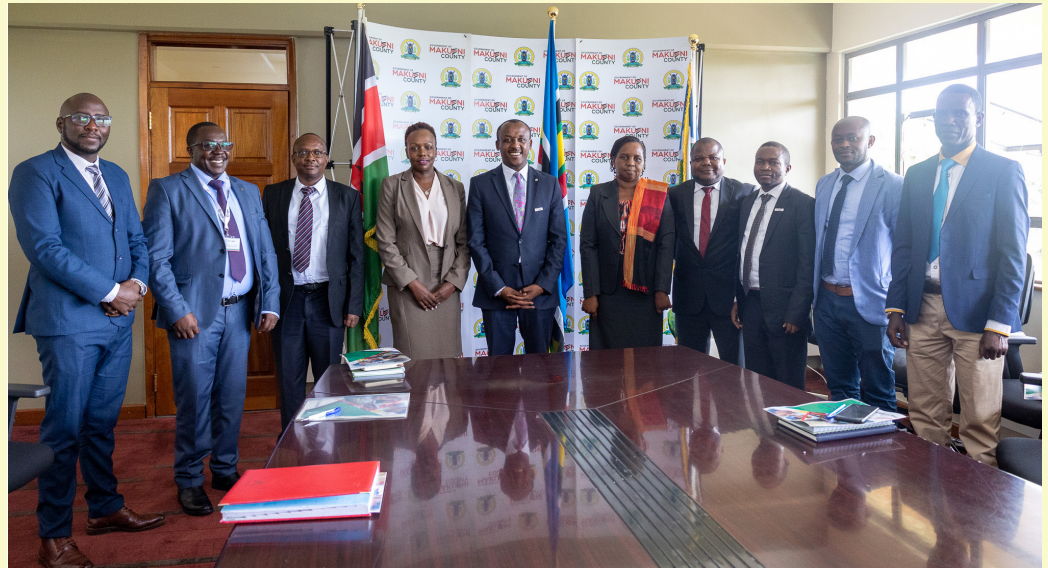
During a study site visit on December 6-8 for technical support to the research teams, the CEO, Dr. Emily Koech commended the team for maintaining high standards in data abstraction and emphasized the importance of adherence to study procedures and data quality assurance, as the data collected will provide insights on areas needing strengthening and guide the formulation of targeted interventions

to optimize catch-up vaccination.



Enhancing Collaboration for Health Systems Strengthening in Makueni County

On November 28, 2022 Makueni County Governor, H.E. Mutula Kilonzo Jr. hosted the CIHEB-Kenya senior leadership to discuss collaboration between Makueni County and CIHEB-Kenya in supporting a robust health system for optimal delivery of health services including comprehensive HIV and TB prevention and treatment services for general, key, and priority populations in Makueni County through the PACT Imara Program fruits in their treatment. She further encouraged the implementing partners to enhance Linking OVC and OTZ to ensure those who are negative remain negative, and those who need treatment receive it.



Ksh 108 million in year two, through a sub-grant to Makueni County, to support the employment of additional healthcare providers, strengthen laboratory services and commodities management systems, support patient follow-up and retention initiatives and support county oversight of HIV and TB activities in the county.



The Partnership for Advanced Care and Treatment (PACT) Imara program is a five-year CDC-funded program that supports the provision of comprehensive HIV and TB prevention and treatment services for general, key and priority populations in collaboration with the county governments of Machakos, Makueni, and Kitui counties. The program provides comprehensive quality care, including psychosocial support and antiretroviral therapy, for approximately 68,000 people living with HIV (PLHIV) across 227 facilities in these counties.

Hon. Kilonzo thanked the leadership for their effort in strengthening health systems to support the delivery of HIV and TB-related services, including laboratory systems, commodity management, and monitoring and evaluation systems in Makueni.

The Governor also thanked CIHEB-Kenya for investing Ksh.112million in year one

The PACT Imara Program Director, Dr. Peter Kyalo, emphasized that CIHEB-Kenya is supporting the entire cascade of HIV and TB services from prevention, including specific interventions targeting the Key Populations, working in collaboration with civil society organizations, to HIV and TB treatment services, through a Health Systems strengthening approach addressing; ensuring quality integrated service delivery, training and mentorship of health service providers, Laboratory strengthening including sample transport network, Commodity management, Health information management systems including scaling up electronic management systems and supporting county oversight of HIV and TB services with a focus on transition and sustainability through County led, County owned and County funded.

The CEO, Dr. Emily Koech, noted that CIHEB-Kenya would continue supporting Human Resources for Health (HRH) and other program requirements to ensure coverage of the entire prevention, care and treatment continuum.

CIHEB-Kenya joins the globe in Commemorating the World AIDS Day

While commendable progress has been made globally in the fight against the HIV scourge, with remarkable reduction in new HIV infections and deaths, HIV continues to be of serious public health concern with many lives still at risk of new infection and negative outcomes. This is particularly aggravated by the recent stagnation in progress towards HIV epidemic control and increased resource depletion.

On 1 December 2022, CIHEB-Kenya joined national and county government and other stakeholders to observe World AIDS Day 2022 whose theme was “Equalize”. The clarion call was on world leaders and citizens to courageously acknowledge and address the inequalities that are impeding efforts to end AIDS and equalize access to vital HIV services, especially for children and key and priority populations and their partners, including men who have sex with men, transgender people, drug users, sex workers, and those who are incarcerated.



Speaking during a pre World AIDS day event in Nairobi, the Head of the National AIDS and STI Control Program (NASCO), Dr. Rose Wafula, reiterated that the Ministry of Health, through NASCO, commits to exploring and connecting the global and national efforts that focus on impact and progress towards the 95-95-95 targets to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. The Director of Medical Services at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Andrew Mulwa, thanked the US government and agencies supporting HIV work through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) funding, and all the implementing partners for the support they have given to the government of Kenya to ensure that inequalities relating to the delivery of HIV/AIDS care are eliminated as envisioned by 2030.



During the meeting, the framework and toolkit for implementing Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis of HIV in Kenya were launched. CIHEB-Kenya, through funding from CDC, provided financial and technical support in the development of the documents. The framework provides guidance for standardization of programming and provision of PrEP services in the

country, with the vision that the strategies will enable the country to reduce the number of new HIV infections by improving PrEP program coverage, quality of services, and effectiveness among all populations.



The national celebration of World AIDS Day was held at Kibabii University in Bungoma County.

The Chief Guest, Dr. Susan Nakhumicha, the Cabinet Secretary for Health, noted that while external funding for HIV had declined, the Ministry of Health had prioritized resource allocation of HIV related commodities and was addressing other important aspects to ensure commodity security, including the scale-up of competitive local manufacturing.

The CS further outlined the ministry’s plan to leverage digital solutions to enhance efficiencies in the provision of HIV prevention & treatment programs.

OGAC visits CIHEB-Kenya Supported Health Facilities in Kisumu

The CIHEB Entrench team today hosted representatives from the Office of the US Global Aids Coordinator (OGAC), the County Health Management Team, and CDC Kenya at the Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital (JOOTRH).

The team was received by the JOOTRH CEO, Dr. George Rae, who gave the history of the hospital and an overview of the services offered. They were later taken through various services offered at the hospital, including the Comprehensive Care Clinic, Gender Based Violence Recovery Center (GBVRC), Outpatient department (OPD), and the Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) Clinic.

The ENTRENCH Program Director, Dr. Anita Nyabiage, helped the team appreciate the services that CIHEB-Kenya supports at the hospital. She noted that JOOTRH, working with CIHEB-Kenya, uses various strategies to retain clients on care at the Medically Assisted Therapy (MAT) clinic. These include building the capacity of peer educators through training; strengthening the linkage between the center and PWID Drop-in center (DiCe) to ease tracking of missed appointments; sensitization of law enforcers on MAT care, and establishing support groups coordinated by a local People Who Inject Drugs (PWIDS) and Civil Society Organizations (CSO).

and the establishment of peer support groups and PrEP clubs at the DiCe has enabled peers to share their experiences interactively, cross learn and keep appointments.



JOOTRH working with CIHEB-Kenya uses various strategies to retain clients on care at the Medically Assisted Therapy (MAT) clinic

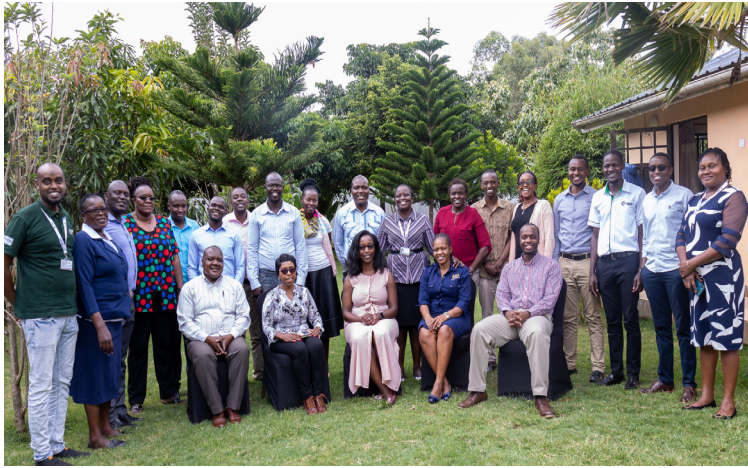


These include building the capacity of peer educators through training and strengthening the linkage between the center and PWID DiCe

The team later visited Naselica Drop-In Center (DiCe). They were pleased to learn the strategies that were implemented at the DiCe, including: engagement and continual capacity building of existing peer educators who recruit peers into their cohorts and follow them up at designated hotspots, a multi-month dispensation of antiretroviral medication among stable HIV-infected patients done on-site and through community-based differentiated model (DCM), implementation of peer-led outreach activities at designated hotspots where PrEP refill is done



JOOTRH is a center of excellence for HIV care, treatment, and prevention services. As at the end of September, it offered ART services to close to 7,000 patients. The hospital has a Gender Based Violence recovery center (GBVRC) that has offered high-quality, comprehensive care to violence survivors and a MAT Center that provides high-quality methadone treatment and psychosocial care to people who use drugs (PWUDS).



TRACK team together with Routine Immunization (RI) research assistants during a training in Siaya County. The training also incorporated County staff who are also critical in the success of the catch up vaccination study.



The ENTRENCH team in Migori commemorates the World AIDS day by considering how #Equalize can support the Adolescent Girls and Young Women.



CIHEB-Kenya and UMB Kenya leaders graduate from a Manager essentials program dubbed the 7 Habits for Managers.



OGAC team together with CDC Western Kenya team, JOOTRH staff and ENTRENCH Kisumu team during a recent visit to Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital



Team Stawisha Pwani commemorates the World AIDS day in Mombasa county during this years celebration aimed at reducing inequalities towards combating the HIV/AIDS disease.



CIHEB-Kenya Senior Management and PACT Imara team courtesy call to Makueni Governor, H.E. Mutula Kilonzo Jr. in his offices late last month.