

IDI BULLETIN

A quarterly news letter of activities and achievements



JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021



Hon. Bangirana Anifa Kawooya, Minister of State for Health - General Duties and Dr Henry Mwebesa, the Director General, Ministry of Health Commissioning the Emergency Operation Center at Arua Regional Referral Hospital

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Dear Esteemed Reader,

Welcome to our third issue of the IDI Bulletin, for the Calendar Year 2021.

While challenges and devastating losses brought on by the COVID19 pandemic have continued to affect Uganda and the global community at large, the Institute has made great strides in leveraging the current context to strengthen the nation's health care system to respond to infectious disease challenges.

You will therefore be delighted to find in this issue initiatives on HIV clinical trials, trainings on infection control and prevention and accelerated efforts to equip national facilities to respond to the pandemic and other emerging infectious

threats.

July to September has seen the phased reopening of the country and well as robust vaccine deployment strategies in a bid to hit the Ministry target of 4.5 million.

We are excited about the opportunity to contribute to productive collaborations with various agencies and ministries to support the pandemic control efforts.

As we work towards economic, physical and social recovery, we encourage you to be a change agent in your community and within your respective work teams.

Happy reading!

— Investing in the Future; Impacting Real Lives

Important Dates to Note:

- » International Infection Prevention Week
- » World Diabetes Day
- » World AIDS Day



Are you Fully Vaccinated Against COVID-19?



As we continue to fight against COVID-19, it is vital that we all get vaccinated. The COVID-19 vaccine is a game changing tool in our fight and requires individual participation.

Currently, the Ministry of Health is running campaigns to get people in the priority groups vaccinated and these include persons older than 50 years, people with underlying health conditions like hypertension, diabetes, HIV and more, Healthcare workers and teachers.

Vaccination is ongoing; visit the nearest designated vaccination center and get vaccinated. Vaccines are safe and effective.

IDI Supports Ministry of Health in the COVID-19 Vaccination Campaigns

The IDI/CDC COVID-19 Vaccination project under the Global Health Security program has greatly supported the Ministry of Health in the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. The project took part in several engagements including meetings with respective political leaders, social media campaigns in order to create awareness on COVID-19 vaccination among people in the communities.



Meeting with Hon. Gidudu Mafwabi Dominic, the Minister of State for Elderly Affairs as well as Members of Parliament representing older persons to discuss strategy on how to create awareness about vaccination among older persons across the country.



"I urge all Muslims and Ugandans to embrace COVID-19 vaccination; especially the elderly people above 50 years, as well as adults with chronic illnesses like hypertension, Diabetes, HIV and more"
Sheikh Muhammed Ali Waiswa, the Second Deputy Mufti, in a meeting with Dr. Alfred Driwale, the Program manager UNEPI at Ministry of Health UG at National Mosque – Old Kampala



Ongoing vaccination for people in priority groups



Vaccination campaign session for the Older Persons held on Bukedde 1 TV

EOC Commissioning at Arua Regional Referral Hospital



On 1st September 2021, The Minister of State for Health in charge of General Duties, Hon. Anifa Bangirana Kawooya launched the West Nile Regional Public Health Emergency Operations Center at Arua Regional Referral Hospital.

The West Nile Regional Emergency Operations Center was established in March 2021 with a goal to strengthen regional capacity for preparedness and response to public health emergencies.

Staff were trained and mentored under guidance of the Ministry of Health, West Nile region steering committee on preparedness and response and with support from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the Infectious Diseases Institute under the Global Health Security Program.

The Emergency Operations Center will provide services including but not limited to;

- To provide technical support to the existing regional and district coordination and collaborative mechanisms to prepare for and timely respond to public health emergencies
- To strengthen regional capacity to receive, verify and analyse public health data for action
- To coordinate public health communication and information flow between national, regional, and district levels
- Enhance coordination of integrated sample management and referral for routine and outbreak, samples
- Provide situation awareness against which strategic, operational and tactical decisions will be made

Uganda Multi-Sectoral Consensus Meeting



The meeting brought together representatives from government bodies as well as implementing partners.

The Ministry of Health held the Uganda Multi-Sectoral Consensus Meeting to evaluate progress towards the attainment of health security. The strategy is to develop a 2021-2022 operational plan and to set Global Health Security Agenda national commitments.

“Once countries develop robust capacities, they are prepared to control public health threats.

This way we are closer to living in a world with no infectious diseases. Uganda has done very well in this endeavor based on past success in the control of the spread health threats such as Marburg and Ebola to neighboring districts and countries.” ~ Dr. Henry Mwebesa, Director General Health Services

The First IDI-Sponsored Clinical Trial

The first IDI-sponsored clinical trial on HIV treatment was published in the world's leading medical journal- The New England Medical Journal.

This study enrolled participants in multiple sites in Uganda and two other African countries (Kenya and Zimbabwe). The Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) was the overall coordinating Centre for the study with oversight for the conduct of the entire trial and data management & analysis.

The study findings will likely inform the global World Health Organisation and country guidelines for 2nd line Antiretroviral Therapy. The successful conduct of this study has paved the way for additional multi-centre, multi-country studies sponsored by the IDI.

Kabong District Leads in TB Treatment in Karamoja Region under USAID-PACT



The USAID-Programme for the Accelerated Control of TB in Karamoja (PACT-Karamoja) held a regional TB learning visit at Kabong hospital. All DHOs and hospital directors in the Karamoja region met to witness best practices and the improved TB treatment success rate of Kabong District.



IEC material printed in 3 languages ready for distribution

The USAID PACT-Karamoja team also handed over TB Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials to all nine districts in the Karamoja sub-region. The IEC materials were developed by the Ministry of Health and printed in the three major languages of Ngakaramajong, Swahili and English.

Printing of the TB IEC materials was made possible with the generous support of the American people through United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The TB treatment success rate in Kabong rose from 50% in January 2020 to 93% by the end of March 2021

Supporting Point of Care Electronic Medical Records in Wakiso District



The IDI Kampala Region HIV Project has handed over equipment worth UGX 460,000,000 to the Wakiso district leadership to support Point of Care electronic medical records (EMR-POC). In attendance was the Wakiso leadership led by the Principal assistant secretary (Babirye Olivia), IDI and Mildmay Uganda representatives.

The equipment includes Computers, furniture, biometric scanners and networking equipment for wireless mesh. This has been made possible with support from PEPFAR through CDC.

“As i hand over this equipment to Mr Lukwago Issa, the acting incharge Wakiso HC IV, I request that we use this equipment for the purpose they are intended in order to improve our data quality” - Babirye Olivia, Principal Assistant Secretary

The History of HIV



The Academy for Health Innovation held a series of sessions on different TV channels showing the history of HIV in Uganda. Intruiging stories on how Ugandans have been affected and infected by HIV, Lessons learned over the 30 years as well as a way forward on the journey towards the 95-95-95 goal by 2030. <https://hhu.theacademy.co.ug/#/>

Through the stories and materials donated to this effort, we are able to see Uganda’s journey from the unknown to the wealth of information on the virus available today and to bring together research and lived experiences to showcase the many textures of HIV advocacy and outreach.

Find more on the stories here: <https://youtu.be/-UINNwXXyYo>

US Ambassador to Uganda Visits Namboole



The US Ambassador to Uganda, Natalie E. Brown visited the Namboole CTU which was reactivated on 28th May 2021 to manage mild, moderate, and severe COVID-19 patients in order to decongest Mulago and Entebbe CTUs.

With support from CDC, IDI has continued to provide technical, human resource, and logistic support to strengthen Infection Prevention and Control, Clinical Care, Emergency Medical services and Psychosocial support.

The US Ambassador was joined by Dr. Mwebesa Henry, the Director General Ministry of Health, Dr Ivan Kisuule, In-charge Namboole CTU, Dr Jennifer Galbraith, Ag CDC Country Director, Dr. Amy Boore, Program Director Division of Global Health Protection CDC, Dr Andrew Kambugu, IDI Executive Director, Francis Kakooza, Deputy HoD IDI Global Health Security Program and Judith Nanyondo Program manager CDC/IDI Strengthening Partnerships for Preparedness and Response in Uganda Project.



Electronic Integrated Disease Surveillance Systems (e-IDSR) Roll Out



The Strengthening Partnerships for Outbreak Preparedness and Response Project supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) to rollout the electronic integrated Disease surveillance systems (e-IDSR).

A 3-day training of trainers was held with objectives to strengthen capacity the district real time reporting and response to public health events.

The stakeholders included Ministry of Health- Integrated Epidemiology, Surveillance and Public Health Department, Public Health Emergency Operation Centre, Mildmay Uganda, The AIDS Support Organization (TASO)

This was implemented with funding from CDC.



Safe and Dignified Burials Training



The Global Health Security Programme team held a virtual orientation for Infection Prevention and Control in Dead body handling and Safe and Dignified Burials.

“We need to practice proper IPC measures and at the same time offer dignified burials for patients that succumb to COVID-19” the Commissioner Community Health Ministry of Health, Dr. Upenytha George said.

He implored Religious, cultural leaders and mortuary attendants to attend such trainings since they would also benefit. He urged, members to respect their perceptions.

The trainings should be aimed at addressing myths and misconceptions related to COVID-19 deaths.



Some of the participants attended online via zoom

Alcohol-Based Hand Rub (ABHR) Production Now in Moroto and Kotido Districts



Representing district leadership from Kotido inspecting the production unit

With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the CDC-IDI WASH project within the IHR Global Health Security program extended the Alcohol-Based Hand Rub (ABHR) production initiative to Moroto and Kotido Districts.

This project goal is mainly to increase access of ABHR among health workers with an aim to improve hand hygiene compliance and enhance health care worker infections against preventable



District Leaders from Moroto signing the Memorandum of Understanding

diseases including Healthcare Associated Infections (HAIs). Using a district lead approach, the project supports local production and distribution of ABHR to 41 health facilities in Moroto and Kotido.

Staff were nominated in each of the districts respectively and these underwent training from IDI staff. The districts also have production units which are expected to produce 4,100 and 4000 litres of ABHR in Kotido and Moroto respectively.

The State of the Art National Microbiology Reference Laboratory



In October 2016, the Infectious Diseases Institute under CDC funding strengthened Global Health Security (GHS) through core packages of GHS Agenda for National Laboratory Systems to the National Microbiology Reference Laboratory (NMRL) in microbiology quality and testing capacities.

The National Microbiology reference laboratory was operationalized with a mandate to strengthen National microbiology and antimicrobial resistance surveillance systems which is done through Laboratory accreditation, microbiology quality assurance, EQA Performance, microbiology testing capacity, training in AMR detection and sample management, and referral systems.

The NMRL has developed capacity Proficiency testing (PT) production for Gram stain, Gram and AST, and Serum Crag Antigen (CrAg) . Enrolled 17 laboratories for GRAM PT/AST and also enrolled 127 public and private facilities for CrAg PT, enrolled other facilities without capacity for Culture and sensitivity on an Only GRAM PT program

The US ambassador to Uganda, Natalie E. Brown, visited the Department of National Health Laboratory and Diagnostic Services at Butabika during which she inspected the National Microbiology Reference Laboratory supported by the Infectious Diseases Institute with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The team inspected equipment in the National Microbiology Reference Laboratory. The US Ambassador was accompanied by Dr. Diana Atwiine, the Permanent Secretary -Ministry of Health, and CDC Country Director, Dr. Lisa Nelson.

NMRL laboratory has undergone series of quality improvement processes and on 2nd - 3rd September 2021 had a final CAP inspection which recommended the NMRL for CAP accreditation with 0.1% minor citations.

The IDI (GHS and Fleming fund) supported NMRL with human resource, (16 staff) to support initial testing from referring health facilities within Kampala and isolates referred from participating microbiology laboratories.

The laboratory analyzed 2710 clinical samples between Jan 2019 and Dec 2020, and received 5,836 isolates for confirmation and storage at its national biorepository.



Natalie E. Brown, the US Ambassador to Uganda inspecting some of the equipment in the National Microbiology Reference Lab