



# Lighthouse Newsletter

**LIGHTHOUSE**

Special issue

January– December 2014

**“Our collective goal is the end of the AIDS epidemic, and treatment is one element to reach that goal.”**

**Mark Dybul, Executive Director, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**

## Chief Editor’s Comment



Prof Sam Phiri,  
Lighthouse Executive Director

*I would like to welcome all our readers to this special issue of the Lighthouse newsletter.*

*In this issue you will appreciate the international recognition of Lighthouse’s efforts as Universities of Cologne and Heidelberg donate heart assessment machines to us.*

*You will also be able to know some of our contributions in the health sector this year, regarding community empowerment, capacity building, research and extension of our services to other districts .*

*Enjoy reading. ■*

## Lighthouse expands to three more districts

Lighthouse will extend its HIV Testing and Counseling (HTC) services to three more districts in 2015.

In collaboration with Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) using USG—PEPFAR funds through Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Lighthouse is expected to implement expanded HTC services in Dedza, Mchinji and Ntcheu. This effort is an expansion of HTC program Lighthouse has been operating in 25 rural health centers using funding from The Rose Project and the National AIDS Commission (NAC). The Lilongwe District rural health centre HTC programme has been instru-

mental in availing HTC access to pregnant women, exposed infants and the population at large: up to 98% of pregnant women accessing antenatal care are able to know their HIV status on their initial visit, 100% of HIV positive pregnant women are started on ART, 92% are these being initiated on ART within same visit.

According to Zion Nyirongo, Coordinator for the Health Centre HTC Programme, the major expansion in 2015 aims at strengthening health systems in the chosen districts specifically in provision of HTC for both inpatient and outpatients, Early Infant Diagnosis (EID), adherence counselling and support

of viral load testing.

Zion said that the project is expected to increase the number of women accessing Prevention of Mother to Child Transition (PMTCT) services in 41 health facilities in the three districts. “We are happy with this development. We have the capacity to successfully implement this programme in the said districts and even beyond since we have the experience and technical expertise in a similar programme which we have been implementing since 2008,” Nyirongo stated.

## Grant winning CBO’s urged to understand HBC policy



Attendees at the Lilongwe HBC stakeholders meeting

On 28<sup>th</sup> March 2014, Community based organisations (CBO’s) that partner with Lighthouse Trust and have won National AIDS Commission (NAC) grants were urged to be conversant with

the Malawi Home Based Coordinator (HBC) policy for smooth running of their organisations.

CBO’s, including Tadala, Chikondano and others, attended the Lilongwe HBC stake-

holders meeting held at Lighthouse Trust.

Daneck Kathumba, CHBC Coordinator for the Lighthouse Trust stated: “The CBO’s are expected to use grants money professionally.

## Malawi former vice president a Lighthouse Pioneer



**Dr. Malewezi (Right) given a certificate of recognition by Dr. Dan Singer (Left) from Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

Former President of Malawi, Dr. Justin Malewezi was in June this year honoured for taking part in the establishment of the Lighthouse Trust.

Dr. Malewezi was among the 65 individuals who were given certificates by Lighthouse Trust during the institution's World AIDS Day commemoration event known as open day, honouring them for contributing to the inception of the Lighthouse at various levels.

Amongst those honoured were Lighthouse board of trustees who were involved in the development of the Lighthouse Trust concept, Kamuzu Central Hospital staff members who were working as volunteers in the Lilongwe Home Based

Care, now the Lighthouse Trust and the first community based volunteers.

In his speech Dr. Malewezi revealed that the government of Malawi utilised the establishment of the Lighthouse as its ideal initial Centre to implement its plans of bringing in free ARV's to people of Malawi. Adding that some pioneers of the Lighthouse including Professor Sam Phiri and the late Dr Martin Preuss, were part of the technical team that worked on introduction of free ARV's in Malawi. Other pioneers of the Lighthouse honoured on this day were Lloyd Muhara, **Dr. Nyangulu**, Dr. Charles Mwanambo, Loveness Gondwe, Morgan Tembo, Manzoor Bedha, Kumbukani Black and Olive Kadzakumanja, ■

## Building Capacity in 2014

CLIP project at it again; Cologne University Lecturer orienting clinicians on ultrasound machine donated to Lighthouse through the CLIP partnership



Lighthouse building capacity in the health sector; customer care training participants from Kamuzu Central Hospital (KCH)



Beyond KCH; Lighthouse funded a short course in Basic statistics offered to Monitoring and Evaluation personnel from several institutions including Collage of Medicine, Médecins Sans Frontières, Welcome Trust and Dignitus International



## Lighthouse has Heart Assessment Machines at Last

On 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2014, Universities of Cologne and Heidelberg donated two Electrocardiography Machines to Lighthouse Trust. The donation of these heart assessment machines was done as part of the Cologne University and Lighthouse Partnership (CLIP) project and will undeniably enhance the clinical services at Lighthouse clinics.

Dr Florian Neuhaus, a lecturer at Cologne University and a CLIP representative stated that what prompted them to donate the machines is the reputation Lighthouse holds as a central ART management centre. "Lighthouse is more like a referral centre. Therefore, it is supposed to have more advanced equipment than other HIV management facilities" he mentioned.

Speaking on the day, Lighthouse Executive Director, Professor Sam Phiri,



*Prof Gerd Fatkenhauer handing over  
ECG machine to Prof Sam Phiri*

acknowledged that the machines are needed to enhance the quality of services Lighthouse is delivery when managing patients. "Since HIV is a chronic disease, there might be some non-communicable diseases our client may suffer from, including those of the heart. These machines have come in time to assist us to work in managing that" he mentioned.

Lighthouse' clinic team greatly commended the donation of these machines.

Wilson Bett, a Lighthouse clinical officer, stressed that the presence of these machines is highly fundamental because it would reduce waiting time for patients' results. According to Bett, previously Clinical Officers were referring patients to the medical department at Kamuzu Central Hospital which is congested. As a result, there were delays in diagnosis of heart conditions. With the newly donated machines, patients will be diagnosed onsite and referred to cardiologists for speciality care.

CLIP project has contributed to Lighthouse in several ways including provision of annual advanced HIV management trainings to all nurses and clinicians facilitated by lectures from Universities of Cologne and Heidelberg.

■

## Kawale 2 comes first in 'Best CBO' competition

Kawale 2 Community Based Organisation (CBO) was the first winner of the 'Best CBO' competition sponsored by Lighthouse.

This was announced during the 2014 Lighthouse volunteer annual get-together, Kawale 2 beat 18 other CBO's who were competing for the MK300,000 prize money and trophy.

Lighthouse organised this competition with the aim of empowering CBO's working in

partnership with it, to be self-reliant and sustain their organisations.

According to Sam Truwa, Home Based Care Nurse for the Lighthouse, the trophy has prompted most CBO's working in partnership with the Lighthouse, to work on their sustainability strategies as they get ready for 2015 competition assessment.

"Following that trophy more than ten CBO's have secured land of their own

some of these have already started building offices. Those with no land are still searching, tirelessly" he said.

CBO's in the competition are assessed using a predefined checklist that has several aspects including ownership of land and offices, record keeping, frequency of volunteer meetings and membership. ■

### Grant Winning CBOs Cont'

Going through the contents of the policy made them understand the guidelines more as they are expected to follow the guidance when implementing their activities”.

During this meeting the minimum HBC package stated in the policy was discussed at length. Emphasis was given to infection prevention for the patient and carers, community sensitisation and resource mobilisation, referrals in HBC systems and trainings management. The CBOs were also reminded of the report writing skills and the need for timely submission of reports to District Health Office and Lilongwe City Coordinating Committee .

Other organisations present in the meeting were Partners in Hope, Malawi Prisons, NAPHAM, Kawale Health Centre and DHO. ■

### Collaborations: Heads of Departments trained in presentation skills

Over the weekends of 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March 2014 Lighthouse conducted a presentation skills training for heads of various departments in Lilongwe District Health Office (DHO) and Kamuzu Central Hospital (KCH) at Lighthouse.

The training that drew 33 participants was meant to equip participants with presentation skills, starting from preparation to the actual delivering of presentation sessions.

Speaking about the training, Dr Valera who is the Head of Surgical Department at KCH stated “We take some of these trainings for granted but I personally have learnt a lot, including the use of simple language that could be easy for all

understand.” and commended the good organization of the training.

Heads of department at these institutions were specifically targeted since they make presentations from time to time and are also responsible for communicating on behalf of their departments hence the need for the skills.

Lighthouse has a mandate derived from its mission statement to build capacity in the health sector. ■

## Service Integration at Lighthouse; Reproductive Health

Lighthouse has developed a reputation as a centre of excellence in the provision of HIV care by maintaining high quality and piloting innovative interventions, many of which are then later rolled out nationwide.

It is from this background that Lighthouse is moving towards creating a one stop centre for its patients by integrating several other services in to its main HIV management system, including comprehensive reproductive health services for women. This integration reduces the time clients would otherwise spend seeking medical attention in several clinics.

Reproductive Health services at lighthouse include provision of family planning methods and counselling, Visual Inspection using Acetic Acid (VIA) or cervical cancer screening, and cryotherapy. In order to provide these

services Lighthouse trained all of its nurses and clinicians in these areas, has relevant equipment and places one nurse daily in the reproductive health services room who attends to patients wishing to access any of these services. Furthermore Lighthouse opens all of these services to its patients and guardians whilst VIA and cryotherapy is further open to patients referred from Ethel Mutharika Gynaecology department. At present Pills, loop, Depo-Provera and Jadelle are the family planning methods offered at Lighthouse. Of course consistent and correct condom use is encouraged to all regardless of the method chosen bearing in mind HIV prevention. On average sixty women access family planning methods every month and

Depo-Provera is the most accessed method.

VIA is accessed by about 44 patients every month. Those found with small pre-cancerous lesions are treated right away with cryotherapy (freezing treatment) but those with larger lesions are referred to Ethel Munthalika for further management.

Lighthouse puts the interest of its patients first and will always look for better ways to assist them. ■

## 59 Individuals Identified With Acute HIV In MP3 Study

Results for the Method of Preventive Programme Packages (MP3) study has shown that 59 individuals were identified with Acute HIV Infection (AHI) among 9098 individuals who were tested.

Malawi's Principal Investigator for the study, Professor Sam Phiri, disclosed this on 24th January 2014 at an event marking the end of the preliminary phase of the study.

Professor Phiri who is also Executive Director for Lighthouse Trust commended UNC and Lighthouse staff for their hard working spirit in the first nine months of the study.

Lighthouse and UNC Project are collaborating on this study with the aim of assessing the potential public health benefit of behavioral and antiretroviral interventions during acute HIV infection. The study combines behavioral intervention and antiretroviral therapy (ART) to prevent transmission of HIV during acute HIV infection. Acute HIV infection occurs in the days immediately after infection.

In his remarks, Professor Bill Miller who is the other Principal Investigator based at University of Carolina in Chapel Hill noted that the group from MP3 study constitutes the largest cohort of persons with acute HIV anywhere in the world, and commended the Malawi team for that..

During the first phase of the study, June 2013 to January 2014, study participants were recruited from Lighthouse, Martin Preuss Centre, and two sexually transmitted infections clinics at Bwaila and Kamuzu Central hospitals.

Blood samples collected from eligible individuals was tested for HIV antigen. The outcome of this step showed that prevalence of AHI was higher

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## Collective Ownership of Way Forward to Enhance Urban Clinic Mentoring



### *Area 25 staff members brainstorming on their own site's SWOT analysis regarding the mentoring program*

Lighthouse clinic coordinator Thom Chaweza said that the way forward for Urban Clinical Mentoring Program is surely going to work because it is collectively owned by Lighthouse, Kawale, Area 18 and Area 25 health Centres who are the involved parties in the program.

Chaweza said this after the Urban Clinical Mentoring Program evaluation meeting which drew nurses and clinicians as well as leaders from the four concerned institutions to Lighthouse conference centre on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2014. According to Chaweza the meeting was done to appraise the program from the time it started to date.

Urban clinical mentoring is a program where the Lighthouse trust nurses and clinicians go and work together with their counterparts at area 18, 25 and Kawale health centres once a week, in their ART units, and provide expertise support in order to make standards uni-

form in the four ART sites.

In the meeting a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis of the program was done. In fact it was discovered that the program has a greater muscle in sharing of workload and good working relations among the four centres that happen to be among the high burden sites in Lilongwe. However, the team spotted shortage of staff as one of the significant drawback of the program.

Chaweza pointed out that there were vivid indications that the team will jointly work towards making the program work. "The program is a good initiative, we have challenges from both sides and the only solution was to address them collectively. We owned the way forward therefore implementation of change is easier." He said.

He stated that part of the way forward was that current antiretroviral drug providers in the three sites would dedicate themselves to cover up the current gap whilst they are lobbying with Lilongwe District Health Office (DHO) for trainings to other existing staff and deployment of new staff. ■

## Fifty nine found with acute HIV (cont')

*From page 4*

screened at STI clinics as compared to general HTC sites. AHI persons identified in STI clinics were 45 while 14 were discovered in the two general HTC sites.

58 of the 59 were successfully contacted during their acute infection and received Antiretroviral (ART) drugs. This was expected to greatly assist as an early possible intervention in reducing further transmission of HIV from the infected to uninfected sex partners which is a core area for the study.

Meanwhile Enrolled clients in the study are still being followed up until the study winds up on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2014. ■

## Staff Corner

**Mr. Wingston Felix Ng'ambi - Monitoring and Evaluation Officer**



**Tell us about yourself?**

I hold a Bachelors of Science Degree in Statistics and Demography with a distinction obtained from the University of Malawi-Chancellor College in 2010. From April 2010 to May 2011, I was a teacher for Mathematics and Computer Studies at Ntchisi Secondary School. From 31<sup>st</sup> May 2011 to date, I have been working at Lighthouse as a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer.

Whilst at Lighthouse I have co-authored four papers published in reputable journals and over ten published abstracts. In addition, I have also been involved in various formal programme monitoring and evaluation at Lighthouse.

**Any accomplishments we should know about?**

I have taken part in the development process of the electronic medical records sys-

tem currently being used in a number of sites in Malawi for management of people living with HIV. I also developed and piloted the new TB Suspects register which is currently being used in over 600 sites doing TB screening in Malawi. Besides, I have acquired advanced MS Access database development and management skills.

**Please tell us about your memorable moments**

The day I travelled to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia to present an abstract at International AIDS Society 2013 Conference is quite memorable to me.

**What are your hobbies outside of work?**

Well I enjoy chatting with my family members and of course, chatting with friends.

**Do you have any advice for new employees?**

There is need for perseverance and hard work despite the forces trying to push their performance down. They need to look for-

## Lighthouse Trust

### Vision

To be a recognized leader in the provision of high quality HIV services and to improve the lives of people affected by HIV

### 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

### Core Values

Compassion Confidentiality  
Equity Integrity Innovation

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