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Engaging all health care providers in tuberculosis control

Public-private partnership in Cambodia

Nov Vansan, a pharmacist at Toul Kork Pharmacy in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, sees customers seeking care for a wide variety of health issues, including tuberculosis (TB), each day. While pharmacies are often the first place people go for care, pharmacists are not always equipped with the training and resources needed to provide patients with the health solutions they need. Through a PATH-led training on TB, supported by United States Agency for International Development, Vansan can now guide people to accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment of TB.

“After I got the TB training, I referred more than 12 suspected TB patients to the health center,” said Vansan. One of them, a man from a nearby village, even returned to thank Vansan for a referral that led him to be cured of TB.

INCREASING EARLY DETECTION

The PATH-led training is part of a public-private mix (PPM) strategy that aims to strengthen both the public and private health sectors in managing TB cases. In many countries, people who fall ill seek care in a variety of settings, including public and private health facilities. Providers outside of the government health system manage a range of health conditions and sometimes diagnose and treat diseases, however they may have very



PATH/Jolene Beitz

little understanding of TB and may lack the medications needed to treat it.

Involving pharmacists and other private-sector providers helps increase early detection of TB cases so that people with TB can be found and treated faster, using all of a country’s health care resources. This also helps ensure that all health care providers are knowledgeable about the correct drugs needed for TB and can refer patients to facilities for the drugs they need.

In Cambodia, committed pharmacists like Vansan are trained by PATH to help guide people to TB diagnosis and treatment, which cuts down on TB transmission within the community.

The project emphasizes a patient-centered approach for people with TB-like symptoms.

Patients like Aunty MOUNG MON have seen the benefits of these efforts firsthand.

With support from USAID, the PATH-led PPM project in Cambodia has helped refer 23,307 patients for TB testing; of those 2,163 TB cases were confirmed which might have otherwise been missed. In Cambodia, PATH has fully transitioned its assistance for PPM to the Cambodia National TB Program, provincial health departments, and in-country partners, including the Pharmacists Association of Cambodia.

PATIENT-CENTERED APPROACH

“I coughed for a long time, I couldn’t eat and couldn’t sleep,” said Mon, who lives in Takeo province. “I went to the drug store, and the pharmacist told me to go to the health center to test my saliva [sputum]. After the tests, the doctor told me that I had TB and gave me treatment.”

PATH’S WORK IN PPM

In many countries, PATH is helping build national networks of committed pharmacists and other private and public health care providers to ensure that people receive screening and a quick referral for TB diagnosis and treatment, no matter where they seek care.

PATH’s work in PPM helps strengthen countries’ abilities to design, implement, evaluate, and sustain innovative and effective PPM interventions that contribute to national TB control objectives. This work began in Cambodia and is now being replicated in India, Tanzania, and Vietnam with funding from the USAID and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

For more information

A case study produced by PATH, the Cambodia National Centre for Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control, the municipal and provincial health departments, and other partners documents the five-year PPM project in Cambodia.

For more information on PATH’s work in public-private mix or for a copy of this case study, please contact Hara Mihalea at hsrimau@path.org or visit us at www.path.org/projects/tuberculosis-ppm.php.

For more information on USAID’s work in TB, please contact Elizabeth Pleuss at epleuss@usaid.gov.

This document was prepared for the United States Agency for International Development’s Bureau of Global Health Tuberculosis Task Order by PATH.

About PATH

For more information, please visit www.path.org.