

## Minutes of Health Working Group Meeting - North

Date: Thursday 12/November /2020

Venue: Tripoli UNHCR Office (Webex)



### Summary of Discussions and Action Points:

#### 1. Follow-up on action points from last meeting (Farah – UNHCR)

- Health partners supporting PHCs and dispensaries were reminded to follow-up on reporting by PHCs as well as referral of suspected COVID-19 cases for PCR testing.
- Partners were also reminded about the importance of applying COVID-19 precautionary measures inside PHCs including crowd control and the use of masks.
- MoPH was not represented in this meeting; thus there was no feedback on the point related to Ramia following up with MoPH centrally regarding MMU medications
- IOCC shared the updated version of IYCF SOPs

#### 2. Ophthalmological Surgeries Project in Zakaria Hospital (Dr. Mohamad Abed) presentation attached

- Dr Abed briefed the HWG about the ophthalmological project and the phoenix team which is currently managing ophthalmology cases at Zakaria hospital in Akkar and providing high quality diagnostic services and surgical treatment with 50% discount to all nationalities.
- The focal point for referrals is Mostafa Obaid [mostafa.obaid88@gmail.com](mailto:mostafa.obaid88@gmail.com)

#### 3. COVID-19 Situation (Nohal – WHO)

- Nohal briefed health partners about the current COVID-19 situation in Lebanon and shared figures from WHO daily brief report noting that the highest ICU occupancy per governorate is in Beirut and Baalbak-Hermel which lead to some death cases due to lack of ICU beds.
- COVID-19 death rate remains the highest in the north. According to WHO the death rate is associated to quality issues related to treatment at hospital level. MOPH and WHO are following up to link private and governmental hospitals together in order to enhance the quality of care. Furthermore, WHO is considering having specialized EMTs deployed again to governmental COVID-19 hospitals to provide further guidance on management of COVID-19 cases.
- Nohal briefed the HWG about MoPH memo on seasonal flu vaccine which will be available in pharmacies and hospitals and accessible by certain categories (children 6 months-5years, elderlies above 60, patients with chronic diseases and low immunity, pregnant women, cancer patients and health workers). Memo to be shared with the minutes of meeting.

#### 4. COVID-19 Response (Farah – UNHCR)

- RRT situation still the same partners are still conducting field visits to suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases in the North. IOCC RRT will increase its capacity up 10 nurses during the coming 2 months whereas MSF-Swiss will stop RRT activities on December 18.
- Hospital Expansion:

- TGH: 21 Covid ICU beds are ready to be used, in addition 34 beds for admission to the regular floor and 43 beds in covid expansion unit. Expansion units are not operational yet due to staffing issue and lack of small medical equipment and supplies such as garbage bins, chairs, etc. Agencies/partners interested to support TGH are kindly requested to reach to Farah Malyani ([Malyani@unhcr.org](mailto:Malyani@unhcr.org)).
  - HGH: in total 18 Covid ICU beds are available, in addition to 24 beds in the regular floor and 52 in covid expansion unit. Same as TGH, HGH needs support with staff.
  - With support of WHO 10 additional ICU nurses were recruited in TGH in addition to 8 nurses in HGH.
  - The issue of lack PPEs remains the same, Coordination with different Health partners to support Governmental hospitals is ongoing however the shortage of gloves and masks in the markets is not making things any easier.
- Isolation Facilities
    - 3 isolation facilities are currently available in the north: Tal Hayat Isolation Center (THIC), Abdel Aziz Hotel in Fneidek and Maarad (Quality INN). Unfortunately, the number of admitted patients is low considering the high number of COVID cases reported in Akkar and T5 and the inability of cases to apply home isolation.
    - A Meeting will be scheduled at central level to discuss the issue of the low utilization of isolation facilities which was not expected at the beginning of COVID-19 crisis in Lebanon.
    - PU is planning to prepare a video to promote services provided at THIC in Akkar.

#### 5. Partners' Updates on Activities and challenges (Health partners)

- LRC: MMU activities and awareness sessions on COVID-19 (remotely or face to face) are ongoing. LRC reported duplication of MMU services provided by LRC and Order of Malta in some locations in T5. A coordination meeting with MMU partners is to be scheduled soon.
- IMC Akkar: reported that no changes in IMC activities in 2021
- RI: (Nadine) launched second year project of community health awareness. MH services in addition to distribution of Hygiene and baby kits will be provided to pre-selected families residing in Akkar and Tripoli.
- MSF: 45 mhGAP patients are being referred to IMC-MH team, however some challenges related to the long waiting list and rupture of medications are being faced. MSF also reported that they currently have 10 NCD patients who are bedridden and not able to reach PHCs for medical services are in need for referral however no other health partner is currently conducting home visits. MSF patients will be provided with medications for 6 months as of December 2020.
- PU: 3 additional centers will start providing subsidized services before the end of Nov. Activities at Zahraa supported PHC were suspended due to internal review regarding the contract. PU to provide feedback soon regarding the resumption of activities. For next year PU will be expanding the RRT activities and THIC support till the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2021.
- IMC T5: same activities are running. Deddeh PHC and Hanane sultan in Menieh have started.
- SAMS: LHF projects is ongoing however not receiving enough referrals for Lebanese patients. UNHCR advised contacting hospital admission offices in contracted hospitals to inform them about the services.

#### 6. AOB

- UNHCR: In view of the increase of malnutrition cases UNICEF will be providing a presentation on Malnutrition project in the coming HWG coordination meeting.
- UNHCR: heard some rumors about some families living in some villages in El Denieh (Bkaasafirin, Bkarsouna, etc.) who are intentionally exposing themselves to COVID-19 positive cases in order to gain immunity. Partners were asked to share any info related to these rumors with UNHCR and ESU for further follow up.

### Action Points

No.	Action	Focal Point	Deadline
1.	Health partners supporting PHCs and dispensaries to follow-up on reporting by PHCs as well as referral of suspected cases for testing	Health partners	Open
2.	Health partners supporting PHCs and dispensaries to ensure that PHCs are applying covid19 precautionary measures including crowd control and use of masks	Health partners	Open
3.	WHO to share list of equipment provided to hospitals to avoid duplication	Katia – WHO	Under Process
4.	WHO to share the updated COVID-19 guidelines on PCR testing, breastfeeding and deliveries	Katia – WHO	Completed
5.	Ramia to follow up with Ms. Wafaa at central level regarding MMU medications	Ramia – MoPH	Nov 2020
6.	UNHCR to call for a meeting between MoPH and relevant agencies to discuss the issue of MMU medications	Farah – UNHCR	Nov 2020
7.	UNHCR to share SAMS announcement of LHF project with the HWG	Farah – UNHCR	Nov 2020
8.	Nohal to share Fire toolkit developed by WHO and Khaddit Beirut (Environmental Health Group).	Nohal – WHO	Completed
9.	To share MoPH memo on Seasonal flu vaccine	Farah – UNHCR	Completed
10.	UNHCR to organize a coordination meeting for MMU partners in the north	Farah – UNHCR	Dec 2020

### List of Participants

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