

BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

LESOTHO

2019

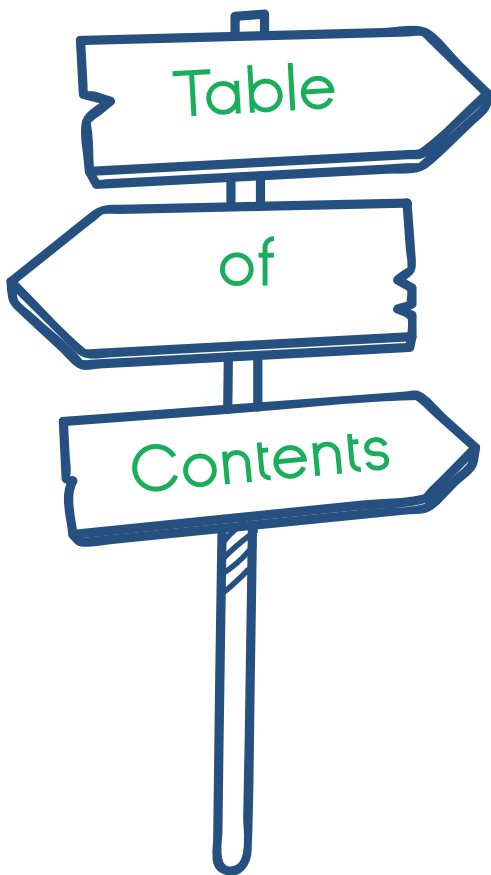


BAYLOR
COLLEGE OF
MEDICINE
**Children's
Foundation**
LESOTHO

BIPAI Baylor International
Pediatric AIDS Initiative
at Texas Children's Hospital



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PREPARED BY

Dr. Mabene Tsotako
Medical Director

APPROVED BY

Dr. Lineo Thahane
Executive Director

Photography is generously provided

by Smiley N. Pool

COLLABORATORS

Dr. Mosa Molapo Hlasoa
MELD and PUSH Projects Manager

Mrs. Esther Makhalanyane

PINCH Project Coordinator

Mrs. Mafusi Boopa
PROTECT Project Coordinator

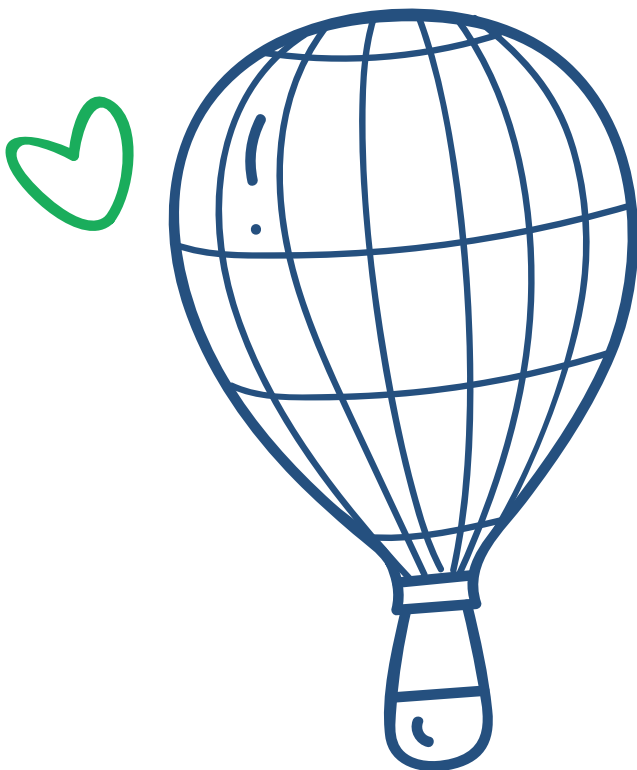
Mr. Motlatsi Letsika

STAR-L Project Coordinator

Mr. Thabo Motseki
Psycho-Social Support Coordinator

Dr. Teresa Steffy
Senior Pediatric Technical Advisor

Mr. Polelo Yose
Finance Manager



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BIPAI

HISTORY AND SCOPE

Baylor College of Medicine International Pediatric AIDS Initiative (BIPAI) at Texas Children's Hospital is the largest care and treatment network based at an academic institution supporting programs for HIV-infected and -affected children in the world. BIPAI consists of nine independent non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating 11 Centers of Excellence that provide comprehensive outpatient care for more than 300,000 children and families worldwide. Over the past 20 years, BIPAI has also evolved its mission beyond HIV to include comprehensive health programs designed to work within the existing health systems and improve maternal and child health outcomes. BIPAI provides technical assistance to its network to ensure the highest level of quality care and treatment, education and training for health professionals, and operational research to improve patient care.





STATISTICS

	\$43	→ Million budget
	80.000	→ Health professionals trained around the world
	300.000	→ Patients in care
	1500+	→ Staff Members
	200	→ Texas Children's Global Health Corps physicians

- 1** — Foundations:
- Romania (2001)
 - Botswana (2003)
 - Lesotho (2005)
 - Eswatini (2006)
 - Malawi (2006)
 - Uganda (2008)
 - Tanzania (2011)
 - Colombia (2014)
 - Argentina (2017)

- 2** — Programs:
- Angola (2011)
 - Papua New Guinea (2013)

*Foundations are independent and legally registered non-governmental organizations located in the respective countries.
*Date refers to year of establishment



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

I am once again privileged to present the Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation – Lesotho (Baylor Lesotho) annual report, for the year 2018/19. This year, my first as Executive Director, was one of continued transition for the Foundation, as I stepped into the role previously held by Dr. Edith Mohapi on August 1, 2018.

During this year, Baylor Lesotho has continued to provide high quality services to our patients throughout Lesotho at our Children's Clinical Centre of Excellence and Adolescent clinic at Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital in Maseru, and at our five Satellite Children's Clinical Centres of Excellence. We remain grateful for the support of the Baylor College of Medicine International Pediatric AIDS Initiative (BIPAI), Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Children's Hospital, Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, and the Lesotho Ministry of Health. Our donor-funded projects, through which we support the Ministry of Health as it strives to attain HIV epidemic control in Lesotho, continue to remain a source of pride for the Foundation.

This year, our providers have continued to implement innovative approaches and programs, such as:

- Supporting health facilities to deliver differentiated services, such as multi-month scripting and dispensing, in order to optimize client-centred care;
- Advocating for expanded access to lopinavir/ritonavir pellets for HIV-infected infants;
- Continuing to provide community-based HIV testing and treatment for adolescents using mobile clinics;
- Supporting decentralization of ART advisory committees throughout the country, to expand access to second-line regimens; and
- Supporting the Ministry of Health to update the national ART guidelines and plan for eventual transition of all ART clients in Lesotho to more-efficacious medication regimens.

As we continue to seek new growth opportunities for the Foundation, I remain proud of our adherence to BCMCFL's core mission, vision and values in all of our activities. Once again I wish to express my appreciation to the leadership of BIPAI and our Board of Trustees for their support, engagement and oversight during this time of transition, to the Ministry of Health which has entrusted us with its most valuable resources, and to all of our donors, funders, partners and clients.

It is truly an honour to continue to serve the children and families of Lesotho.

Kea leboha,

Lineo Thahane, MD
Executive Director



OUR MISSION

To provide high-quality, high-impact, highly ethical paediatric and family-centred health care, health professional training, and clinical research, focused on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, malnutrition, and other conditions impacting the health and well-being of children and families worldwide.

OUR VISION



To ensure universal access to care, treatment, and support services for all HIV-infected and -affected children and their families throughout Lesotho; support prevention of new infections; and equip healthcare providers with knowledge and skills to manage common paediatric illnesses.



OUR VALUES

Personal integrity and accountability, client-centred approach, respectful service delivery, compassionate and confidential services, organisational accountability for operational excellence, client and partner satisfaction, employee and organisation development, financial health, and infrastructure maintenance.

OUR PLACE WITHIN THE BIPAI NETWORK



Lesotho is a small, mountainous country in Sub-Saharan Africa, fully surrounded by its much larger neighbor, South Africa. The people of Lesotho, who number around 2.2 million, are known as Basotho, and their language is Sesotho. The local currency is the loti. The country is a parliamentary democracy with King Letsie III as head of state.

Lesotho's greatest health challenges remain the high prevalence of HIV and the high rate of tuberculosis (TB) co-infection. According to the Lesotho Population-based HIV Impact Assessment (LePHIA 2017), the country has the second-highest prevalence of HIV globally, at 25%. About 320,000 people live with HIV in Lesotho, 15,313 of whom are children under 14 years of age. Of these, 14,739 are currently on treatment, according to the report.

Although the government of Lesotho is providing treatment for these illnesses, there remains a human resource problem: Many healthcare professionals are not qualified to comfortably deal with children, resulting in paediatric patients being either mismanaged or inadequately managed. Capacity building is necessary to improve health service delivery in the country, especially to children.

To address these health challenges, which also impact the country's economy, the government of Lesotho has partnered with many organisations and sponsors. Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation Lesotho (Baylor Lesotho) plays a vital role in the fight against HIV/AIDS and TB. Our primary role is to provide comprehensive medical, social, psychosocial, and support services for HIV-infected children, adolescents, and their families nationwide. We also train healthcare professionals throughout the country in paediatric HIV care and management, as well as management of other common paediatric illnesses.

ABOUT BAYLOR LESOTHO

Baylor Lesotho was formed and registered in 2005 as a non-governmental organisation as a result of a partnership between the Baylor College of Medicine International Paediatric AIDS Initiative (BIPAI) in Houston, Texas, USA, and the Lesotho Ministry of Health. Through this partnership, Baylor Lesotho is committed to delivering high-quality, high-impact and highly ethical paediatric and family HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment services, health professional training, and operational research in Lesotho.

The Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation's Secure the Future initiative donated the initial funds to construct and equip Baylor Lesotho's first health facility, which His Majesty King Letsie III inaugurated on December 1, 2005, World AIDS Day. Baylor Lesotho runs its flagship Children's Clinical Centre of Excellence (COE) in Maseru, the capital city of Lesotho, along with five Satellite Clinical Centres of Excellence (SCOE) in five of the country's 10 districts: Qacha's Nek, Mophale's Hoek, Leribe, Butha-Butha, and Mokhotlong. In 2012, we launched an adolescent clinic specifically for those aged 14-20 years of age, housed within the Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital premises. The basic operations of all the centres are funded by the Government of Lesotho through the Ministry of Health.

Since its inception in December 2005, Baylor Lesotho has seen enormous growth in every area of its operations. The services offered have expanded from HIV testing, prevention, care, and treatment to provision of TB screening, prevention, and treatment as well as other support services, including outreach activities and psychosocial support. To accommodate this expansion, Baylor Lesotho's staff has increased significantly in both numbers and in the diversity of personnel functions.

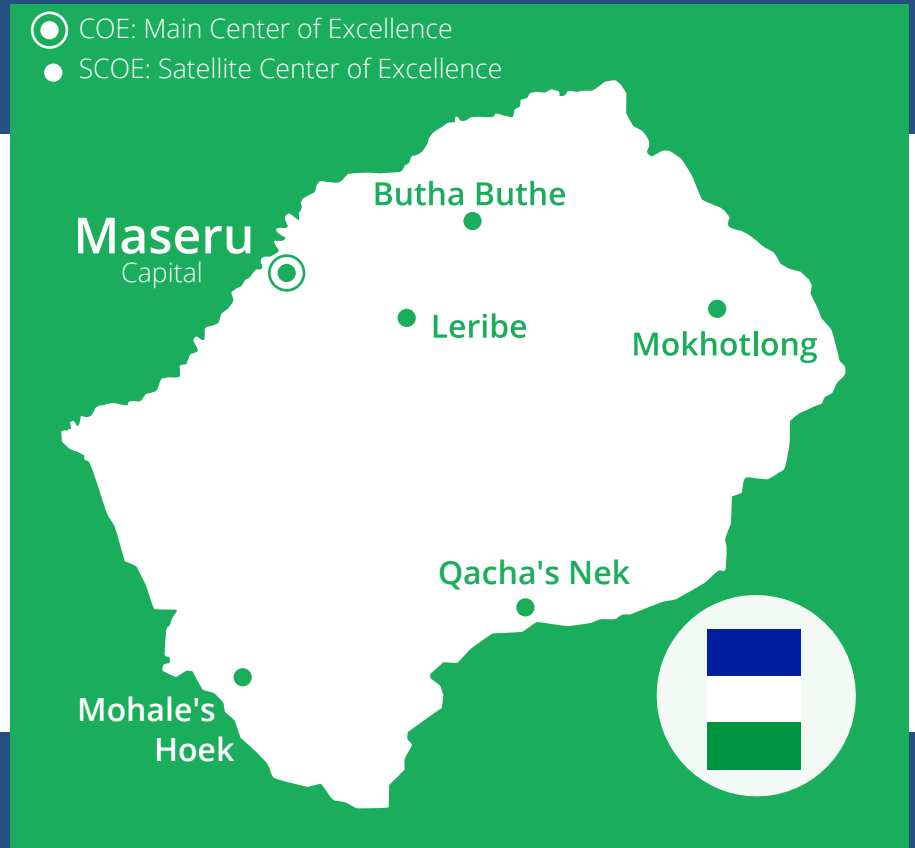
Baylor Lesotho operates donor-funded projects throughout the country, including trainings and mentorship. Furthermore, we distribute our expertise through capacity building with healthcare professionals across the country, either through attachments at Baylor Lesotho sites or by conducting on-site trainings. At the end of the reporting period, we had 2,817 active patients. Of these, 2,573 were HIV-positive, and all of them were on ART. Twenty patients were TB/HIV co-infected, 40 patients were positive for TB only; there were 199 HIV-exposed infants, and five patients enrolled for other services (including PEP, PrEP, etc.).

LESOTHO

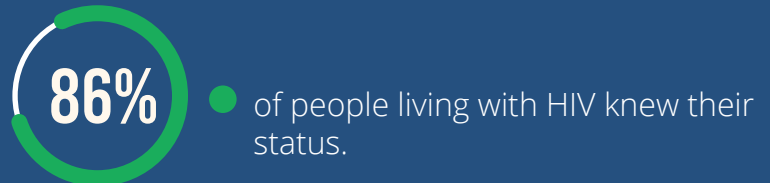
The 90-90-90 targets envision that, by 2020, 90% of people living with HIV will know their HIV status, 90% of people who know their HIV-positive status will be accessing treatment and 90% of people on treatment will have suppressed viral loads. In terms of all people living with HIV, reaching the 90-90-90 targets means that 81% of all people living with HIV are on treatment and 73% of all people living with HIV are virally suppressed.



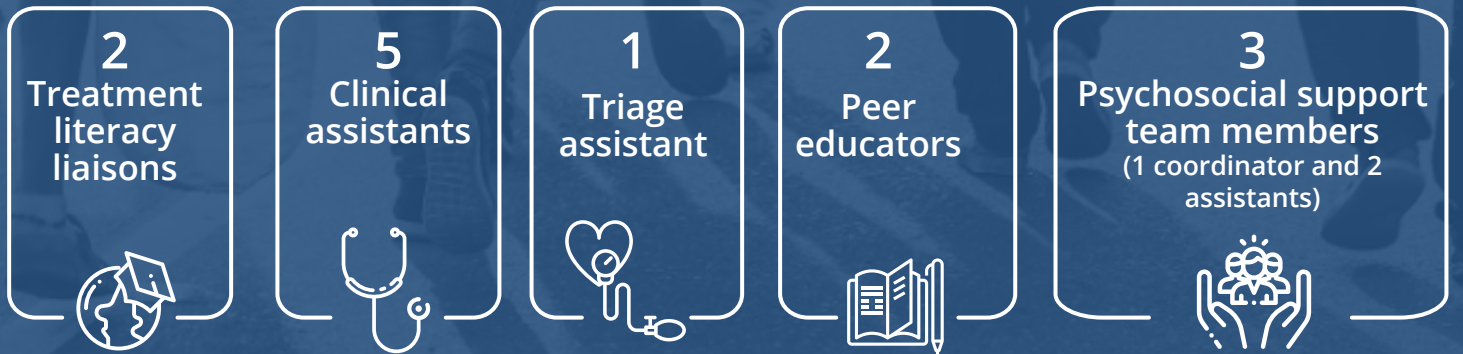
- COE: Main Center of Excellence
- SCOE: Satellite Center of Excellence



Nation of
2.203.000
inhabitants



Baylor Lesotho has 87 clinical staff
(excluding projects staff):



The total budget for the organisation for the report period was **\$6,852,450**



2019

KEY PROGRAMMES

Baylor Lesotho offers the following programmes and services:



MATERNAL HEALTH



1. Prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT)
2. Sexual reproductive health (SRH) services



HIV CARE AND TREATMENT



1. HIV testing and counselling
2. Anti-retroviral therapy provision
3. Laboratory monitoring
4. Management of treatment failure (including provision of 2nd and 3rd line drugs)
5. Post-exposure Prophylaxis
6. Pre-exposure Prophylaxis
7. Psychosocial services



INTEGRATED CHILD HEALTHCARE SERVICES



1. Growth and development monitoring
2. Immunisations
3. HIV testing
4. Nutrition services



ADOLESCENT CARE



1. Adolescent clinic
2. Teen club
3. Wise youth
4. Teen pregnancy clinic
5. Sexual reproductive health



TB SERVICES



1. TB screening
2. Sputum induction
3. Treatment
4. TB prophylactic therapy



OTHER PATIENT SUPPORT SERVICES



1. Outreach and defaulter tracking
2. Caring fathers support group

PROGRAMMES



SAVING LIVES WITH CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

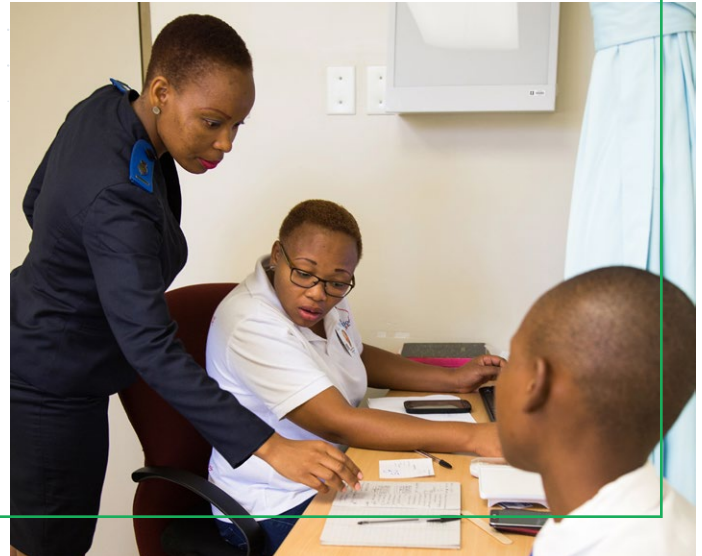
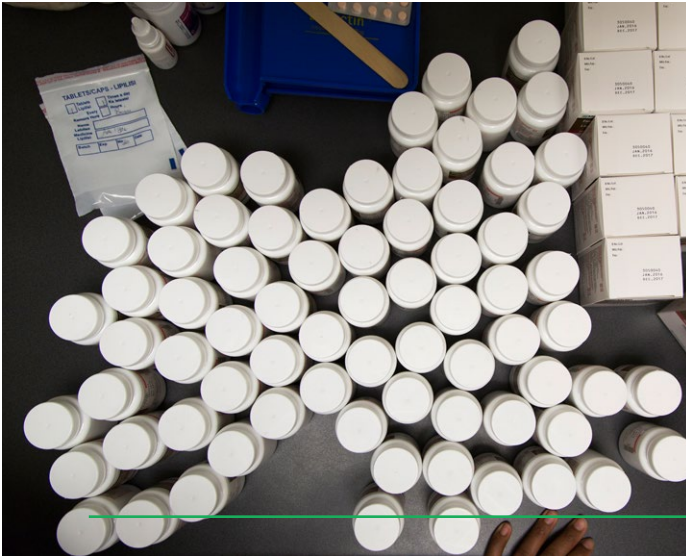
For the past five years, Baylor Lesotho has offered family planning and screening and treatment of sexually transmitted infections. However, we identified a gap in our services after one of our patients died of cervical cancer, which is the most common type of cancer among women in Lesotho. In July 2018, we added a new protocol to our sexual and reproductive health services: cervical cancer screening. Women living with HIV are at a higher risk of other diseases, and cervical cancer is most common in this population. In the early stages of cervical cancer, there are no symptoms or obvious signs, and yet if detected early, precancerous lesions can be treated.

Today, we screen all sexually active women and girls enrolled at the Children's Clinical COE in Maseru (Baylor Maseru) for cervical cancer. We do visual inspection with acetic acid as well as PAP smear for those who are eligible. By the end of the report period, we had screened 242 patients. Of these, one was referred for suspected invasive cancer and 13 for precancerous lesions.

REACHING MEN

We run a support group at Baylor Maseru known as Caring Fathers, which was started primarily to give psychosocial support to the men who care for our paediatric patients. Here, they discuss their everyday challenges and share advice. Feedback from these caregivers is extremely positive. But we realised that some of these caregivers were at times dealing with their own health problems. So we decided to change the programme: In order for fathers to care for their children, they need to be healthy themselves.

In February 2019, we dedicated Caring Father's day to clinical services in addition to psychosocial support. During the event, male healthcare providers offered various services ranging from HIV testing to prostate cancer screening. Any identified medical conditions are dealt with and referrals are made where necessary. So far, we have held two such events and are in the process of scheduling Caring Fathers medical days at least quarterly.



LOPINAVIR/RITONAVIR PELLETS FOR BETTER PAEDIATRIC ADHERENCE

Adherence to treatment has always been a challenge, especially for young children who are on KALETRA (lopinavir/ritonavir) syrup. This is due to various factors, such as its bitter taste and the inability of some caregivers to accurately measure it. Baylor Maseru was approached in 2017 by the Ministry of Health as a pilot site for a new formulation of this medicine in the form of pellets. After implementing the pilot, we saw a remarkable improvement in treatment adherence and viral load suppression among the children who were given pellets.

Following these results, the Ministry of Health decided to roll out pellets to all health facilities countrywide. Baylor Maseru staff members, especially the pharmacist and treatment literacy liaisons, were involved in training healthcare providers on the use of pellets and on the messages to be given to caregivers regarding pellets. As a result, pellets are now improving adherence among children not only at the Maseru COE but at all Baylor Lesotho sites and government health facilities.

ART ADVISORY COMMITTEE TRAININGS

According to the Lesotho National ART guidelines, patients who fail on their initial regimen (1st line) must go through a process to manage treatment failure. Patients first receive enhanced adherence counselling services so as to identify the barriers that may be contributing to the failure and address such barriers. If the obstacles have been addressed but the patient still has a viral load that is above 1,000 copies/ml, then the provider must submit an application to a government medical board to switch the patient to the 2nd line regimen. This application used to be made to the ART advisory committee in Maseru. However, this caused some delays in switching eligible patients to 2nd line regimens, as requests came from various health centres in different districts and the volunteer committee was unable to produce timely decisions.

The Ministry of Health decentralised the process this year, such that each district now has its own ART advisory committee. Baylor Maseru, through the PUSH and STAR-L projects, assisted the Ministry financially, and some of our clinical team members facilitated trainings. Currently, all districts have active ART advisory committees to respond to clinicians' requests and support clinical care in a timely manner. Baylor Lesotho, together with the Ministry, provides supervisory visits from time to time to ensure the process is running smoothly.



TRAINING MINISTRY OF HEALTH INTERN DOCTORS ON HIV AND TB

There is no medical school in Lesotho; all doctors are trained in other countries, including our neighbour South Africa. On completion of their studies, the new doctors are expected to come home for their 18-month internship programme. At the beginning of this year, the Ministry of Health identified Baylor Maseru as one of the training sites for these interns, especially on paediatric HIV and TB. They rotate at Baylor Maseru for a period of two weeks, during which time they are attached to different clinical departments and learn how we provide services to our patients. To date, we have had 18 interns, all of whom have given positive feedback about the training they received at our site.

CONTINUED MEDICAL EDUCATION AT SATELLITE COES

In order to capacitate our own staff with the latest updates in the medical field, Baylor Maseru holds a one-hour continuing medical education (CME) presentation every Friday morning. Presentations are done by either staff members or health personnel invited from other organisations and facilities. The SCOE staff members are also expected to organise their own CME presentations. This year we realised, however, that pertinent medical guidelines updates were not always reaching the SCOE staff members, resulting in inconsistencies in practice across the Baylor Lesotho network.

To ensure that Baylor Lesotho sites all speak the same language in terms of patient care and updates to Lesotho guidelines, we brought the satellite staff into our discussions through Zoom, the video conferencing software. This has not only improved CME through active participation across all sites, it has also improved morale by bringing the staff closer together.



EMPOWERING OUR **'WISE YOUTH'**

Lesotho is generally faced with high rates of unemployment and poverty. Even people who have graduated from tertiary institutions remain unemployed. This results in frustration and a feeling of hopelessness among our youth.

One of the mandates of the Wise Youth programme is to motivate and encourage its members to realise that they can use their talents to earn a living without necessarily being hired. This year some members of this group started making crafts such as flowers made from used ARV bottles. They sell these crafts, and that has remarkably improved their economic situation.



STAR-L - STRENGTHENING TUBERCULOSIS **AND AIDS RESPONSE THROUGH DISTRICT-BASED PROGRAMMING IN LESOTHO**

We are in year four of this five-year project funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention via the Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF). The overarching goal of the project is to reduce the impact of HIV and TB on the health of Basotho. Baylor Lesotho specifically contributes to the identification and treatment of children and adolescents in the districts of Berea and Leribe. This year 58,067 people were tested for HIV, of whom 16,216 (29%) were children and adolescents. We enrolled into care and treatment services 1,653 who were found to be living with HIV. We screened 196,421 patients for TB, of whom 4,732 had symptoms consistent with tuberculosis; 450 yielded positive results upon further testing and were treated for TB.

PUSH - PROVIDING UNIVERSAL SERVICES FOR HIV/AIDS



This is a five-year USAID-funded project, implemented under EGPAF, which began in 2016. The project's mission is similar to BIPAI's and supports high-quality, family-centred, comprehensive HIV care and treatment and provider-initiated testing and counselling (PITC) across three districts of Lesotho: Maseru, Mafeteng, and Mohale's Hoek. It also aims to strengthen national and district capacity to deliver HIV programmes by training healthcare workers on HIV and TB and participating in policy, protocol, and guidelines review.

The role of Baylor Lesotho is to support child and adolescent HIV and TB initiatives. In the past year, lay counsellors tested over 52,551 clients for HIV, and 525 children received sputum induction for diagnosis of pulmonary TB at supported health facilities. Three children had positive GeneXpert (rapid TB testing) results with Rifampicin susceptibility, while other children received further management based on their clinical diagnosis and chest X-ray reports.

Training is a key aspect of our participation in the project. One hundred twenty-six healthcare workers (doctors, nurses, and counsellors) from 10 districts participated at a training for decentralised ART advisory committees, and 18 private practitioners (doctors and nurses) participated in training on treatment failure. The offsite clinical attachment training programme continued at the Maseru COE and the Mohale's Hoek, Butha-Butha, and Mokhotlong Satellite COEs, with 79 nurses and nurse assistants participating in the programme. A total of 358 lay counsellors and professional counsellors received refresher training on HIV testing services during the reporting period.

MELD PROJECT



MELD stands for Mentorship of healthcare workers, Expansion of clinical care services, Linking mothers and infants together in HIV care, and Decentralising and Differentiating care to best meet patients' unique needs. This two-and-a-half-year, USAID-funded project is part of a regional effort under the Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation – Malawi Technical Support to PEPFAR Programmes, which aims to create sustainable HIV services that will continue even after PEPFAR funding has ended.



MELD's paediatric and adolescent mentorship component is similar to that of the PUSH project and covers the same three districts of Maseru, Mafeteng, and Mohale's Hoek. To avoid duplication of effort, PUSH and MELD paediatric and adolescent mentors support designated health facilities.

The MELD project supports innovations in differentiated care for paediatric and adolescent patients, including Community Adherence Mentorship and Retention Assistance (CAMARA) groups for adolescents and multi-month dispensing for paediatric and adolescent patients, along with improvements in PMTCT.

To date, 298 CAMARA groups have been formed, with a total membership of 1,073 adolescents who attended 805 individual meetings. Additionally, 319 family pairs have been established at supported health facilities. Our staff assessed the process by which 65 supported health facilities were carrying out paediatric and adolescent multi-month dispensing (MMD). We found that 58% are implementing MMD correctly, 29% are mixing qualifying and non-qualifying children, 5% are not implementing MMD but have clients who meet the criteria, and 8% are not implementing MMD and do not have clients who meet the criteria. MELD will continue to support health facilities to correctly and appropriately implement MMD.

PINCH - PROTECTING WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN FROM HIV IN LESOTHO

PINCH is a three-year project supported by The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, designed to increase uptake of maternal, newborn, and child health (MCH) services, including prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) as evidenced by increased antenatal care (ANC) attendance, higher PMTCT coverage rates, timely testing of HIV-exposed infants at 6 weeks of age, and treatment of all infected infants. The basic ongoing activities of the project involve mentorship and supervision to change the behaviour of healthcare workers, community health workers, and community members (i.e. patients). Community efforts focus on young women, their partners, and mothers. Facility efforts centre on MNCH clinics and include maternity wards and children's wards at hospital. Didactic trainings focus on known and evolving gaps in care and are directed by routine data collection and analysis.

This year, we focused on trainings and mentorship in the five districts of Qacha's Nek, Quthing, Thaba-Tseka, Butha-Buthe, and Mokhotlong. We trained 132 providers on psychosocial support, 41 on HTS, and 110 on early infant diagnosis, plus 2,230 village health workers on PMTCT.



PROTECT



Supported by The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, PROTECT is a three-year project whose main goal is to accelerate HIV Testing Services (HTS) uptake by adolescents through community-based HIV, sexual and reproductive health and family planning services, in order to have an AIDS free population of adolescents and young people. Its activities are implemented in eight districts in Lesotho - all except Maseru and Berea which are separately supported by the PEPFAR-funded DREAMS program. The project's main activities include community-based provision of HIV, TB and Family Planning Services (including HTS, ART initiation, TB screening, STI management and family planning services), with services provided via mobile clinics at schools, local clubs and churches. Project personnel collaborate with partner organizations who create demand for services amongst young people and follow-up on those found to be HIV-infected to ensure that they are adequately linked to facility-based services. During the report year, a total of 12,214 young people were tested for HIV in the northern and southern regions of the country.

PERSPECTIVES

One patient's Baylor Lesotho experience

Since February 2009, when I was first initiated on ART at Baylor Lesotho, I have seen care, love, and support from Baylor Lesotho, and it's been over 10 years now on ART. Baylor Lesotho has been an umbrella since my childhood; it has always made me feel like I am at home, and it gave me resilience. I am proud to be a Baylor Lesotho patient because of the support I got from this clinic, from people I previously considered to be strangers. They guided me to understand my strengths and weaknesses.

Thanks to Baylor Lesotho, I am now someone who supports others to take their medication, and I can inspire other people with my life story. The clinic helped me to be an outgoing, charismatic person, which is something that I never had. Baylor Lesotho also helped me to adhere to my medication at all times.

Baylor Lesotho gave me the knowledge and skills I needed when it comes to HIV, and I am now the confident person I am today because of Baylor Lesotho. My self-confidence and self-esteem have improved with the help of Teen Club and Wise Youth. Besides the main purpose of receiving medications, I also received valuable life skills and lessons from Baylor Lesotho. Regardless of how many mistakes I made, Baylor Lesotho staff never rejected me; they always stuck around and assisted me whenever I needed

Thanks from a caregiver

help.

As a caregiver, Baylor Lesotho always makes me feel welcome. All the staff help us every day with a smile while giving support to our families. Baylor Lesotho also loves our children, who are living with HIV/AIDS, very much. Every day, we appreciate your services as well as support. All the staff members meet all the qualities that we need. They have self-control, are caring, and have a good work ethic. You also criticize when needed: you are able to show us our mistakes. As parents, we appreciate everything you do for our families. Baylor Lesotho, keep it up — Basotho love you.



DONATIONS AND OTHER SUPPORT



Generosity, collaboration, and support from the following organisations allow Baylor Lesotho to carry out its mission and assist in improving the lives of our patients, for which we are grateful. The following list of our partners and donors is by no means complete.



**Elizabeth Glaser
Pediatric AIDS
Foundation**
Until no child has AIDS.



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