



Delivering quality essential
maternal, newborn and child
health services during COVID-
19:
Health workers' perspectives,
challenges and solutions

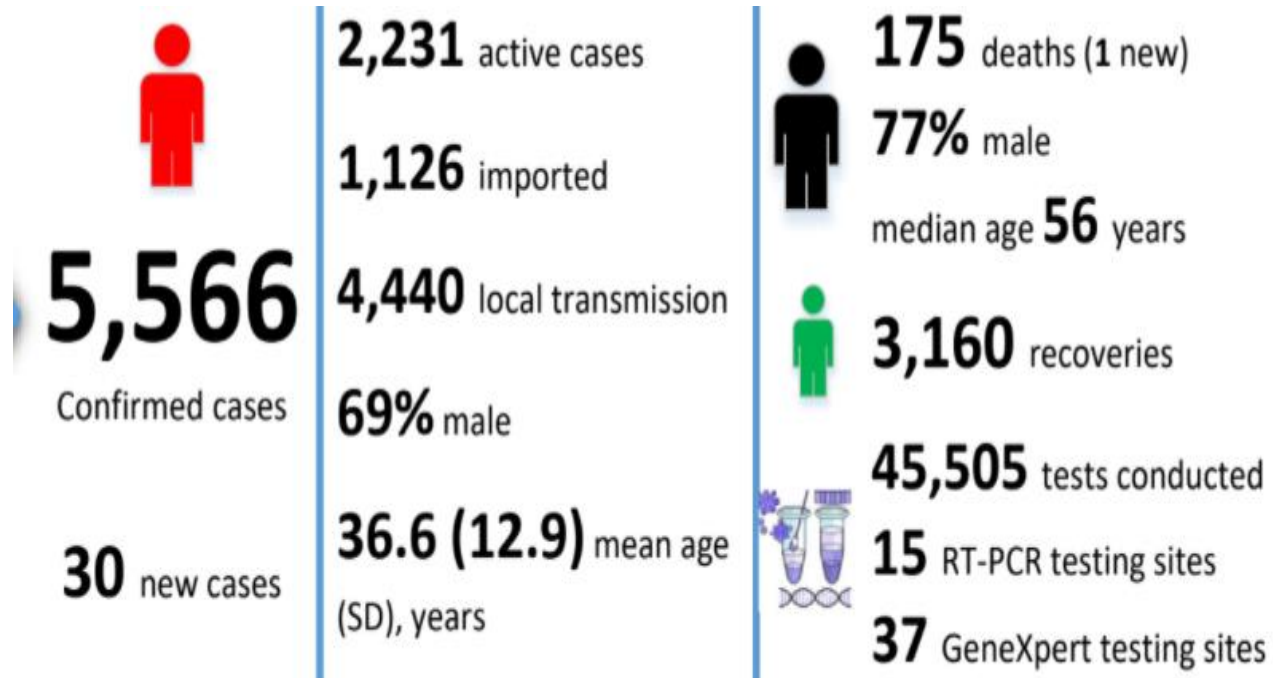
Dr Andrew Likaka,

Director, Quality Management and Digital Health

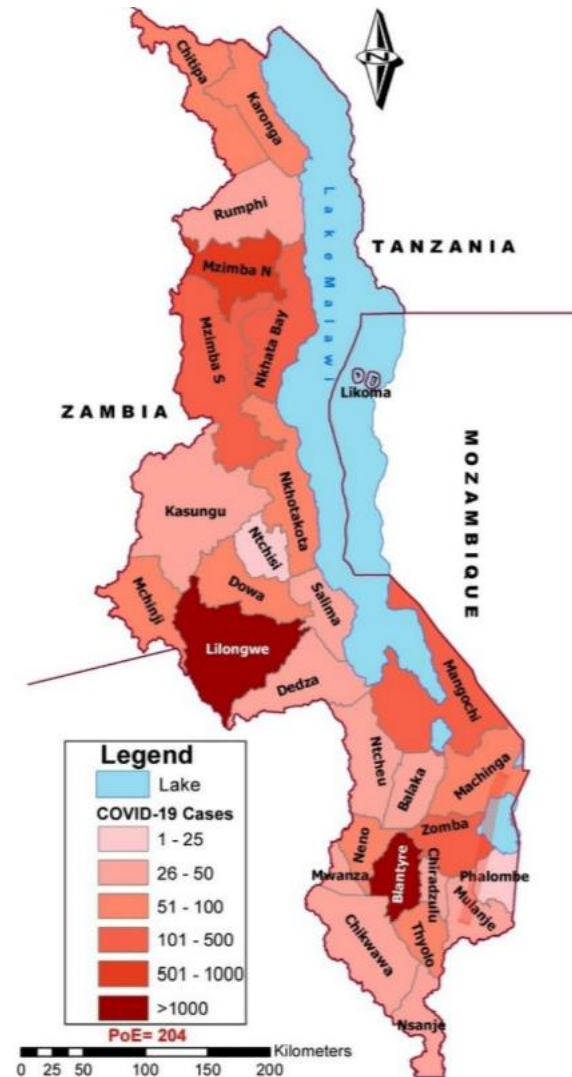
Ministry of Health

Malawi

Local Situation Update as of 31st August 2020



37 Pregnant Women, 1 Postnatal mother, 1MD



Disruption of RMNCAH services during Covid-19

- Delayed health seeking for RMNCAH services
 - Fears
 - Unavailability of health care workers
- Increase in teenage marriages and pregnancies
- Decreased attendance for Family Planning Services by 50%
- Decreased attendance for ANC services

8/29/2020

Malawi Sees Spike in Teen Pregnancies, Early Marriage During COVID Lockdown | Voice of America - English

Africa

Malawi Sees Spike in Teen Pregnancies, Early Marriage During COVID Lockdown

By Lameck Masina

August 27, 2020 07:16 PM



PHALOMBE, MALAWI - Malawi has one of the highest rates of early marriage and teenage pregnancy in the world, with about half of girls marrying before age of 18, according to government records. Aid groups say the coronavirus pandemic's closing of schools has worsened the trend.

A 17-year-old girl from the Phalombe district, who asked not to be named, said she became hopeless when the government closed schools.



TEEN PREGNANCIES SURGE IN MALAWI

Date: August 1, 2020

Lc. 19 G.
28 Aug.
Gender a
SA: Women
Month fundit
Press release:
SADC
SADC Gender Barometer 2020
After we broke-up my husband
Drivers of Change: Soole!
Botswana: Sethunya



as Over 5,000 Teen Pregnancies in 5 Months

A total of 5,467 teenage pregnancies have been recorded in Phalombe from January to May 2020 raising fear that the number may increase due to prolonged stay of learners at home.

This is a significant increase from 2019 when only 1,000 pregnancies were recorded in the district.

Malawi's National Gender Development Director General for Malawi Health Services Organisation, Dr. ... There will have to be need for policy makers to swiftly ...

... 120 registered cases of ... and age cases," said ...

... 1,467 teen pregnancies have also been recorded during the same period ... and has called on ... and policy makers to swiftly intervene ...

National Education Manager, ... said there is need to ... structures such as mother groups to engage parents on ...

... of enforcing by laws set by authorities to avert the risk.

... said Africa Organisation presented a report to the education, youth and sports service committees of the council ...

Challenges faced by health workers delivering SRMNCAH services

- Inadequate policies and everchanging guidelines and protocols
- Inadequate skills amongst newly recruited health personnel
- Isolation of infected health workers or contacts or those working in treatment centers for Covid-19
- Stigma and discrimination

8/29/2020

Malawi Health Workers Face Stigma, Discrimination Over COVID-19 | Voice of America - English

COVID-19 Pandemic

Malawi Health Workers Face Stigma, Discrimination Over COVID-19

By Lameck Masina
April 23, 2020 01:34 PM



- Health Officials Call On US Government to Reverse COVID-19 Test Guidelines
- Controversy Rages as India Presses Ahead With College Entrance Tests Amid Pandemic
- Hurricane Laura Victims Struggle to Find Housing Amid Pandemic

BLANTYRE, MALAWI - While health workers fighting the coronavirus around the world have been cheered in public, in Malawi they complain of insults, stigma, and discrimination.

Malawi so far has confirmed 33 cases of COVID-19 and three deaths. But health workers say they are presumed to carry the virus, shunned in public, refused access to public transport, and even evicted from rented homes.

The mayor of Malawi's capital, Lilongwe, recently condemned the practice of shunning health care workers for fears they have COVID-19.

Juliana Kaduya asked members of the public to appreciate what these workers are doing in saving the lives of coronavirus patients.

<https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/malawi-health-workers-face-stigma-discrimination-over-covid-19>

8/10/2020

Doctors react to new risk allowances - The Times Group Malawi



Doctors react to new risk allowances

Eric Mubidi - April 22, 2020 - 4:51 - Less than a minute



MISIMBO - It is wrong to limit it to Covid-19

Doctors have argued that their demands for an upward adjustment of their risk allowances are not limited to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Medical Doctors Union of Malawi president, Collins Msimbo, was reacting to an announcement by the government that it has increased the risk allowances from a minimum of K1,000 to a maximum of K60,000.

1/3

<https://times.malawitimes.com/news/health/doctors-react-to-new-risk-allowances>

1/3



Challenges for Midwives

- Inadequate infrastructure, PPE and IPC measures
- Inadequate support for mental health services (stress and depression)
- Infections and deaths amongst health workers due to Covid-19
- Limited capacity building for health care workers



Malawi health workers protest against lack of protective gear

Doctors and nurses in Blantyre stage sit-in, request government to meet their demands amid coronavirus pandemic.

by Charles Pensulo
14 Apr 2020



Health workers in Malawi's public hospitals reported severe shortages of personal protective equipment, prompting demands for more secure working conditions [File: Marco Longari/AFP]

Blantyre, Malawi - Dozens of health workers in Malawi's commercial capital, Blantyre, have staged a sit-in to protest against working conditions during the coronavirus pandemic, including a "critical" shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to treat patients.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/malawi-health-workers-protest-lack-protective-gear-200414165816071.html>

Malawian Midwives Unite for Their Rights - White Ribbon Alliance



Malawian Midwives Unite for Their Rights

May 6, 2020 | Blog, Malawi, News, Safer Together
By Newton Kalua, Communications Intern, White Ribbon Alliance Malawi

As the COVID-19 pandemic brings new challenges to healthcare workers, Malawian nurses and midwives are advocating for their rights within the healthcare system to be respected, protected and fulfilled during the crisis. For years, the health sector in Malawi has faced many challenges, including a shortage of health facilities and health workers, critically lacking adequate numbers of trained midwives. In a 2017 study by White Ribbon Alliance, more than 20,000 additional midwives were needed to support women of reproductive age. As the COVID-19 crisis continues to stretch an already overstrained health system, hiring additional health workers and fulfilling their commitment is more vital than ever. WRA Malawi was pleased to see that as part of the Government of Malawi's COVID-19 response, the Ministry of Health (MOH) committed to hiring 2,000 more health workers to ease the overburdened system and has already hired 755 healthcare workers.

While the government recruits additional health workers, they must also navigate how to adequately equip and protect health workers serving on the frontlines. In mid-April, healthcare workers staged a sit-in to protest working conditions and lack of personal protective equipment – referred to as PPE – while demanding increased risk allowances, or hazard pay, in the wake of the

enter search term

were at an average of MK2,000 (around \$2.00 USD). To their credit the
[v.whiteribbonalliance.org/2020/05/06/malawian-midwives-unite-for-their-rights/](https://www.whiteribbonalliance.org/2020/05/06/malawian-midwives-unite-for-their-rights/)

Coping and Adaptation Mechanisms

- Social distance and mandatory use of face masks
- Recruitment of additional health care workers
- Suspending elective cases
- Working in shifts
- Innovation and technology use

THE NATION

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Govt probes recruitment stampede

by Joseph Mwale — 11/06/2020 in National News 3 min read

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Health Jappie Mhango says government will investigate the chaotic organisation that organised walk-in mass interviews to recruit healthcare cadres on Tuesday in Mzuzu.

...killed at Mzuzu



Capacity development of SRMNCAH health workers



Association of
**OBSTETRICIANS
& GYNAECOLOGISTS
OF MALAWI**



The scientific arm of the Association of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Malawi (AOGM) in conjunction with the Association of Malawian Midwives (AMAMI) & Reproductive Health Directorate with in the Malawi Ministry of Health is planning to hold a series of Webinars around COVID 19 and Pregnancy with Malawi's Perspective.

Target audience for these series will be maternity health workers (clinicians and midwives) from all the health facilities in Malawi. We envision that these talks will be used as part of continuous professional development for individual cadres but it will also be a common platform where maternal health information will be shared and experiences learnt from the topics/cases being discussed.

All sessions will be held virtually via zoom every **Wednesdays from 1400-1500hrs** and the eighth session is planned for the **2nd of September 2020**. Please find the zoom link below:

Topic: COVID 19 and Pregnancy - Malawi's perspective

<https://zoom.us/j/4403207754?pwd=S0lMQWJOWmpKcmJMZHVaTHVSVnlfQT09>

Meeting ID: 440 320 7754

Password: 8182

Session 8 topics

- Managing a COVID-19 pregnant client in labour with a valid medical insurance: Experiences from Nsanje DHO. **Dr Alfonsina Ndebela**
- Coordination between a health center and a district Hospital in managing a COVID-19 case: A case of Mangochi DHO. **Dr Chimwemwe Thambo**
- **Question and Answer session**

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES FOR SRHR SERVICES DURING COVID-19

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Member Associate of



By Andrew Bishop Mkwandawire

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information and services remain key to the lives of adolescents, youth, women, and men although every country is sailing in the turbulence of COVID-19 fears and restrictions. At a distance, it seems it is just impossible for health service providers and health communication personnel to continue providing SRHR information and services. But in reality, it is just possible on condition that all medically recommended measures will be taken into consideration.

On 20th June 2020, the Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM) visited Malikha, Nchenzi in TA Chimutu in Lilongwe district where it hosted a pretesting of Cervical Cancer Screening Radio Campaign messages that feature COVID-19 prevention alert, a drive funded by UNFPA.

Community Based Distribution Agents of the area were also encouraged to reach more households with Cervical Cancer, Family Planning, and COVID-19 information and lead referrals targeting adolescents, youth, women, and men through their Health Surveillance Assistant (HSA).

All participants used alcohol-based hand sanitizer and facemasks and their confidence to support the social work was boosted.

Below are pictures that share the whole story of the visit.



Picture 1: Pretest participants listening to radio messages. They quickly followed messages due to characters featured in messages and interest to start commenting earlier was sparked.

Engaging communities and frontline health workers

Recognizing and rewarding the efforts of health workers

COVID-19 Pandemic

Malawi President Introduces Award for Health Workers Fighting COVID-19

By Lameck Masina

August 02, 2020 11:32 AM



- **US Nears 6M Cases of Coronavirus as Midwest Sees a Spike**
- **Malawi President Bemoans Men's Laxity on COVID-19 Prevention Measures**
- **Artists in Kenya Spreading Health Messages Through Their Works**

BALAKA, MALAWI – Malawi President Lazarus Chakwera has announced the introduction of special award for most dedicated health workers in the fight against COVID-19. Speaking during his weekly national address Saturday night, Chakwera said five health workers nominated by various medical associations will be receiving the award every three months for their dedication to work. But health workers say awarding only five people is not good enough.

Malawi continues to register an increase in the cases of COVID-19.

The coronavirus situation update report from the Presidential Taskforce Force on COVID-19 shows as of the Saturday evening, Malawi had 4,186 cases of COVID with 120 deaths.



THANK YOU

