

COVID-19 Bulletin

Health Sector, Dhaka Ahsania Mission

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As a renowned non-profit philanthropic organization, Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) Health Sector has been at the forefront in fighting the physical, economic, psychological and social burdens that COVID-19 has brought upon us. Health Sector, along with all other institutions of DAM, has been under lock-down adhering to the Government declared general leave. However, its activities are not at all confined; rather the activities are continuing with much more determination to reduce the after-effects of this pandemic period.



DAM Health Sector Activities in COVID-19 Pandemic

Formation of COVID-19 Response Committee

At the beginning of the pandemic, DAM Health Sector has established a response committee which has been providing guidance and technical support to battle COVID-19. The committee members visited the Health Sector institutions and project offices for providing orientation training to the staffs before the country went under lock-down. They provided visual presentations and demonstrations of ideal hand washing technique, cough etiquette, and PPE use. The committee also attended live video sessions for general awareness and shared correct information for preventing COVID-19.

Development of Protocols and Guidelines

DAM Health Sector has developed several protocols and guidelines to fight COVID-19 – guideline for personal protection for medical professionals and infection control; guideline for drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation centers to follow during COVID-19 pandemic; guideline for community-based service providers; guideline for refugee camp transport drivers; guideline for general vehicle drivers; Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) guideline; guideline for ideal use of masks, gloves and hand sanitizer; and the recent protocol (guideline) for emergency treatment support to COVID-19 positive DAM personnel. All of these are in use at current situation.

Adequate Supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

DAM Health Sector has ensured adequate supply and storage of PPE for the healthcare workers. From the beginning of the pandemic, it has been distributing PPE kits to Urban Primary Health Care Service Delivery Project II (UPHCSDP-II Mirpur, Hazaribag, Rajshahi and Cumilla), Integrated Emergency Humanitarian Response to the Rohingya Population in Cox's Bazar (IEHRR) Project in Cox's Bazar, Tuberculosis Control Program centers, and to its three Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers. Ensuring their personal safety, all healthcare workers have been determinedly providing their services.



Also, as an individual initiative to continue caring for the drug dependents, Ahsania Mission Female Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Center has distributed PPE to 27 drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation centers, who are members of SANJOG – a network of drug treatment and rehabilitation centers of Bangladesh.

Continuing Healthcare Services



DAM Health Sector has been continuing its regular healthcare services for maternity and child healthcare, delivery support and Cesarean deliveries, family planning services, general consultation, laboratory investigations, USG and EPI through four Comprehensive Reproductive Healthcare Centers (CRHCC) and 22 Primary Health Care Centers (PHCC) under the UPHCSDP-II project.

A total of 10 health posts running in the Rohingya camps under IEHRR project are also functioning. TB Control program has been operating two DOTS center and laboratories at Ward 1 (Uttara) and Ward 17 (Khilket) of Dhaka city. Ensuring adequate PPE, Gazipur, Jashore and Ahsania Mission Female Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation center are also continuing their services amidst the pandemic.



Formation of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Committees

IPC committees were formed in each project area of UPHCSDP-II and for the IEHRR project running in Cox's Bazar. The committees are responsible for monitoring the PPE usage and disposal along with organizing training programs for infection prevention and control purpose.

Awareness Raising Events

DAM Health Sector developed leaflets, stickers and other communicative materials for distributing among general population. These contained information about spread of the virus, symptoms of the disease, and preventive measures. A total of 80,000 such leaflets have been distributed among different project/program beneficiaries. Different Health Sector projects have organized targeted awareness programs in schools and community on personal hygiene, proper hand wash, cough etiquette and the spread of COVID-19. UPHCSDP-II RCC PA-1 organized a discussion meeting with 50 pregnant mothers and their families on the issues related to safe delivery during COVID-19. The IEHRR project has been



implementing community awareness programs, door-to-door and individual counseling, and distribution of leaflets containing preventing measures of COVID-19 for the camp dwellers to increase knowledge, to modify hygiene behavior, and to increase hand washing practices. Awareness messages have been distributed through 5308 mobile text messaging service to various actors, vendors, MMC, SMC, Imam and other officials from the Feed the Future Bangladesh Nutrition Activity (BNA) project running in Patuakhali. Health and

Nutrition Voucher Scheme for Poor, Extreme Poor and Socially Excluded People (PEPSEP) project conducted a campaign for managing social distance and precautionary measures for safe life for the community people of Savar and Satkhira. Online campaigns are still undergoing to raise awareness for preventing COVID-19.

Training on COVID-19 Preparedness

DAM Health Sector has been providing in-person training on preparedness for COVID-19 and mental well-being since the pandemic hit the world. Before the general leave started in Bangladesh, technical personnel from the Health Sector visited UPHCSDP-II project offices and IEHRR health posts for



providing orientation trainings for all healthcare personnel. Three orientation meetings were organized in the Health Sector head office where different project personnel attended. In-person IPC trainings were also held for UPHCSDP-II and IEHRR project staffs.

After the country went under lock-down, DAM Health Sector took the initiative to train its competent workforce using internet platforms. A total of 11 batches received training on "Operational Preparedness for Tackling Physical and Psychological Burden of COVID-19". Physicians, nurses, midwives, laboratory technicians and other healthcare workers received the training, where the management authority also participated. Almost 360 personnel from different sectors have received the training till date.

Support for Economically Vulnerable Coworkers

With the support from Ahsania Mission Shastho Shurokkha Forum (AMSSF), DAM Health Sector provided food and grocery support to 50 low-income coworkers of UPHCSDP-II DNCC PA-3 (Mirpur), 50 low-income coworkers of UPHCSDP-II DSCC PA-3 (Hazaribag), 43 low-income coworkers UPHCSDP-II RCC PA-1 (Rajshahi), and 47 low-income coworkers of UPHCSDP-II CoCC PA-1 (Cumilla) areas. PEPSEP project has



prepared a course of action to provide food supplementation, nutrition and hygiene support for 1650 beneficiaries. Gazipur Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Center distributed food items to its economically vulnerable health workers with the support from AMSSF.



Furthermore, with the funding from DAM Zakat fund, Ministry of Social Welfare and DNCC, UPHCSDP-II DNCC PA-3 (Mirpur) also helped 150, 50 and 20 poor families in the project area respectively.

The food supplies are provided to potential beneficiaries without any discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability or political affiliation/opinion.

One of our coworkers was tested positive for COVID-19, who received all necessary treatment in designated hospital with the support from DAM Health Sector. He has now recovered from the ailment, and in good health.

Establishing Hand Washing Points

All the projects of DAM Health Sector have been emphasizing the importance of proper hand washing during the pandemic. As precautionary measures, all the health centers of UPHCSDP-II, health posts of IEHRR project, and TB Control Program established hand washing stations at the entrance and made hand washing mandatory for every visitor. Permanent and temporary hand washing stations have been established in different growth centers at the BNA project areas of Patuakhali district.



Development of Khutba Module with Issues on COVID-19

The BNA project has prepared a Khutba module on COVID-19 issues to be disseminated among the community people during Friday congregation.

Initiatives inside Prisons

Through the Improvement of the Real Situation of Overcrowding in Prisons (IRSOP) project, 700 leaflets have been distributed within four working prisons – Dhaka Central Jail, Kashimpur Central Jail 1 and 2, and Kashimpur Female Central Jail. Prison authorities highly appreciated the effort and they have placed these leaflets at important places for clear visibility of the prisoners. DAM-GIZ-IRSOP project has taken an initiative to provide awareness information to the released prisoners over telephone since May 2020 through the project staffs. Five of such prisoners have already received the telephone orientation.



DAM Health Sector has handed over 172 full set PPE kits, 17,200 gloves, 8,600 face masks, 172 goggles and 68 infrared thermometers to the prison authority through the IRSOP project. DAM Health Sector is also waiting for the approval from the Government authority for conducting online training sessions for prison personnel working in 68 prisons across the country.

Tobacco Control Initiatives during COVID-19 Pandemic

Health Sector's Tobacco Control Program has taken different initiatives against COVID-19; like-letter campaign, SMS campaign, social media campaign, publishing articles and news etc. DAM has sent 21 letters signed by different professionals and tobacco advocates, and also distributed more than 1000 SMS to the honorable Prime Minister demanding withdrawal of Ministry of Industry's directive and imposing temporary ban on the marketing and sale of all tobacco products at the time of COVID-19 epidemic.



DAM has issued a legal notice to the Secretary of the Ministry of Industry against the circular in favor of tobacco companies. DAM has developed 21 templates and two videos for social media platforms on issues related to tobacco-use and COVID-19. DAM has sent a request letter signed by the organization

President Mr Kazi Rafiqul Alam on tobacco taxation to 70 MPs, NBR Chairman, and the Finance Minister through email along with tax proposal and recent WHO template regarding increased risk of tobacco use in COVID-19.

COVID-19 Perspective of Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation

Three drug addiction treatment & rehabilitation centers of DAM Health Sector have been serving. A guideline has been developed to treat and serve the patients with Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and other mental and behavioral disorders during the pandemic. All the new patients admitted in the centers for in-house treatment will be quarantined for 14 days. Separate isolation rooms have been prepared in each center for this purpose. Adequate screenings are taking place to ensure the safety of the in-house patients.

In-house orientation sessions are being conducted for both the staffs and patients to let them be aware of the pandemic and on how to prevent this contagious disease. As social distancing is advised during this pandemic, so online and mobile platforms are being used instead of in-person family visits and counseling. Psychosocial educational sessions are being conducted regularly to train the patients on how to deal with panic and anxiety related to COVID-19.

Mental Health Support

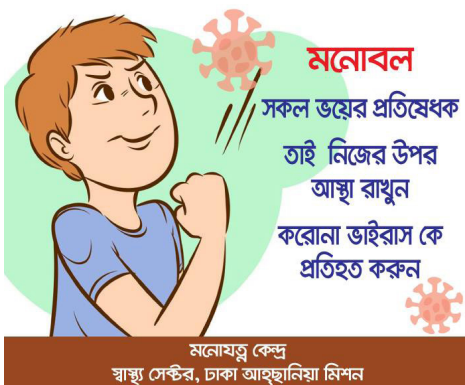
DAM Health Sector has been organizing online mental health counseling sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this initiative, a total of eight sessions have been provided until now. People suffering from anxiety and panic regarding COVID-19 and with other mental health conditions are receiving the online services.

Regular Monitoring and Updates

Daily monitoring reports and updates from every project/program/institution are shared with the concerned authorities through email and mobile applications at all time for rapid response at any change of situation. Online meetings are taking place at regular basis to improve the collaborating, learning and adaptive management of every project in the crisis situation. Web-based platforms are also being used for capacity development and efficient operational issues regarding the activities.

Social Media Campaign against COVID-19

DAM Health Sector has been running awareness campaigns on COVID-19 using social media platforms. It has implemented following social media initiatives –



- **Developing templates:** Total 33 templates were developed on various issues of COVID-19. They have been uploaded in different Facebook pages of Health Sector projects/programs/institutes.
- **Conducting Facebook live sessions:** Five facebook live sessions were conducted on physical, mental health issues of COVID-19, and on drug dependency during COVID-19. Additionally, eight small videos on PPE use; messages from health professionals; experience sharing of recovered COVID-19 patients were developed and uploaded in the Facebook pages. Above 42000 viewers have seen the videos and joined the Facebook live sessions.

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- **Sharing write-ups/articles:** Total eight articles on COVID-19 and tobacco-use; and COVID-19 and drug addiction treatment were published in national daily newspapers.
- **Conducting online survey:** An online survey titled “COPING STRATEGIES AND WELLBEING IN THE FACE OF COVID-19 CRISIS” was conducted.

Online Live Talk-shows on Issues Related to COVID-19

DAM Health Sector has been broadcasting online talk-shows on economic, social and other issues related to COVID-19. Experts from different fields have graced the live sessions which are being aired regularly on Facebook. Speakers discuss about how COVID-19 pandemic impacts and changes our lives and living in current situation. Viewers from all around the world joined the live shows and they shared their queries, concerns and experiences about the issues. The shows are available for viewing at the DAM Health Sector official Facebook page.



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