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IHI PARTNERS WITH SOUTH AFRICA NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ON INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE TUBERCULOSIS CARE AND OUTCOMES

Supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the initiative will accelerate progress toward national health care quality goals

Cambridge, Massachusetts and Pretoria, South Africa – August 17, 2017 – The [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](http://ihi.org) (IHI) has been awarded a \$3 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support a four-year quality improvement (QI) initiative to reduce deaths from tuberculosis (TB) in South Africa. The initiative has been co-designed with the [South Africa National Department of Health](http://www.doh.gov.za) (NDoH) and other partners, and will be the first country-wide TB effort of its kind to utilize QI methodologies at both local and national levels. The goals are to find the missing TB cases, dramatically improve the care of patients with TB, reduce the incidence of the disease by nearly a third by 2022, and cut the rate of TB mortality in half by the same year.

Every year TB kills more than 30,000 people in South Africa, making it a leading cause of death in the country. Despite recent improvements in TB cure rates, the burden of TB in South Africa remains high, fueled by a HIV co-infection rate of approximately 57%. The increasing number of drug-resistant forms of TB further worsens the situation, with more than 10,000 people diagnosed with RR/MDR-TB annually.

“It is critical we deploy a rapid response that is national in scope to address this epidemic. This is possible through the concerted efforts of all health workers working at different levels of the health system to improve TB care. There is also strong determination, both at the leadership of the NDoH and within government, to record measurable improvement and we look forward to driving this initiative,” stated Dr. Yogan Pillay, Deputy Director General, in charge of HIV/AIDS, TB and Maternal, Child and Women’s Health, in the National Department of Health. “We acknowledge the support of the Global Fund, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the USAID-led TB SAP program and all their associated partners who will make such a large-scale project possible.”

The main challenge faced by the NDoH is the high level of attrition among patients from screening to diagnosis, treatment initiation, and completion, known as the “TB Care Cascade.” The NDoH has prioritized strengthening the TB Care Cascade to reduce the number of patients who fall out of the process along the cascade. Quality improvement methodology will be used to identify the gaps, develop and monitor plans to address them at facility level.

In November 2016, the NDoH convened IHI and partner organizations based in South Africa to undertake the design and implementation of a QI initiative to support the implementation of the National TB Strategic Plan. This initiative will be implemented in all 52 health districts in South Africa to create innovative, local learning networks of primary health care clinics and community health centers. Starting with an intense

period of learning in ten sub-districts located in four provinces with the highest burden of TB in the country, local learning networks of primary health care clinics and community health centers will be established. Health facilities will identify and test strategies that can then be rapidly scaled up to the rest of the district, province, and country.

The new efforts being announced follow the South African government's successful national application of QI methods to prevent mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV eight years ago. This program leveraged local expertise and deep facility-level engagement in driving down PMTCT rates from 23.2% in 2003 to 2.4% in 2012.

Dr. Sodzi Sodzi-Tettey, Executive Director, Africa Region, IHI, is very optimistic that the burden of TB in South Africa will be similarly eased and improved. "It has been a truly wonderful experience co-creating this work with colleagues from the NDoH to roll out over the next four years. Ultimately, as we have seen time and again, frontline health workers, empowered with the necessary improvement tools and supported by leadership, will develop the innovative local solutions that are needed to close these identified gaps in TB care. We are excited to contribute to such a worthy endeavor, working closely with the NDoH and other very experienced partners."

IHI has been working for decades with national and regional governments to co-design QI-based strategic initiatives that have resulted in improved quality of national, regional, and district-level performance of health systems. For more on IHI's work around the world, visit ihi.org/regions.

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement

IHI is a leader in health and health care improvement worldwide. For more than 25 years, IHI has partnered with visionaries, leaders, and frontline practitioners around the globe to spark bold, inventive ways to improve the health of individuals and populations. Recognized as an innovator, convener, trustworthy partner, and driver of results, IHI is the first place to turn for expertise, help, and encouragement for anyone, anywhere who wants to change health and health care profoundly for the better. Learn more at ihi.org.

The South Africa National Department of Health (NDoH)



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