

Virtual Ninth Health Cluster Coordination Meeting
Kathmandu, Nepal
4 June 2020 -THURSDAY (2:00 – 4:00 pm)

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Gunaraj Lohani, Lead of the Health Cluster and co-chaired by Dr. Lungten Z. Wangchuk, Co-lead of the Health Cluster. Distinguished officials from the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), Health Coordination Team and Provincial teams from all the provinces, and health partners from more than 38 agencies attended the meeting virtually. Dr. Lungten Z. Wangchuk, Co-chair and Dr Sameer Adhikari, Chief of HEOC facilitated the meeting.

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Agenda Items

Agenda Item	Responsible	Time
Welcome and Update	Dr. Gunaraj Lohani, Chair-Health Cluster	14:00-14:10
COVID-19 Epidemiological Situation	Dr. Basu Dev Pandey, Director, EDCD	14:10- 14:20
Managing COVID positive cases at Bheri Hospital: Lessons Learnt	Dr. Prakash Thapa, Medical Superintendent, Bheri Hospital	14:20-14:30
Follow-up action points and brief updates from partners	Dr. WANGCHUK, Lungten (Zangmo) Co-chair	14:30-14:40
Provincial Presentation (5 minutes to each province)	Karnali Province, Gandaki Province, Bagmati Province	14:40-14:55
Summary of the meeting followed by discussions/questions	Dr. Lungten Wangchuk, Co-Chair Advisors MoHP and Chair (answers/comments to the questions)	14:55 -15:05
Comments/Answers to the questions	Advisors/Chair	15:05-15:20
Conclusion and closing	Dr. Gunaraj Lohani, Chair-Health Cluster	15:20-15:30

Synopsis of the meeting:

Dr. Lohani welcomed all the participants to the meeting and provided brief updates on the responses of MoHP to manage and control COVID-19. The details of tests and isolation/quarantine of COVID-19 cases as of 3 June 2020 were also provided.

Dr. Lohani thanked all the countries and organizations for providing continued support to MoHP through "One Door Mechanism" for COVID-19 response. He informed about the endorsement of COVID-19 Emergency Medical Deployment Teams (EMDT) Mobilization Guidelines, COVID-19 Cases Isolation Management Guidelines and Guidelines for Management of Dead Body of COVID-19 cases (edited).

As of 3 June 2020

Total PCR sites: 20
 Total PCR tests done: 80267 (average of more than 3000 per day in past week)
 Total PCR positive: 2300
 Total active cases: 2009
 Total discharged: 282
 Affected districts: 64
 Total RDT performed: 120379 (average of more than 2800 per day in past week)
 Total isolation beds: 3952
 Total people in isolation: 2013
 Total quarantine beds: 204388
 Total people in quarantine: 155868





Dr. Basudev Pandey, Director, Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD) provided epidemiological updates on COVID-19 cases in Nepal. He also informed that about 98% of COVID-19 cases in Nepal are asymptomatic and thus suggested case investigation and contact tracing as a must. Dr. Prakash Thapa, Medical Superintendent, Bheri Hospital presented the lessons learnt on management of COVID-19 cases. He provided the information on strategies and resources that assisted in successful management of COVID-19 cases in Bheri Hospital and requested all the managers for proper planning and implementation with coordinated approach for management of COVID-19 cases.

Dr. Lungten Wangchuk, Co-chair provided brief updates from partners and their supports on COVID-19 response this week. She also updated on the progresses of Mental Health Sub-cluster like endorsement of COVID 19 Intervention Framework on MHPSS and interventions for person in quarantine settings. She also put forward the challenges that are being faced by the MHPSS teams at ground level such as travel passes for the MH support staff to travel to the field and testing for homeless persons or new coming person into residential care/treatment homes.

Following the health partners presentation, Bagmati Province, Gandaki Province and Karnali Province provided the provincial updates, activities, key issues, and their way forward. The major issues identified in the provinces, which were later summarized by Dr. Lungten, were:

- Lack of proper management of quarantine facilities and people within those facilities
- Inadequate isolation facilities (management of asymptomatic COVID cases)
- PCR testing issues (machine, lab reagent, RNA extraction kits) and huge sample backlogs
- Inadequate human and financial resources for PCR laboratories and CICT formation
- Lack of appropriate information sharing and coordination when central CICTT visits provinces
- Lack of protective commodities like PPE (goggles, masks -N95, face shields, gowns) for both COVID and non-COVID (basic and essential) health services
- Need for clear guidelines for management of asymptomatic cases as majority of cases are asymptomatic
- Lengthy contact tracing form- as the no of contacts increases, the form has to be shorter and precise than collecting many information that is half filled

The co-chair highlighted that some of the issues related to unclarity in testing and discharging will hopefully be addressed by the guidelines that were just endorsed and mentioned by the chair such as: COVID-19 Cases Isolation Management Guidelines and revised testing guidelines for COVID-19 and rest of the policy and operational issues will be conveyed to the chair, who had step out to attend high level emergency meeting.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Samir Kumar Adhikari, chief of HEOC and acting chair thanked all the participants of the meeting for their presence and ensured that the provincial issues will be addressed sooner through coordinated efforts of MoHP and health partners.



Decisions/Action points:

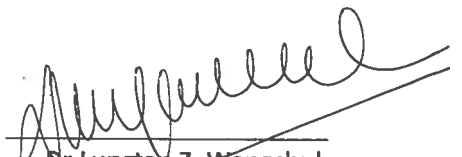
- Partners requested to re-prioritize where possible towards the key priorities as given the scenario of increasing cases:
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (N95, full set)
 - Logistics for labs especially - Testing kits, RTPCR reagents
 - Support to Hub hospitals for the expansion of Isolation wards
 - Help in improving health conditions in quarantine
 - Help health facilities for the continuation of services

Signed by the Chair:



Dr Gunaraj Lohani
Chair/Lead

7 June 2020



Dr Lungten Z. Wangchuk
Co-Chair/Co-Lead