

CONTINUED TUBERCULOSIS (TB) TREATMENT IN ZIMBABWE DURING COVID-19

Statement on COVID-19: 17/04/2020

The Stop TB Partnership Zimbabwe applauds the Government of Zimbabwe for all the measures that they are taking to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. We welcome the national lockdown called for by government which took effect on 30 March 2020. We are also thankful to the Ministry of Health and Child Care for developing new drug dispensing protocol for TB medicines to ensure TB patients are given 1-2 months supply for intensive and continuation phase respectively. This move will help to reduce the frequency of patients visiting health facilities.

We therefore advise all people on TB treatment including those taking TB Preventive Therapy to visit their nearest health facilities to collect their medicines. Furthermore, we call upon all our partners to ensure communities are aware that TB services at all health facilities remain uninterrupted during this National lockdown period. It is critical to ensure household and community support systems for people with TB are well strengthened and functioning.

We encourage people on TB treatment to take extra caution and follow the prevention guidelines as shared by the World Health Organisation and the Ministry of Health and Child Care which include:

- Good personal hygiene
- Frequent washing of hands with soap
- Avoid touching your nose, eyes and mouth
- Cough into your elbow
- Social distancing and staying at home

People ill with COVID-19 and TB show similar symptoms such as Cough, fever and difficulty breathing. Both diseases also attack primarily the lungs therefore if you experience any of these symptoms, quickly visit your nearest health facility for screening. We also hereby express the importance of ensuring all people presenting symptoms but who test negative for Covid-19 are further investigated for TB.

As Stop TB Partnership Zimbabwe we continue to work closely with the Ministry of Health and Child Care through the National TB Program (NTP) and World Health Organisation (WHO-Zimbabwe) to monitor the situation and ensure quality TB services remain accessible to all.

#One Face,One Voice & One Goal to End TB & COVID-19 !!!

#STAYATHOME

#Working together to end TB & COVID-19

Shared by the Chairperson (Mr Ronald Rungoyi) on behalf of STPZ Committee