

HEAL TB Inaugurates New Multidrug-resistant TB Treatment Center in Debre Tabor

Authored by: Tsion Issayas

Publish: 1/31/2018 5:37:00 PM

Last update: 1/31/2018 5:42:33 PM

MSH's Help Ethiopia Address Low TB Performance (HEAL TB) Project inaugurated a state of the art Multidrug-resistant (MDR) TB Treatment Center located at Debre Tabor Hospital in Northern Ethiopia. The inauguration ceremony took place on Saturday January 27, 2018 with representatives from Amhara Regional Health Bureau, Zonal Health Offices, and other distinguished guests in attendance.

The USAID-funded HEAL TB project has supported TB program efforts in Ethiopia for the past six years. Addressing the threats of MDR-TB has been one of the major activities of the project and services now reach most of the Amhara and Oromia regions. The newly inaugurated center serves to further expand MDR-TB treatment services in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Regional Health Bureaus.

The Debre Tabor MDR-TB treatment facility is one of four health facilities being constructed by the HEAL TB project as part of an extension beyond the project's initial five year period, and the first to be inaugurated.

At the start of the HEAL TB project in July 2011, Ethiopia was seventh among the 22 high-burden countries for TB, with an estimated sputum-smear-positive rate of 163 per 100,000 people and a mortality rate of 92 per 100,000. MDR-TB was a major concern, but there was no solid program to address it.

In 2011, there were only two hospitals in Ethiopia that could admit MDR-TB patients and initiate treatment. With a mixed ambulatory and inpatient model designed by the FMOH, HEAL TB in partnership with FMOH established 23 MDR-TB treatment initiating centers in the two regions, and more than 300 treatment follow-up centers for patients to get their DOT (Directly Observed Treatment). In addition, HEAL TB constructed three MDR-TB centers and equipped and trained staff of MDR-TB units in all 23 hospitals. A total of 1,005 MDR-TB patients started treatment in the two regions during the project's five years, an increase from 50 before the project.

The MDR-TB Treatment Center at Debre Tabor Hospital was constructed with an investment of close to USD 200,000 (6 million Ethiopian Birr) and has been fully furnished and equipped through the HEAL TB Project. The center has both

inpatient and outpatient units which will provide services to the northern parts of the Amhara region.

The CEO of Debre Tabor Hospital, Belay Ambachew, thanked MSH for this big contribution toward the fight against TB. He said 'these types of constructions usually take large amount of investment and fail to meet quality standards. But MSH just showed us how a small monetary investment can be used to build a great facility that meets all the required quality standards.' The hospital management awarded a certificate of appreciation to MSH on the ceremony.



Debre Tabor Inauguration

The remaining sites at Jimma and Bule Hora (Oromia Region) will be finished and handed over to the respective health facilities by the end of February 2018; while the treatment center at Woldia Hospital (Amhara Region) has already been completed and is pending inauguration. The four MDR-TB centers together will give services for more than 11 million people in Amhara and Oromia regions.

The USAID/HEAL TB constructions at health facilities in Ethiopia are intended to assist the TB prevention and care activities in the country.