

TIBETAN HEALTH

JULY – DECEMBER 2022



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, CTA

About Us

The Department of Health, CTA, manages and finances 48 health centers in India and Nepal including Ngoenga School for Tibetan refugee children with special needs apart from different health programs, projects, and activities.

Tibetan Health is the official Newsletter of the Central Tibetan Administration's Department of Health registered as (Tibetan Voluntary Health Association).

Tibetan Health Newsletter is published twice a year to inform and update about our health promoting initiatives to our friends, donors and supporters. This newsletter also gives you an overview of health programs, projects, activities and needs of the department. Most importantly, it covers success stories and outstanding contributions of all our field health staffs including hospital administrators, doctors, nurses and community health workers etc. This newsletter is dedicated to them, for their selfless dedication and hard work, who is the backbone of this successful and unique refugee healthcare system.

Tibetan Health is distributed free to all who are interested in the works of Department of Health.

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Mental Health Desk organized Awareness programs for young adults in Delhi and Bangalore

Dharamshala: The Department of Health partnered with the Dalai Lama College for Higher Studies (DLIHE), Bangalore, and the Chisem foundation, a youth-led psychology student group and had organized youth-targeted mental health awareness programs in Bangalore and Delhi, respectively.

One day workshop was held on 10th June, 2022 in Bangalore and subsequently on 26th June, 2022 in Delhi.



There were 155 numbers of students who had participated in the workshop. The workshop used various methods such as icebreakers, assessment forms, presentations, videos, and open discussion. Dr. Shivantika from Delhi University and Ms. Jyotsna, a certified queer-counseling psychologist, spoke to the Tibetan youth in Delhi. They discussed on mental health: problems and coping means and maintaining healthy relationships, respectively. On the day, Tibetan aspiring artists T-Nammy and Gtashi showed their support by performing their songs and sharing their resilient journeys of pursuing their passion. The first-year Tibetan youth hostel students also recited poems and gave theater performances followed by wellbeing activities at TCV day school ground, Delhi.

Health Department concluded 7th Health Review Meeting

Secretary of the Health Department, Mr. Palden Dhondup inaugurated the 7th Health Review Meeting at the Administrative Training and Welfare Society (ATWS), Dharamsala on 14th July 2022.



A total of 60 participants, including doctors and administrators from Delek Hospital, Men-Tsee-Khang, Local Tibetan Clinics from various Tibetan Settlements, Monastics and School institutes, Executive Secretaries, representatives of the Central Council of Tibetan Medicine, and staff of the Department of Health participated in the 2-Day review meeting.

The first day of the meeting began with a presentation on the five most prevalent diseases in the Tibetan community as reported in the department of Health- Health Information System by Traditional & Allopathic Doctors accompanied by the introduction of each relevant program by respective DoHe staff, followed by Q&A session at the end.

The review meeting ended with a group discussion followed by a presentation on integrated preventive measures and suggestions of interventions for the top 5 prevalent diseases and windup with the presentation on the final compiled resolution from the meeting by Deputy Secretary Guru Nyima la.

DoHe Secretary successfully concluded the review meeting lauding the participants for their active participation and urged for future collaborative efforts in improving public health across Tibetan settlements.

Another Half Day meeting was held with the department of health facility doctors and Executive Secretaries to discuss administrative and accounting issues, gave a guidance talk on the importance of management, leadership quality, and public relations by the Health Secretary on 16th July 2022.

Pre service Training for Nurses and Regional Supervisors in Dehradun

Dehradun: The Health Department had organized a five-day Training of Trainers for the regional supervisors/coordinators under Health workforce capacity strengthening program from

18th July to 22nd July 2022 at Deakyiling in Dehradun. Five regional offices for mentoring and supervising health workers were set up. One supervisor each for Karnataka, Northeast India, Dehradun area settlements, Bir-based Himachal settlements, and one for the remaining unclustered settlements in Northern India, including Dharamshala, Delhi, and Ladakh. These regional supervisors will be responsible for visiting health facilities on a rotating basis, to collect programs, to monitor data, to provide technical and programmatic guidance, and on-the-job training.



These activities aimed to address the DOHE challenges of supervising and mentoring health program components at the ground level for smooth activity implementation.

Free Eye Screening and Surgery Camp at Mundgod



Mundgod: On 8th July, 2022 a free eye screening and surgery camp were organized at Mundgod Tibetan Settlement by DTR Hospital Mundgod in collaboration with MM Joshi Eye Hospital.

A total of 59 patients were screened for eye related issues and for around 16 people with various eye related surgeries were carried out such as Cataract and Pterygium. The Camp was

funded by The Tibet Fund, USA, and administered by the Department of Health, CTA.

Nutrition based theme skit performed at the settlements on the Birth Anniversary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

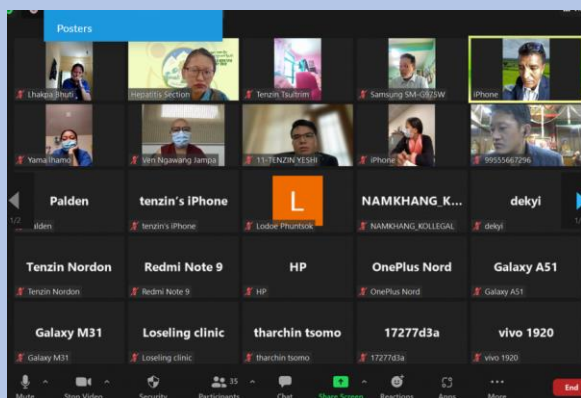
Dharamshala: On the 6th of July every year, Tibetans across the globe celebrate the birth anniversary of the His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.



The Health Education desk of the Department of Health, CTA coordinated with Tibetan Settlement Offices to organize a skit based on the theme of the importance of nutrition. Eight settlements participated and arranged a skit on the day. Such as Hunsur, Bylakuppe, Mundgod, Bhandhara, Mainpat, Kalimpong, Miao and Bir Dege. The teams were given a brief orientation through a virtual meeting prior to a month on the background, objective, and target message. The focus was to avoid junk food, carbonated and energy drinks. For many, the method to create awareness felt to be a bit different approach from the usual awareness. The success of the events were a result of collective effort from all the teams and coordination from the Settlement offices.

Health Department initiated Hepatitis awareness drive

Dharamshala: The Department of Health, CTA observed World Hepatitis Day through virtual awareness drive for health care workers and patients. The webinar was addressed by doctors and medical experts from allopathic and traditional Tibetan medicine namely Dr Dhondup Tashi from Gajang Medical Society, Dr Lungtok from TMAI, hepatitis B advocate Ven. Ngawang Jampa, and Nurse Yama Lhamo.



The doctors talked about the importance of testing, treating and vaccinating against Hepatitis B whereas Ven. Ngawang Jampa spoke about her experience as a Hepatitis B patient and the importance of being mentally strong, frequent follow-ups, and continuous treatment and inculcating a balanced diet.

The theme, “Bringing hepatitis care closer to you”, aimed to raise awareness about the need to simplify and bring hepatitis care to the communities and people wherever they are. World Hepatitis Day takes place every year on 28 July by bringing the world together under a single theme to raise awareness of the global burden of viral hepatitis and to influence real change. Door to door and mass awareness sessions were also held across the settlements and schools with Health talks and free screenings activities etc.

The activities were financed by the United States Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

Pre service Training of Newly Recruited Nurses under Health Workforce Capacity Strengthening

Dharamshala: The pre-service training of six recruited nurses under the “Health Workforce Capacity Strengthening” by the Department of Health, CTA took place from 25th July till 26th August 2022 at Dekyiling Tibetan Primary Health Center in Dehradun.



The training aimed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the new staff. It prepared them to assist with various programs under the department of the health such as CCOCC, SBCC, RMNCHA, HIS, TB and TMS etc., in addition to the clinical and administrative work. It was also meant for them to easy progression of data collection and implementation of projects and carrying out awareness works.

Department of Health Successfully Concluded its Mental Health Orientation to Community Leaders

Dharamshala: The Department of Health, CTA successfully concluded mental health orientation to community leaders in 20 major Tibetan settlements in India with support from PRM and help from the local settlement offices and the Tibetan primary health centers. From 16 June to 27 July, the department’s mental health dealing staff, Tsering Yangdol and Tenzin Chondhen, visited Tibetan settlements in central and northern India, namely Orissa, Mainpat, Bhandara, Delhi, Bir, Deckyiling, and Dharamshala. Simultaneously, the telepsychiatry project coordinator, Sherab Tsono, and Mundgod’s mental health dealing nurse Sangay Choezom visited southern settlements; Mundgod, Hunsur, Kollegal, and Bylakuppe and conducted the mental health orientation. Similarly, in Baluwala and Clementown settlements, the respective nurses, Dawa Choedon and Tseten Peltso gave the same

orientation.



The Department of Health provided basic mental health orientation to 563 community leaders in 21 Tibetan settlements in India.

The first ever mental health orientation was much appreciated by the community leaders for its unique method of inclusivity and clear concept delivery. This made the learning fun and relatable to their everyday lives.

The learnings from this orientation was that mental health relates to every individual and not just those suffering from mental health problems or their family members. Anyone, irrespective of age and gender, can suffer from mental illnesses. It is not an individual's fault that he/she/they suffer(s) from any kind of mental illness. However, unfortunately the negative stigma towards people suffering from mental health issues in the settlements were still prevalent. Which had its negative consequences on these people by ostracizing them from the care and support they deserve.

The effort to reduce these stigmas must begin from changing ones negative beliefs, actions, and feelings one held towards anyone struggling with mental health problems.

Along with the orientation, the dealing staff gave positive parenting and trauma-informed care workshops to parents and school staff, respectively.

Department of Health Launched Disbursement of Baby care-kits for Newborn Infants

Dharamshala: The Mother and Child Health Program of the Department launched disbursement of baby care-kits for newly born

Tibetan infants at both private and public hospitals including primary health centers under the jurisdiction of the department.



This new initiative funded by USAID aimed at delivering supported health services while focusing on curbing infant mortality, and ensuring healthy child growth while also providing nutrition supplements to pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers with children up to age two.

Health Secretary Palden Dhondup unveiled a sample kit during a brief ceremony held on 10th August, 2022 at the Department of Health.

Health Secretary Palden Dhondup emphasized on the collective actions of the administration and community in reducing child mortality while also improving maternal health.

Department of Health held an orientation workshop on Allopathic Medicine

Dharamshala: A two-week orientation workshop on Allopathy Medicine for Traditional Sowa Rigpa physicians held at LTWA from with the goal of improving community health through better integration of traditional Tibetan SORIG and Allopathic medicine on the 18th of August 2022. There were 15 participants from seven different medical institutes like TMAI, Chagpori Tibetan Medical Institute, CIHTS Varanasi, Palpung Sherabling, Menri Ling Bumshi College and private practitioners as well.

The inaugural session was presided over by the Health Joint Secretary as a chief guest. She emphasized the significance of improving public health and raising awareness on disease prevention and urged them to practice their

knowledge in their respective settlements keeping the objectives and importance of the integration project in mind.



A total of 40 sessions including both theory and practical practices were provided by the Allopathic doctors. Introduction on basic allopathic medicines, report reading, first aid, NCDs, Oral health etc.

A separate week-long Traditional SORIG orientation workshop was also held from 26th August 2022 at LTWA.

Department of Health Staff Concluded an Official Visit to Clinics and Hospitals in the Northern Tibetan Settlements



Dharamshala: The Department of Health, CTA's HIS staff Ms. Tenzin Dolma, and TB staff Ms. Ngawang Woesser concluded their official visit to clinics and hospitals in the northern settlements of Poanta, Lakhawala, Manduwala, Dekyiling, Clementown, and Delhi on the 3rd of September 2022. The visit was meant to monitor HIS data management in settlements and to provide assistance in better management of the data. It was also meant to review TB resources, registers, records, to identify the patients' challenges and to formulate the way forward.

The team focused on identifying the needs of eye and ear camps based on the OPD data of the hospital.

Annual TB and CCOCC Programs Review Meeting

Dharamshala: On the 3rd of September 2022 the Department of Health, CTA commenced a four-day annual review meeting for TB and CCOCC programs at the administrative training center, Dharamshala.



The objective of the review meeting was to strengthen the existing programs through reviewing the ground-level implementation, challenges, and feedbacks from the health care providers. The whole session was led by the program consultant, Dr. Lobsang Tsering.

Additional secretary Mr Jampa Phuntsok was the chief guest at the opening session. Joint Secretary Mrs. Tenzin Kunsang addressed the participants and introduced the schedule and aims of each sessions. After the opening session, Director of Library of Tibetan Work and Archives, Geshe Lhakdor la, spoke to the participants on "Buddhist perspective on health care and Mindfulness in general".

The meeting was attended by 46 health care providers from various health facilities across Tibetan settlements in India and Nepal.

Orientation workshop for Allopathy and Sowa Rigpa practitioners concluded

Dharamshala: The two-week orientation workshop on Allopathy Medicine for Traditional Sowa Rigpa physicians and one week of the vice-versa concluded on the 31st of August 2022 under the Traditional and Allopathic collaboration program held at LTWA auditorium. Organised by the Department of Health, the workshop was attended by 30 participants from seven different medical institutes like TMAI, Chagpori Tibetan Medical Institute, CIHTS Varanasi, Palpung Sherabling, Menri Ling Bumshi College, and private practitioners as well.



Health Secretary, Palden Dhondup presided over the closing ceremony accompanied by two personal physicians of His Holiness the Dalai lama namely Dr. Tsetan Sadutshang and Dr. Tsewand Tamdin.

A brief feedback session was held in which four participants from different sections shared what they learned and how to be more resourceful using some approaches of the other discipline. However, there was a clear consensus about the objective of the orientation program and was communicated clearly that the idea was not to turn the participants into an expert or practitioners of the other discipline but rather a helping hand in some areas during their practice. In the changing landscape of the healthcare system by moving away from disease-oriented to a more holistic and personalised approach, Dr. Tsetan expressed that this workshop was the first step of many toward a holistic approach from the department.

On the final note, Health Secretary appreciated the guidance of the two physicians and said that the workshop was the inception of actualising the idea advised by His Holiness the Dalai Lama

on which a series of discussions were held over several years. And he encouraged each participant to build on this.

Department of Health Inaugurated Awareness Workshop for Enrolment of Tibetan Medicare System

Dharamshala: The Department of Health organised a workshop for awareness and enrolment campaign for Tibetan Medicare System (TMS) for the year 2023-24 at the administrative training centre on 10 September 2022.



Secretary Palden Dhondup presided over the workshop attended by Additional Secretary Jampa Phuntsok, trainer Alok Gupta, Joint Secretary Tenzin Kunsang, TMS staff Pema Youdon and the Directors of PHC and health workers. Mr Secretary addressed the gathering and reiterated the vision, evolution, and the importance of self-sustenance of the programme.

Additionally, settlements that surpassed the target enrolment goal were distributed certificates and cash rewards. Tibetan communities such as Dharmashala and Norgyeling settlements were the award recipients, while settlements close to the target mark also received the certificates.

TMS program officer Pema Youdon explained the aim of the workshop was to give an introduction to the new members and set the goal for the fiscal year 2023-24 based on the population of each settlement and likewise, to raise awareness among the public of the TMS programme and make it more efficient. She

added that it made up for missed opportunities due to the pandemic restrictions for the last three years. This year's conference saw 47 participants from 40 settlements.

The workshop was funded by USAID through TTF. The TMS programme was initially initiated in 2012 and 9774 members enrolled in it. The year 2022 marked the 10th anniversary of its establishment with 24101 members enrolled, bringing it to forty per cent of the exile Tibetan population.

The Department of Health Observed World Rabies Day



Dharamshala: On September 28, 2022 the Department of Health observed World Rabies day by successfully vaccinating 1914 dogs in 11 Tibetan settlements through branch Tibetan Primary Health Care Centers. In certain settlements our staff at the TPHCCs coordinated and facilitated with local NGOs.

The event's organiser included awareness talks about both monkey pox and World Rabies Day in some locations. As monkey pox had been actively spreading throughout India since about July 2022. For instance in Puruwala, they covered both the topics which was attended by 55 people including teachers and children. A special emphasis was placed on children since they were more likely than adults to pet and play with animals, which increased their risk of contracting rabies.

Awareness on Prevention of Suicide initiated across Tibetan settlements



Dharamshala: On 3rd October 2022 the Mental Health Desk of the Department of Health organised an awareness session on suicide prevention to the students and the faculty of Sarah College and TCV school. Similar awareness campaign was launched across 17 settlements by the local Tibetan doctors.

PRM Program delegation visited the Department of Health



Dharamshala: PRM Delegate Mr Denis Test, Program Officer of the Assistance Office for Asia and the Near East, Ms Mackenzie Rowe, Regional Refugee Coordinator, Ms Katrina Castillo, Political Officer visited the Department of Health on 17th October 2022. The official visit was to monitor the PRM and US government funded programs in the Dharamshala settlement and partner offices. They were received by the Health Secretary, Mr Palden Dhondup, Additional Secretary of Health, Mr Jampa Phuntsok and joint secretaries and all the PRM program offices. Mr Tsering PRM program coordinator briefed them regarding the progress and the impact of these programs.

Health Secretary along with TNSA Executive Director Visited the US for fund-raising and awareness related program



Washington: The Office of Tibet welcomed Mr Palden Dhondup, the secretary of the Department of Health and Mr Tenzin Rinchen Lama, the Tibetan National Sports Association (TNSA) Executive Director in Washington DC on 6 October 2022. The delegation visited New York and Washington DC as a part of TNSA's fund-raising and awareness program. TNSA is the apex of national sports body of the Central Tibetan Administration, set up in May 2002, entrusted with the objective of promoting sports and achieving sporting excellence for Tibetans around the world. TNSA Coordinator in North America Karma T. Ngodup also joined the visit in Washington DC. Who had organised CONIFA World's Women's Soccer Cup 2022 and several sporting events in New York. This provided opportunities for Tibetan youngsters to participate with other international organizations and communities.

Secretary Palden and TNSA's Executive Director participated in programs of Radio Free Asia and Voice of America (VoA) to spread awareness about TNSA in the Tibetan exile community. A welcome dinner for them was hosted by the Capital Area Tibetan Associations (CATA) in Fairfax, Virginia to help raise funds for TNSA. Secretary Palden spoke in length about the CTA's Department of Health work and achievements, and the current health issues prevalent in the Tibetan communities in India, Nepal and Bhutan. On the next day, the Secretary visited the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) office and attended a luncheon hosted for them.

Dawa Tsultrim Assumes Charge as Secretary of Department of Health

Dharamshala: Dawa Tsultrim officially took charge as the new Secretary of the Department of Health following the appointment of outgoing Secretary Palden Dhondup to the Department of Home.



As a part of the handover-takeover ceremony held earlier this morning, the new and outgoing Secretaries exchanged official documents in the presence of an official witness Jigme Namgyal, the Secretary of Education Department, appointed by the Kashag. The event was also attended by sMenpa Tsering Thakchoe Drungtso (Chair of the Central Council of Tibetan Medicine), Tsering Phuntsok (General Secretary of Drophen Men-Tsee-Khang) and Dawa Phunkyi (Chief Administrator of Delek Hospital).

The new Secretary Dawa Tsultrim was born in Miao (Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh). After completing his Bachelor's degree at Punjab University, he joined the Central Tibetan Administration with the designation of Office Assistant in 2000 and thereafter ascended to various positions till his latest appointment. During these periods, he has served in various departments and offices, such as Settlement Officer at Miao Choephelling and Joint Secretary at the Tibet Bureau in Geneva.

The Department of Health observed World Diabetes Day on 14th November 2022

The Health Education Desk of the Department of Health, CTA observed World Diabetes Day on 14th November at Gangkyi as well as across the Tibetan Settlements through Tibetan Primary Health Care Centers and individual nurses stationed at smaller settlements.



To raise awareness, to avoid contraction and to help prevent Diabetes and the Department of Health initiated Diabetes related programs through central Dharamsala and various settlements. In around 18 settlements namely Bonshi ,Mundgod, Poanta, Puruwala, Gangtok, Bangalore, Hunsur, Ladakh, Odisha, Herpertpur, Mandi, Dekyiling, Dalhor, Kollegal, Mainpat, Bir, Bhandhara and Dharamshala, we were able to reach more than 1296 people. The program is funded by the USAID.

The Department of Health, CTA rendered free eye, sugar, and blood pressure check-ups

The Department of Health, CTA rendered free eye, sugar, and blood pressure check-ups to the maximum staff of CTA, LTWA and Men-Tse-Khang. The purpose of this was to make the staff aware of the conditions of their eyes, sugar and blood pressure levels. Also provided information for necessary care and solutions.



The check-ups occurred in two batches, the first batch was held on the 16th of November 2022 with successful screenings of 187 CTA Staff. Following this the second batch took place on 23rd of November 2022 reaching the rest of

CTA staff as well as LTWA and Men-Tse-Khang staff. Overall, we had successfully screened 384 staff including the first batch.

The program was funded by Tibet Fund and some compensation for the eye screening was offered by SM eye hospital, Kangra (with whom we have partnered).

Dengue preventive measures in Miao Tibetan Settlement

Miao: On the 1st of December 2022 the staff of Tibetan Primary Health Care Center and the staff of Tibetan Settlement office, Miao took a voluntary efforts towards preventing dengue within their community funded through DOHe, CTA.



On the said date, the health workers under of TPHC, Miao held a dengue awareness presentation that was attended by 250 Tibetans in Miao. For the prevention and management of dengue, insect-repellent bleach was sprayed throughout the settlement's surroundings, concentrating on areas with standing water, drainage, etc.

Tests for Tuberculosis (TB) (Active Case Finding)

The Health Department, CTA did TB screenings within the Tibetan Settlement in Delhi, Tibetan Youth Hostel, Delhi and Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS), Varanasi. The events took place from the 17th to the

22nd November 2022. It was conducted by the medical staff of Tibetan Primary Health Care (TPHC), Dekyiling. The tests were aimed to locate active TB patients at an early stage, and discovered two active TB cases at TSO, Delhi. The patients were provided with best solutions and guidance.



The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has embraced the same objective of creating a TB-free community in alignment with the Government of India's determination to eradicate TB by the year 2025. Numerous initiatives had been carried out so far as part of the End-TB campaign.

We had successfully screened 824 beneficiaries from the aforementioned locations, comprising 328 men and 183 women.

Health Secretary's Official Visits

Dehradun: Health Secretary visited several places in Dehradun from 28th November-4th December 2022.

On the first day, the new Secretary Mr. Dawa Tsultrim paid a visit to the Ngoenga School for Tibetan Children with Special Needs in Dehradun. He was greeted by school Children's spirited cultural performances and he interacted with the school's personnel, caretakers, and foster parents. He commended them for their commitment and sincerity in doing their best to raise the kids and also interacted with the children. Later, he went to the classroom, mess, and hostel as well as the schoolyard. He also visited the infrastructure area for the Adult Home Project.



On the second-day, Mr Dawa Tsultrim visited Dekyiling, Rajpur, Tsering Dhondenling, and Dhondupling Tibetan Primary Health Care Center. He discussed the ongoing initiatives like the Dekyiling toilet and water filter building project. Additionally, he examined the state of older projects, such as the drainage pipe built in Tsering Dhondenling in the years 2019–2020.

The third-day began with secretary's visit from the Lingsang clinic before moving on to Lhaxhanwala, Baluwala, Khera Camp, and Poanta. He toured each clinic and met with its staff and engaged with them regarding the various evolving projects. He also gave consideration to the staff's concerns over the deteriorating conditions of Khera camp hospital and its borewell.

The Health Secretary's official week-long journey came to an end with his final visit to Puruwala, Kamrao, and Sataun. There he reviewed current initiatives, clinic requirements, staff quarter renovations, pertinent problems, as well as the progress of the pipeline and water tank projects.

Community Health Need Assessment conducted in Nepal Tibetan Settlements

A series of health need assessments were carried out by Snow Lion Foundation (SLF), Nepal from 18th to 25th of October, 2022 under the guidance of the Department of Health CTA. The assessment were done in 11 settlements in Nepal namely Samdupling, Gyalphak and Shawara, Tashi Palkhiel, Tserok, Dorpatan, Lodrik, Tashiling, Manang, Tsum and Choejor.



Ms. Tenzin Choedon, the SLF's health officer, participated in a virtual orientation session on conducting community health needs assessments on October 13 that was led by Mr. Tsering, the health department's project officer.

The primary goal of the health need assessment was to identify the settlement's health needs and to prioritise projects for the next three years. The community health need assessment was thoroughly discussed by the SLF Executive Secretary, Administrator, and SLF Health Officer to ensure its success.

The community's requirements were assessed by a team that included the SLF Health Officer Ms. Tenzin Choedon, SLF WASH Coordinator Mr. Tenzin Tenpa and Nurse Chime Youdon. A number of Tibetan monasteries, settlement offices, clinics, hospitals, and schools were visited for the assessment. The team also gathered grievances and information about the community's basic requirements to be reported to the Central Tibetan Administration. During this visit, the team assessed how well the Department of Health's services met community needs.

In addition to determining the needs of the community, the team were able to disseminate information about various CTA public health initiatives and services that were offered to settlement residents to promote their health. Due to the unpredictable weather, the team was unable to visit some remote locations. However, they made every effort to learn about the health requirements of those residents through one-on-one interviews with settlement officers and representatives.

Tibetan Schools and Settlements



Dharamshala: Department of Health, with assistance from the Department of Education and Department of Home, observed World AIDS day at the settlements and in Tibetan Schools across India on 1 December 2022. With funding from PRM (US), allocated budgets to cover expenses related to the planning and implementing awareness programs and activities in the settlements and schools.

The objective behind observing the day was to educate general mass, to prevent new transmissions, to support people with HIV/AIDS. The focus was to encourage people to get tested for HIV, to encourage HIV patients to take anti-retroviral treatment on time and moreover to discourage people from discriminating against the patients.

Various awareness activities were performed ranging from health talks, movie screening on the topic, sports and games, drama and skit play, essays and drawing competition, quiz competition, street march, free HIV test campaign, poster and booklet distribution in the settlement and in schools. The department also assisted patients with medical treatment, check-ups, with daily allowances for monthly ART centre visits and nutritional support. Tibetans suffering HIV can contact the department of Health, CTA via the Settlement office or the Settlement's Health care centre for assistance and support.

Department of Health held TMS virtual meeting with CROs and TSOs

On December 6, 2022, Ms. Pema Youdon, Program Officer of TMS, the Department of Health, CTA, held zone-wise virtual meetings to discuss raising awareness of TMS. The meeting lasted from 9.30 am till 4 pm with all the settlement officers including chief representatives of Ladakh, Bangalore and Shimla.



The TMS officer explained the aim of the meeting by outlining the purpose and importance of Tibetan Medical System. She underlined the importance of incorporating as many uninsured Tibetans as possible in TMS through settlement officers' efforts.

The TMS enrolment for the next FY 2023-2024 will begin on the auspicious day of 10th December, the Nobel Peace Prize Day to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

A Biannual Follow-up tests on Hepatitis B Patients



Dharmashala: The Department of Health, CTA with funding from PRM, US conducted biannual follow-up tests on Hepatitis B-positive patients in Dharmashala on 5th and 6th December 2022. Those who were Hepatitis positive and on Anti-

viral medication were screened twice a year to detect and check the severity and improvement of the case. Those who were not on treatment were screened once a year. A similar program was carried out in 23 Tibetan Settlements under the guidance of the department. A several tests were performed on the patients i.e. Complete Blood count (CBC), liver function test (LFT), HBV DNA (viral load), Serum creatinine, ultra sound and etc. It was the fourth phase of the screening and vaccination campaign. The data compiled within these phases were being analysed and evaluated by our experts and will publish a Hep B prevalence and status report for our exile community soon.

Central Covid Task Force Committee Meeting



Dharmashala: The Department of Health (DoHe), CTA, hosted a Covid Task Force committee meeting on 24 December 2022.

Members of the committee who attended the meeting included Dawa Tsultrim, Secretary of DoHe; Jigme Namgyal, Secretary of Department of Education; Thupten Tsering, Director of Men-Tse-Khang; Dawa Phunki, Director of Delek Hospital; Dr Rigzin Sangmo, a senior physician from Men-Tse-Khang, Dr Namdol from Delek Hospital.

Dr.Tsetan Dorji Sadhutsang, the private physician to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and senior doctor Tsewang Tamdin from Men-Tse-Khang, virtually participated in the session.

The meeting's goal was to discuss the newly discovered COVID variant identified as Omicron Sub-Variant BF7, and the members also talked about methods to reduce the possibility of this variant spreading among Tibetans.

As COVID prevention measures became laxer over the world, the committee also talked about encouraging individuals to use masks, attempt to stay at home when experiencing COVID symptoms and get tested as soon as possible.

Talk on “Adolescence and Mental Health” by Health Department Staff



Ms Tenzin Choedhen, mental health desk staff of the Department of Health, gave talk on the topic “Adolescence and Mental Health” on December 26, 2022, as part of a week-long leadership training held in Tibetan Reception Centre, Dharamshala initiated by the Department of Education. There were 114 participants in total from 27 Tibetan schools who attended the course.

Health Department Organised Free Medical Camp during His Holiness’ Teachings at Bodhgaya

Bodhgaya: The Department of Health initiated a free medical camp to all the devotees at Bodhgaya during HH the Dalai Lama’s teaching from 25th December 2022 to 3rd January 2023. The camp provided basic preventive and healthcare services i.e. consultations, examinations, treatment, medicines, and physiotherapy. Within these ten-day camp a total of 4,754 individuals sought treatments under the initiative.



To control and prevent the spread of the Omicron Sub-Variant BF7 the Department issued several directives measures by setting thermal screening, distributing free face masks, and disseminating key messages on COVID- In total, 60,000 face masks had been distributed.