

BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER



JAN-JUNE 2024

TIBETAN HEALTH



www.tibetanhealth.org

About Us

The Department of Health (DOHe) of the Central Tibetan Administration manages and finances 45 health centers in India and Nepal including Ngoenga School for exiled Tibetan children with disability, along with different health programs, projects, and activities. The department aims to provide holistic health services that are community-responsive and self-sustaining to improve the health of all Tibetans in exile, especially among the most vulnerable groups, by focusing on access to quality, affordable, equitable, and integrated health care services.

The Department is officially registered as Tibetan Voluntary Health Association.

Tibetan Health is the official Newsletter of the department. The biannual publication strives to keep DOH's partners, donors and stakeholders informed about the Department's health initiatives.

The newsletter gives an overview of health programs, projects, activities and needs of the department. Most significantly, it captures success stories and outstanding contributions of all DOHe's field health staff including hospital administrators, doctors, nurses and community health workers etc.

This newsletter is dedicated to the field health staff, whose unwavering commitment and dedication make them the backbone of the unique and successful Tibetan healthcare system in exile.

Advisor: Mr. Jampa Phuntsok (Secretary), Ms. Dekyi Dolker (Additional Secretary)

Edited by: Ms. Ngawang Tenzin (Deputy Secretary)

Compiled, Layout and Designed by: Ms. Tenzin Dhaze (Office Assistant)

You can also contact:

Department of Health
(Tibetan Voluntary Health Association)
Central Tibetan Administration,
Dharamsala, Distt Kangra (HP)
INDIA 176215

Tel: 0091-1892-223408/223486

Email: health_re@tibet.net

Websites

www.tibetanhealth.org www.tibet.net/health

www.ngoengaschool.org

A Team from Woesser Association in Italy Visits Health Department



A delegation from the Woesser Association in Italy, led by Dr. Raffaella, visited the Department of Health on January 3rd to discuss the planned redevelopment of Menlha Hospital, which the association is partially funding. The project will help improve the hospital's deteriorating infrastructure and enhance its overall capacity.

The department hosted a dinner in honor of the delegation, attended by the Secretaries of the Departments of Health and Home, along with concerned officials. The Department extends its deep appreciation to Woesser Association and all other donors for their generous support in strengthening healthcare services for the Tibetan community.

Sonada Settlement Officer Inaugurates Telemedicine Services



The Telemedicine program places a strong emphasis on offering remote and easy access of clinical services in the most efficient way possible through the use of electronic devices such as phones, laptops, and video conferencing. Patients can schedule appointments, contact doctors, and get prescriptions filled. It makes health care

On 8th January, Sonada Settlement Officer Ms. Pema Tsering officially inaugurated the Health Department's fifth Telemedicine facility, followed by a public awareness talk on its services.

Telemedicine facilities are already operational in Miao, Bhandara, Ravangla, and Tenzingang. The program enhances remote access to clinical care through electronic devices such as phones, & laptops, allowing patients to schedule appointments, consult doctors, and obtain prescriptions. It significantly improves healthcare accessibility, especially in rural areas.

The program is funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM).

Virtual Orientation on the Revised TVHA Guidelines by Health Secretary



The Department of Health held a virtual orientation on the revised TVHA rules and regulations for settlement officers and Executive secretaries of TVHA hospitals on 17th and 18th January.

The Health Secretary Mr. Dawa Tsultrim provided a comprehensive overview of the revised guidelines, followed by an in-depth question and answer session involving the heads of the North, North East, and South Central zones.

Awareness talk on Mental, Sexual and Reproductive Health at CHTS, Sarah



On January 23rd, the Department of Health conducted an awareness session on sexual, mental, and reproductive health at the College for Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarah. The session was led by Deputy Secretary Ms. Ngawang Tenzin (MPH) and volunteer psychologist Ms. Sonam Tsomo. Tailored for outgoing students, the session saw active participation from 40 students (22 females, 18 males). The session not only highlighted the importance of mental health and help-seeking but also addressed critical aspects of sexual and reproductive health. Despite being their first exposure to these topics, interactive activities helped dispel myths and encourage open dialogue.

This initiative reflects the Department of Health's commitment to youth's well-being, supported by USAID.

Health Department's Deputy Secretary Visits Settlements in Dehradun

Ms. Pema Youdon, Deputy Secretary and Head of the North Zone, along with Chief Accountant Ms. Tenzin Palkyi, conducted a three-day monitoring visit from January 29 – 31 to Tibetan settlements, healthcare centers, and schools in the Doon area. Their visit covered Tsering Dhonden, Gephelling, TWC Rajpur, Doeguyulgyelling, Khera Camp,

Balluwala, Ngoenga School, the Tibetan Private Industrial Training Institute (Selaqui ITI), and healthcare centers in Dekyiling, Lakhawala, and Khera Camp.

This official visit was intended to assess ongoing and upcoming projects for FY 2024–2025 under Ngoenga School and the Dekyiling and Herbertpur settlements, as well as to review completed WASH projects in the region. This initiative was supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) through the Tibet Fund.



World Cancer Day

The Department of Health observes World Cancer Day annually on 4th February, emphasizing early detection and prevention. This year, the department organized various initiatives across settlements in India, continuing its long-standing efforts in cancer prevention.

Hospitals and clinics held settlement-specific activities, including free health check-ups, cancer awareness talks, breast self-examination training for women, and quiz and drawing competitions in schools. This program was supported by USAID through the Tibet Fund.



Department of Health's HIS desk Organized Three-Day Training and Monitoring event



From February 26 to 28, the Department's Health Information System (HIS) desk conducted a three-day training and monitoring event at healthcare facilities in Dharamsala, Bir, and Chauntra settlements.

As part of a pilot initiative, three schools: TCV Upper, Petoen, and Mussoorie Homes will integrate in the HIS system to strengthen school-based health programs and student well-being. Training at TCV Upper and Petoen School, was conducted by technicians from HISP India, which completed successfully, with participation from one doctor and three nurses from upper TCV and a nurse from Petoen School. Training at Mussoorie Homes is scheduled in March.

Additionally, training and monitoring sessions were conducted at TMAI Mcleod, Bir, and Chauntra to improve Tibetan medical practitioners' skills in utilizing health information system. At TPHC Bir, an Open MRS refresher session was held to update healthcare personnel on report generation and system functionality. Similar activities were carried out at PHC Chauntra and Tashijong to enhance healthcare workers' proficiency in using the health information system for improved health monitoring and disease surveillance.

The 27th Governing Body Meeting of the Tibetan Voluntary Health Association (TVHA)

On 1st March, the 27th Governing Body Meeting of the Tibetan Voluntary Health Association (TVHA) for the fiscal year 2023–2024 was held at the health department, Dharamshala. The meeting was chaired by Honorable Health Kalon Mr. Penpa Tsering and the Society Chairman.



The interim budget for the fiscal year 2023–2024, annual budget for 2024–2025, amendments of TVHA and Ngoenga School guidelines were among the twelve agendas that the Governing Body deliberated on.

Department of Health Concludes Two-Day HIS Training at Dekyiling and THF School, Mussoorie



The Department of Health concluded a two-day Health Information System (HIS) training program at healthcare facilities in Dekyiling and Tibetan Homes Foundation (THF) from March 13–14, 2024.

On March 13, in collaboration with HISP technicians, the department conducted an Open Medical Record System (MRS) refresher training at the Tibetan Primary Health Center in Dekyiling. The session aimed to enhance nurses' skills in using the MRS system while addressing operational challenges. On March 14, the department held its first HIS training at THF school in Mussoorie, the third site selected for the HIS pilot project in Tibetan schools. The session introduced school nurses to HIS, emphasizing its role in data management, monitoring prevailing disease and health issues within educational institutions.

This training is expected to improve health data management within educational institutions, enabling better monitoring and response to student and staff health concerns.

Yes! We can end TB: Tibetans in India observe World TB Day

On March 24, Tibetans across India marked World Tuberculosis (TB) Day under the global theme, “**Yes! We Can End TB.**” The observance included awareness campaigns and community engagement initiatives to reinforce TB prevention and control.



Tibet TV, in coordination with the Department of Health, broadcasted a panel discussion featuring Dr. Sonam Wangmo from the Tibetan Medical & Astro Institute and Dr. Sonam Topgyal from Delek Hospital. The discussion focused on preventive approaches in achieving a TB-free Tibetan community.



Tso Jhe Hospital's team delivered a TB awareness talk at Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) School, followed by a poster competition on TB transmission. Mundgod DTR Hospital hosted a basketball match preceded by a TB awareness session by Dr. Tenzin Passang. The DTR hospital team also distributed TB awareness brochures with the "End TB" message.

In Mainpat, hospital staff conducted TB awareness programs in schools, community gatherings, and monasteries, incorporating Q&A sessions. In Kollegal Dhondeling, Dr. Tashi Phuntsok addressed over 360 community members on TB symptoms,

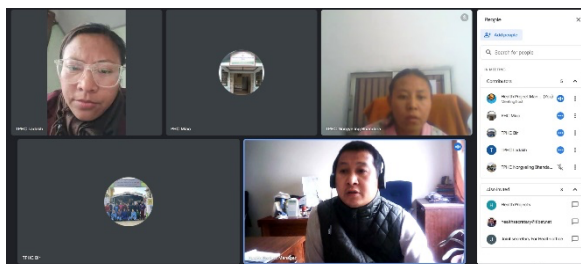
prevention, and treatment during a prayer gathering at Phodrang.

Hunsur Phende Hospital organized a TB awareness session at Zongkhar Choedhey Monastery, where Dr. Tenzin Chonyi educated monks on TB causes, symptoms, risk factors, and the importance of early diagnosis and treatment.

In the northeastern Tibetan settlements of Miao, Tezu, Tenzingang, Ravangla, and Tuting, health workers led school and monastery-based awareness activities, including health talks, poster competitions, and interactive discussions to engage high-risk groups.

These collective efforts reaffirm the Tibetan community's commitment to eliminating TB through education, awareness, and proactive health initiatives.

DOHe conducts a Webinar on Hospital Quality Assurance



On March 27, 2024, the Department of Health organized a webinar on hospital quality assurance, specifically designed for newly appointed hospital administrators across Tibetan hospitals in India.

In his opening remarks, Health Secretary Mr. Dawa Tsultrim emphasized the importance of prioritizing quality healthcare services, ensuring responsiveness to patient needs, and upholding patient privacy to strengthen hospital administration.

Mr. Tsering, OSM (Optimal service model) Program Coordinator, led a comprehensive session covering the Department's hospital quality standards, measurable elements,

quality assurance framework, assessment protocols, and hospital management strategies. The session also introduced quality measurement systems to enhance service delivery. An interactive Q&A segment was included throughout the virtual session to foster productive discussions with attendees.

Department of Health Organizes Open Marathon on World Health Day



On 7th April, the Department of Health, in collaboration with Dharamsala Tibetan Settlement Office marked World Health Day with an open marathon. The race covered 8.4 km for men and 6.6 km for women, with 91 participants (72 men and 19 women) from diverse backgrounds including students, professionals, retirees, and homemakers.



Dharamshala SHO Shri Yadesh Kumar, Former Mayor Shri Onkar Nehria, Indo-Tibetan Friendship Association President Shri Ajit Nehria, and Health Secretary Dawa Tsultrim flagged off the race, which began from Thekchen Choeling Tsuglagkhang to Dal Lake (men's group) and Thekchen

Choeling Tsuglagkhang to Forsyth Ganj (women's group). Secretary Dawa Tsultrim highlighted World Health Day as a reminder to prioritize health and integrate physical activity into daily life.

Winners in the men's and women's categories received INR 5000 each, while second and third-place winners were awarded INR 3000 and INR 2000, respectively. USAID through The Tibet Fund supported the event.

Tibetans in India Observe World Health Day



On April 7, TVHA Health Centers across India commemorated World Health Day with a range of initiatives focused on physical and mental well-being. Field staff organized health talks, screenings, CPR training, and engaging activities such as basketball matches, marathons, yoga, and exercise sessions.

Tibetan Primary Health Centres in Dekyiling, Bhandara, Odisha, and Hunsur held health talks emphasizing the importance of prioritizing health. In Dekyiling, community members also participated in marathon and basketball match, while Bir hosted an inter-settlement basketball tournament. In Paonta, the day was observed with a community clean-up drive and an exercise session at the open gym. Meanwhile, Puruwala held a morning yoga session followed by an open marathon.

Highlighting the importance of regular health check-ups, health centers in Kalimpong and Miao conducted public health screenings, while Mundgod demonstrated CPR

techniques to educate the community on emergency response.



These initiatives reflect the Tibetan community's commitment to health and wellness, reinforcing the importance of daily well-being practices.

Health Department Concludes Telemedicine Awareness program in Five Tibetan Settlements



The Department conducted a series of Telemedicine awareness programs from April 29 to May 3, 2024, in Ravangla, Bhandara, Miao, Sonada, and Tenzingang settlement all of which are already equipped with telemedicine services.

With funding support from PRM, the Department of Health launched telemedicine services in 2021 to provide equitable and accessible healthcare, including specialist consultations in remote Tibetan settlements. The first clinics to receive these services were in Miao, Bhandara, and Tezu, though Tezu's services were later relocated to Ravangla. Earlier this year, Tenzingang and Sonada Tashiling became the most recent clinics to adopt telemedicine, further expanding access to remote healthcare

CTA's Health Secretary Concludes Field Visit to Tibetan Settlements in Central and South India



Health Secretary Mr. Dawa Tsultrim conducted field assessments in central and southern Tibetan settlements from April 15 to May 3, 2024. Project dealing officer Ms. Kunchok Dolma accompanied him for health project assessments in Mundgod, Hunsur, and Bylakuppe, while Central Region dealing officer Ms. Tenzin Chondhen joined for assessments in Bhandara, Mainpat, Odisha, and Delhi.

The visit aimed to gather first-hand insights into health services and monitor WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) projects. Secretary Dawa also visited Men-Tsee-Khang branches, monastery-run health centers, and local Indian hospitals where feasible. He inaugurated a new pharmacy, dressing room, & ward at the Tibetan Primary Health Center in Mainpat, as well as a physiotherapy unit at Menlha Hospital in Phuntsokling, Odisha.

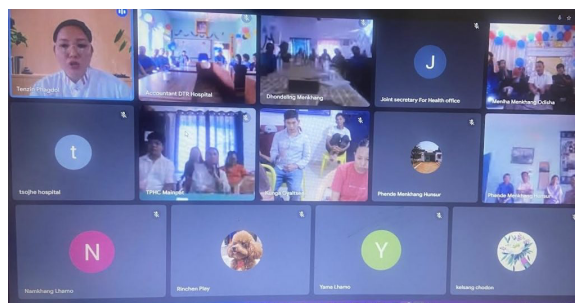
During the visit, meetings were held with settlement officers, executive secretaries of health centers, local health committees, monastery-run health center administrators, and other stakeholders to discuss existing health services and challenges. The Secretary emphasized the importance of a collaborative and integrated approach to healthcare across all Tibetan settlements.

Tso-Jhe-Khangsar hospital Organises an awareness session on the Role of Nurses in the Growth and Development of Children



On May 4, 2024, Tso-Jhe Khangsar Hospital in Bylakuppe held an awareness session on 'The Role of Nurses in Promoting Child Growth and Development,' led by Dr. Tenzin Phagdol, a specialist in maternal and child health nursing. Nine field nurses from the hospital attended the session, which covered key topics such as factors influencing child growth, developmental assessment, and the critical role of nurses in supporting infants and toddlers. The session was well-received by the participants.

World Nurses Day: Virtual session on Child Growth and Development



On May 12, 2024, World Nurses Day, the South and Central Zone Section of the Health Department hosted a virtual health talk on 'The Growth and Development of Children Ages 0-3.' Led by Dr. Tenzin Phagdol (PhD), Maternal and Child Health Nursing Specialist, the session was attended by over 119 health staff from seven Tibetan Health Centers (TPHC) across South and Central India. The talk aimed to enhance health

personnel's knowledge and competencies in child development and care.

Department of Health Conducts Health Facility Quality Assurance Audit



The Department of Health audited four health centers from 26th April to 8th May, 2024 with the objective of enhancing patient care and optimizing resource utilization. Mr. Tsering, the Health Department's project officer led the assessment of facilities in Delhi, Odisha, Tezu, and Miao, evaluating key areas such as governance, infrastructure, accessibility, patient care, infection control, staffing, medication management, service quality, and data management. During the audit, Mr. Tsering engaged with local officials and healthcare staff, sharing observations and recommendations to strengthen healthcare delivery and operational efficiency.

Department of Health Marks World Hypertension Day



On 17th May 2024, the Department of Health and its health centers marked World Hypertension Day with various programs to

raise awareness about hypertension. DTR Hospital in Mundgod conducted awareness sessions incorporating screenings and discussions on the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. Tso Jhe Hospital in Bylakuppe held an interactive talk on preventing hypertension and lifestyle-related diseases, encouraging physical activity.



Similar initiatives were carried out in Odisha, Bhandara, Mainpat, Miao, Ravangla, and Gangtok. In Kollegal, DVT Hospital staff performed a role play on hypertension, covering risk factors and prevention. Phende Hospital in Hunsur, in collaboration with Men-Tsee-Khang, hosted an awareness session at Dzongchoe Monastery, focusing on monastic communities. In Dharamsala, the Department's nurses offered desk-to-desk blood pressure checkup & follow up screening for Central Tibetan Administration staff.

TVHA's Health Information System (HIS) data highlights hypertension related health conditions as among the leading cause of non-communicable disease deaths in the Tibetan exile community, reinforcing the urgency of early detection and lifestyle changes.

Eye Camp at Mainpat

On 22nd May, 2024, The Tibetan Primary Health Care Centre (TPHC) Mainpat, organized a successful Eye Camp to address eye health issues, particularly cataracts and pterygium, affecting the local Tibetan community. The event was held in collaboration with Vision Eye Care Hospital

under which eye screening for 79 individuals were done. 13 individuals were identified in need of surgery thus, a later date will be set for the procedure in the coming months. The screening was funded by the Tibet Fund.



Elder's Fest

On June 30, 2024, the Department hosted an Elder Fest at Lhagyari, Dharamsala, as part of its elder care initiative. The event, which attracted 92 elderly participants, aimed to provide holistic care and featured a variety of activities, including games, wellness services, and delicious food. The oldest participant was 96 years old. The fest emphasized hygienic services and cognitive engagement, offering space for elders to socialize and express themselves.

The event was made possible with support from the TSO Dharamsala, Tibetan Career Center, Patient Care Trust, Tibet Charity, and volunteers.

