

BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER



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TIBETAN HEALTH

Active case finding at a school in Odisha, Tibetan settlement, under the department's TB program

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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 DOHe. It is biannual publication strives to keep DOH'e 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.

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TMS 2025–26 Enrollment



The Tibetan Medicare System (TMS) enrollment for fiscal year 2025-26 began on January 1, 2025, across 37 Tibetan settlements in India. The enrollment campaign in the separate settlements were spearheaded by the Tibetan Settlement Officers (TSOs), Executive Secretaries, and Staff Nurses, with the goal of strengthening institutionalized health coverage for a resilient exiled Tibetan community

During the first month, enrollment took place at Tibetan Settlement Offices and Tibetan Primary Health Centers (TPHCs). Subsequently, nurses went door-to-door to ensure complete coverage and that everyone has equal access to health care, especially during emergencies.

This fiscal year, 22,513 Tibetans have enrolled in the TMS.

Health Secretary Concludes South Zone Visit



From January 2 to 7, 2025, Health Secretary Mr. Jampa Phuntsok and South Zone Coordinator Mrs. Sonam Choedon undertook an official visit to Lugsum, Dickey Larsoe, and Kollegal Dhondenling settlements to assess healthcare services and monitor project progress. Inspections were conducted at Tso Jhe Hospital, DVT Hospital, and healthcare units within monasteries and institutions such as Karuna Home, Men-Tsee-Khang, Nyamdrel, and the Old People's Home (OPH).

The final leg of the visit concluded at the Delhi PHC on January 9, 2025, reaffirming the Department's commitment to improving healthcare access and quality.

Anti-Rabies Campaign Reaches Five settlements



An Anti-Rabies Vaccination Program, funded by The Animal Welfare Society (TAWS), was successfully conducted from January to February 2025, covering 566 dogs across Tibetan settlements in Mundgod, Odisha, Hunsur, Bhandara, and Mainpat.

In Mainpat, the initiative was carried out in collaboration with the Indian Government Veterinary Department, while in Bhandara, it was implemented in partnership with Dr. Ujwal Bawanthade and his team. In addition to vaccinations, dogs with health concerns such as wounds and lice infestations were also treated.

Technology upgrade at TPHC Mainpat



In February 2025, TPHC Mainpat received a major equipment upgrade with the installation of a fully automatic biochemistry analyzer and a silent generator, made possible through the generous support of the Yeshi Norbu Onlus Organization.

These additions will significantly improve the efficiency and accuracy of diagnostic services. The biochemistry analyzer will streamline laboratory testing, while the silent generator ensures uninterrupted power supply, especially during outages.

This upgrade represents a key step in strengthening the healthcare infrastructure in Mainpat and enhancing service delivery to the local community.

Ngoenga School celebrated its Silver Jubilee



Dehradun, 8 March 2025 — Mr. Jampa Phuntsok, Secretary of the Health Department, CTA, attended the 25th anniversary celebration of Ngoenga School for Special Needs Children as chief guest, accompanied by Ms. Tenzin Tseyang, the department's dealing officer.

The event brought together dignitaries including the Dekyiling Settlement Officer, circuit justice commissioners, monastic heads, and representatives from health centres and NGOs. Students showcased their talents through march-past, calisthenics, cultural performances, and sports. The Secretary awarded appreciation certificates to staff who served the school for over 15 years and launched the school magazine. In his remarks, he praised the dedication of the staff parents, and thanked donors and sponsors for their continued support in promoting the well-being of the students.



Health Secretary Visits TPHC Dekyiling



Dehradun, 8 March 2025 Following the Silver Jubilee celebration at Ngoenga School, Health Secretary Mr. Jampa Phuntsok visited TPHC Dekyiling in the afternoon, accompanied by the Settlement Officer.

He toured the health centre, met with staff, and addressed the team. In his remarks, the Secretary emphasized the importance of maintaining a friendly and united work environment, adhering to professional guidelines, and prioritizing the promotion of public health within the community.

Staff members took the opportunity to share their concerns and feedback during the meeting. The visit concluded with a stop at the Men-Tsee-Khang branch.



TVHA Holds Annual General Meeting at Kashag

13 March 2025 — The Tibetan Voluntary Health Association (TVHA) convened its Annual General Meeting for the fiscal year

2024–2025 at Kashag, chaired by Health Kalon Mr. Penpa Tsering and the Society Chairman.



Key agenda items included the review and approval of the 2024–25 Annual Activity Report and the 2023–24 Audit Report. Both the interim budget for 2024–25 and the annual budget for 2025–26 received formal approval. The meeting also confirmed the appointment of a Chartered Accountant for the 2024–25 fiscal year.

A notable development was the approval of a new residential project for Tibetan special needs children at Rabgyaling Settlement, Hunsur. The current Governing Body Members were reaffirmed, and other TVHA-related matters were discussed with the Chairman's permission.

New drinking Water Pipeline installed in Odisha

A drinking water pipeline installation project, which began on 15 September 2024, was successfully completed on 17 March 2025. Funded by German Aid to Tibetans (GAT) through the Health Department, the project aimed to resolve persistent water supply issues caused by aging and damaged pipelines. The existing water tank at Camp No. 3, originally constructed with support from the European Community, had served the commu-

nity for over 20 years. However, deteriorating pipelines led to frequent disruptions, prompting the need for a new system.



The project involved trench digging, pipeline installation, and connection to existing water sources, followed by extensive testing to ensure a reliable and sustained water supply for residents.

Tibetan Settlements Observe World TB Day

March 24, 2025 — Tibetan settlements observed World Tuberculosis (TB) Day through awareness talks and outreach programs focused on TB prevention, symptoms, and treatment.



At DVT Hospital, Kollegal, the health team led by the doctor addressed around 300 people, highlighting the Department of Health's efforts and RNTCP protocols. Emphasis was

placed on early diagnosis, treatment adherence, and community participation.

Similar outreach was conducted in Bhandara and Mainpat, targeting the Old Age Home and Sambhota Tibetan School. In Rawangla, the nurse used social media and school visits to reach students and parents. In Puruwala, TB awareness was shared alongside other services during a morning health check-up, reaching around 50 community members.

World Health Day Observed with Focus on Families and Wellness



7 April 2025 Tibetan health centers across various settlements observed World Health Day, with this year's theme focusing on Maternal and Newborn Health. Awareness sessions were organized on key topics such as the importance of family support during pregnancy and postpartum, mental health challenges linked to hormonal changes, birth spacing, family planning options, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Personal stories from parents were also shared. About 117 individuals participated in these activities.

Some health centers also addressed broader health concerns through a variety of activities. These included sessions on environmental hygiene, screenings for blood sugar and blood pressure, handwashing demonstrations in primary schools, hiking, group discussions, wellness sessions, and a health camp organized in collaboration with local hospitals.

Free Medical Camp Held in Herbertpur Settlement



March 2025 — Clinic nurses in Herbertpur, in coordination with a local hospital, organized a free medical camp across the Tibetan settlements of Lakhanwala, Baluwala, and Khera.

The camp offered blood sugar and blood pressure screenings, along with free consultations by a gynecologist and physician. A total of 121 individuals benefited from the services.

Autism Awareness Program Held in Lakhanwala

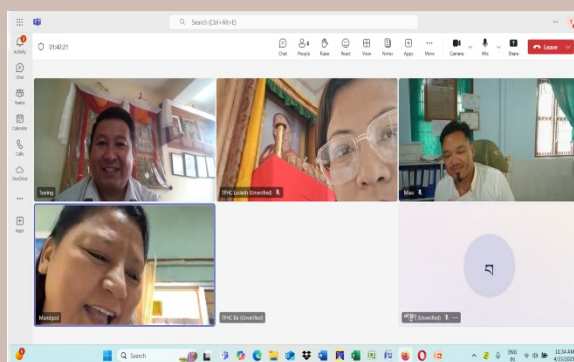


2 April 2025 — In observance of World Autism Awareness Day, clinic nurses from Lakhanwala organized an awareness program at the Baluwala Tibetan Settlement Hall, with participants from the Herbertpur settlement.

The session featured two voluntary speakers, both parents of children with autism, who shared personal experiences and practical knowledge. Topics included the early signs and symptoms of autism, the importance of early diagnosis, and an overview of available therapies.

The initiative was well received by the audience, with 23 individuals attending the session.

Online Refresher Training on TVHA Quality Assurance Standards



23 April 2025 — The Health Department conducted an online refresher training on TVHA Quality Assurance Standards for newly appointed hospital administrators. Participants included new executive officers from Mundgod DTR Hospital, Bir TPHC, Miao, and Ladakh TPHC.

Mr. Tsering, OSM Program Coordinator, led the session, covering key topics such as the TVHA Quality Assurance Framework, assessment protocols, TQAS audit checklist, and Facility Service Quality (FSQ) calculations. The session concluded with an engaging Q&A, ensuring participants gained clear understanding of the standards.

Health Kalon Meets AYUSH Minister

23 April 2025 — Health Kalon and Sikyong Mr. Penpa Tsering paid a courtesy call to AYUSH Minister Shri Prataprao Ganpatrao

Jadhav to highlight ongoing efforts to strengthen Traditional Tibetan Medicine (Sowa Rigpa) and its practitioners.



The Sikyong was accompanied by representatives from the OHHDL Delhi Bureau, the Health Secretary, TMAI Director, and the CCTM Secretary. A key focus of the meeting was to seek the Ministry's support for Sowa Rigpa practitioners under the provisions of the Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy 2014.

Eye Camp Held at Puruwala Settlement



On 27 April 2025, the Puruwala Tibetan Clinic, in collaboration with Sanjeevini Eye Hospital (Paonta), organized a free eye check-up camp following an appeal to the Chief Medical Officer of Nahan District. The initiative aimed to promote eye health, enable early detection of visual impairments, and provide necessary care. A total of 60 residents benefited from the camp. Among them, 18 individuals were diagnosed with cataracts and advised to undergo surgery. Others were

found to have pterygium and vision problems requiring treatment or corrective lenses. The community welcomed the initiative and appreciated the efforts toward strengthening eye health services.

Evaluation Visit by Prolog Consultant Director

On 6 May 2025, Mr. Michel Andre Vanbruaene, Director of Prolog Consultant, Belgium, visited the Department of Health, accompanied by Mr. Kunga, Secretary of the Office of Tibet, London.



The visit aimed to assess the effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the (THT) program and extract key lessons for future initiatives.

The meeting was attended by Health Secretary Mr. Jampa Phuntsok, Additional Secretary Mrs. Dekyi Dolkar, section heads from all three zones, the Public Health Specialist, SARD THT Coordinator, and several TTSP beneficiaries. The session concluded with a Q&A discussion with program beneficiaries, providing valuable insights for the evaluation process.

World Hand Hygiene Day marked with focus on elderly care

May 5, 2025-Health centers in South and Central Tibetan Settlements observed World



Hand Hygiene Day with a special focus on the elderly, a group particularly vulnerable to infections due to weakened immunity. A total of 91 participants were educated by their respective TPHC nurses on the importance of hand hygiene in preventing disease. The sessions included interactive demonstrations on proper handwashing techniques and guidance on key moments for hand hygiene, such as before meals, after using the toilet, and after touching potentially contaminated surfaces.

The initiative aimed to encourage sustained hand hygiene practices among older adults and reduce the risk of preventable infections.

World Hypertension Day observed through mass screening and education



17 May 2025 – Tibetan settlements across India marked World Hypertension Day with community-wide awareness and screening campaigns led by settlement health staff. The

initiatives aimed to highlight the burden of hypertension and promote early detection and lifestyle modification. Screenings for blood pressure, weight, and BMI were conducted in monasteries, community halls, OPHs, shops, and public events such as the 28th Shoton Festival. In smaller or scattered settlements, activities extended beyond 17 May, with several held in collaboration with Mentseekhang branch doctors and local Indian hospitals.

A total of 1,249 individuals (North: 604; South & Central: 401; Northeast: 244) participated. Those with elevated readings received counseling and were advised to follow up with a physician. Health education activities included teach-outs, pamphlet distribution, games, and Gorshey, emphasizing prevention, regular monitoring, and lifestyle changes.

Workshop on HIV/AIDS



From 29–31 May 2025, the Department of Health organized a workshop on HIV/AIDS in Dharamshala, funded by PRM. Aimed at nurses and people living with HIV from Tibetan settlements, the workshop focused on reducing stigma and promoting holistic care. Opened by Secretary Mr. Jampa Phuntsok and Additional Secretary Mrs. Dickyi Dolker, the workshop hosted 23 participants and followed a train-the-trainer format with parallel sessions. Key sessions included:

- Dr. Sapna Sharma and team (Tanda Govt. Hospital): HIV overview, updates, PEP, PrEP, and HIV-TB.

- Dr. Anoop Kumar and Dr. Neha (YRG Care): ART services, HIV Act 2017, and transmission prevention.
- Geshe Lhakdor (LTWA): Buddhist perspectives on caregiving.
- Dr. Tenzin Tsomo (Delek Hospital): HIV treatment and opportunistic infection prevention.
- Dr. Tenzin Paldon (Mentsekhang): Tibetan medicine approach to HIV care.
- Mrs. Ngawang Tenzin (Dept. of Health): Conducting STI awareness through SBCC approaches and personal self-care planning.
- Ms. Tenzin Choenden and Ms. Tenzin Kalsang (Dept. of Health): Group sharing circle and resilience-building activities.

The workshop concluded with a farewell dinner and a group visit to Norbulingka Institute and Gyuto Monastery, reinforcing shared learning and solidarity among participants.

Health Facility Quality Assurance audit



Ms. Ngawang Tenzin, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health, conducted quality assurance audit for health facilities in the southern settlement (Bylakuppe, Hunsur, Kollegal, and Mundgod) from May 31st to 11th June 2025. The audit was conducted as per the Tibetan Voluntary Health Association's (TVHA) Optimal Service Modules. The initiative, was funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

(PRM), which aims to enhance the quality of patient care and ensure optimal utilization of resources across the health facilities.

WASH Workshop Strengthens Community Water and Sanitation Practices



The Department of Health, in collaboration with CURE India, successfully conducted a WASH workshop and training for WASH committee members, TPHC staff, and TSO staff from Mundgod and three Central Tibetan settlements. The initiative aimed to improve access to safe drinking water and enhance sanitation practices across the communities. Key topics covered included groundwater recharge, water tank and platform maintenance, and sewer system upkeep. Participants were trained on practical maintenance schedules—biweekly cleaning of recharge areas, bimonthly tank cleaning, and regular system checks—through theoretical sessions and on-site demonstrations. Indian blackberry branches and copper utensils were recommended for preventing algae growth and promoting water safety due to their antimicrobial properties.

The training also highlighted the importance of proper septic tank ventilation to avoid the buildup of harmful gases. This effort builds the technical capacity of WASH teams and promotes healthier living environments in Tibetan settlements.

CTA Health Secretary Pays Courtesy Call to Zonal Hospital MOH

On June 17, 2025, Health Secretary Mr. Jampa Phuntsok and Joint Secretary Mrs. Tsering Dolma of the Department of Health, C.T.A., paid a courtesy visit to Dr. Rajendra Kumar Sood, District Health Officer at Zonal Hospital, Dharamshala. The visit was to express appreciation for facilitating expert resource persons for the department's HIV workshop held from May 29–31, 2025, at ATWS, Dharamshala.

Such workshops are instrumental in addressing the stigma associated with HIV, which remains a barrier to timely diagnosis, treatment, and care. The Department conveyed its sincere appreciation to Dr. Sood for his vital contribution to enhancing community-based HIV prevention and response initiatives.



Health Department staff observe International Yoga Day at Zonal Hospital

On the occasion of International Yoga Day, select staff members from the Department of Health (CTA) participated in a yoga session held on June 20–21, 2025, at Zonal Hospital, Dharamshala. Organized by Himachal Pradesh Central University under the theme "Yoga for One Earth, One Health," the event aimed to promote physical and mental well-being through yoga. The early morning sessions included a brief introduction to the significance of the day, followed by guided asanas and breathing exercises led by a certified instructor.

Participants appreciated the opportunity to reconnect with the benefits of yoga for overall health and well-being.



Health Secretary paid courtesy call to CMO, Zonal hospital



On June 24, 2025, Health Secretary Mr. Jampa Phuntsok and Joint Secretary Mrs. Tsering Dolma of the Department of Health, C.T.A paid a courtesy visit to Dr. Rajesh Guleri, Chief Medical Officer (CMO), at Zonal Hospital, District Kangra Dharamshala. The meeting served to strengthen professional ties and foster collaborative relations.