**Health System Strengthening through Community Health Workers**

Prompt treatment is one of the key drivers of a robust health system, however in rural setting this is not the case. To improve this the National Malaria Control Program is implementing the community health strategy in which it has seen over formation of over 700 community health units in the lake endemic region in Kenya.

Gone are the days when the doctor was the man or woman in the big white building labeled hospital. Whilst hospitals in several parts of the country remain a long distances off, Community Health Volunteers are first filling the gap and are the first respondents to cases of Malaria, TB, Neonatal care amongst other health related issues.

“He encouraged me to go to hospital for the antenatal care” says 21 year old Grace Nyanchama referring to the community health worker in Manga that is under the Nyamira Level 5 District hospital in Nyamira county.

Nyachama says her son now 4 years old is healthy because of the advice of the CHV and the community CHEW who have always ensured they follow up on the progress of her child and provide advice on her status and that of her child.

She is one of the success stories of the impact the Community Health System adoption by the Kenya government and various health stakeholders are proud of. Under the facilitation offered by KeNAAM in Migori in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Malaria levels in Maeta, Komaroma and Nyametaburo wards are first reducing according to the Maeta Community Health Unit, CHVs. Whilst they face lots of challenges in addressing the health issues, Maeta CU, chairman John Nyaisawa, the progress made in their region in the fight against malaria and also in addressing issues of sanitation which had for many years proved a challenge is immense. Similar views are shared by Deborah Wankuru who says the instance of malaria have reduced because information has been widely shared in the community on how malaria is spread and how it can be reduced.

While implementing the malaria community case management, the strategy to deliver these lifesaving curative interventions for the most common childhood illnesses, in particular where there is little access to facility-based services. The malaria program has been the driver in the roll out of this program but the CHV’s undertakes all other health intervention.

*“Ninapotembea, nawatuwananiitadaktari, nifuraha* (When I walk and people refer to me as doctor, it’s a delight)”, says Getongoroma A, CHV, Sarah Mogesi, adding that through KeNAAM the community is now informed on how to protect themselves from malaria and the importance of using clean water.

Reaching zero malaria infections and deaths is possible. Improved malaria case management at the community level through the community health units and Community health Volunteers has proved an effective way of reaching the community with improved health services.