



Expanded Program on Immunization
Government of Pakistan



COMMUNICATIONS UPDATES - EPI JULY | 2019

National Inter Agency Coordination Committee Meets to discuss Additional Health Strengthening Grant

A high powered meeting of the National Interagency Coordination Committee was organized on Monday, June 3rd, 2019, in Ministry of National Health Services Regulation & Coordination, chaired by the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health Honorable Dr. Zafar Mirza. SAPM, Ministry of NHR&C welcomed the participants and shared objectives of the meeting. During the introductory remarks Dr. Zafar Mirza shared the vision of the current Government and advised EPI to improve immunization coverage of Fully Immunization Children (FIC) beyond 70%. The meeting discussed Pakistan's application to Gavi for Additional Health System Strengthening (HSS) Grant of USD 25 M to address the inequities in immunization coverage in high risk districts. Dissemination/sharing of verification results of Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs) 2,4 & 7 by Third Party Validation firm were also discussed in length by the members. Participants also discussed Pakistan's Annual Renewal Request to Gavi for New Vaccine Support for 2020.



SAPM Dr. Zafar Mirza interacts through media to a wider audience to share Government's vision of the equitable health service delivery approach



Respected Dr. Zafar Mirza, SAPM on Health conducted an interview of the Country Representative, WHO Dr. Mahipala Palitha to share Sri Lanka's experience of achieving universal health coverage and universal immunization coverage.



Main highlights of Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health, Dr. Zafar Mirza's directives were as follow.

1. All provinces and federating areas will develop plans for achieving Universal Immunization Coverage during the tenure of current Government and set immunization target specifying the year and will present backward planning for reaching this universal immunization coverage by the end of December 2022.
2. NICC will be held on quarterly basis for reviewing the programme performance including progress on CDA/ICT to achieve 100 % target by Dec 2019.
3. Meeting concluded with endorsement of Pakistan's Application for Additional HSS (USD25M), Annual Renewal Request for NVS and Third Party Validation Results of DLI 2,4 & 7 against NISP targets.



Special Assistant to Prime Minister Honorable Dr. Zafar Mirza visits Federal EPI

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Honorable Dr. Zafar Mirza visited Federal EPI and chaired a detailed briefing on EPI. National Programme Manager, presented current status, magnitude and scope of the Federal EPI, progress made so far, challenges faced by the program and strategies to mitigate the challenges. Respected Dr. Zafar Mirza specially focused on the Islamabad as a model to achieve universal immunization coverage. Focusing on the performance of Islamabad (ICT&CDA) in immunization, SAPM shared his concern that coverage of 82 % is sub optimal therefore programme should aim to reach 100 % coverage in Islamabad by December 2019 and advised programme to plan backwardly from the target date and execute full scale implementation for covering 100 % of the target population.

SAPM also visited federal operations room to review state of the art information and system to record real time data of coverage and vaccine utilization from across the country.





Equity Matrix Workshop

The 2030 agenda for sustainable development emphasises on prioritizing the needs and rights of the most vulnerable people – so that no one is left behind. Despite improved strategies and interventions for childhood immunization, some population groups continue to be missed and therefore require further planning and strategizing for their inclusion in essential immunization services of the country. For this purpose, an Equity Metrics Workshop was organized in Islamabad from 9 – 12 April 2019 for EPI, UNICEF and WHO staff working on immunization in Pakistan. The workshop focused on analysing existing practices and approaches, determining efficient and effective ways to monitor and track progress in vulnerable communities, and encouraging development of equity-friendly interventions to target missed children from these communities and prioritizing their needs in the district/UC level micro-plans.

The objectives of the workshop

1. Orient the participants on the equity metrics framework as per the available equity assessment guide to acquire a common understanding of the key determinants of inequalities and inequities in immunization coverage in South Asia.
2. Review the existing data to identify pockets of unimmunized children and better understand the plausible reasons of inequalities in coverage.
3. Brainstorm and come up with effective pro-equity strategies and interventions and include it in their national/ sub national action plans.
4. Review and make recommendations on options for routine monitoring of inequity in immunization services with course correction



Plenary Meetings to finalize roadmap for Universal Immunization Coverage in Islamabad

A series of meetings were held in the Federal EPI to brainstorm and finalize roadmap to achieve Universal Immunization Coverage in Islamabad in light of the directives of the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Respected Dr. Zafar Mirza. Officials from the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, Federal EPI, colleagues from CDA and ICT, donors and development partners participated and deliberated on making an effective plan to achieve universal immunization coverage in Islamabad by the end of December 2019.



Visit of Nigerian students to the Federal EPI

A group of 15 Nigerian students visited Pakistan on a study tour through Ministry of foreign Affairs. During the study visit, they visited Ministry of NHSR&C, NIH, PIMS and Federal EPI to exchange knowledge and best practices in health system, Hospital care, Universal Health Coverage and Pharmaceuticals.

ACTIVITIES

Undertaken
across Pakistan for
EPI

BALUCHISTAN

Quarterly EPI Review Meeting - Balochistan

By Zoheb Qasim

Quarterly EPI review meeting was conducted at EPI cell Balochistan on May 24, 2019 chaired by Director General Health Services/ Provincial EPI Coordinator, Dr. Shakir Baloch. The chair shared his concerns on the progress of programme so far. He added that despite of necessities along with vaccines and vaccinators are fulfilled still we are unable to achieve the desired results.

Deputy provincial coordinator Dr. Ishaq Panezai delivered a detailed presentation showcasing the overall progress of EPI programme. He added that the overall performance has improved in all districts but yet we have to work harder to compete with other provinces. All the DHOs also shared their progress through Power Point presentations.

Capacity Building Workshop for Vaccinators

The Balochistan EPI cell conducted a series of capacity building workshops for newly appointed vaccinators of health department. A total of 393 newly appointed vaccinators from 18 districts were trained on basics of vaccination, routine immunization, and EPI programme. The series of 15 days training was started from 16th of May and ended on 30 May 2019. The training was successfully completed for 15 batches





KP TRIBAL DISTRICT

Extensive Outreach Activity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tribal Districts

By Asad Zia

EPI department of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tribal Districts conducted an Extensive outreach activity with the support of the WHO in KPTD. The Extensive Outreach Activity started in 7 districts and 7 Sub divisions of KPTD from 17th June 2019 to 29th June. During the Extensive Outreach activity total of 10,867 Zero Dose children were covered and 74,385 children received all antigens to children of age 0 to 24 months.



Grand Jirga

A grand Jirga of all tribal elders, including Ulamah, Malaks, Teachers and Journalists of Central and Lower Kurram was organized at Sadda Jirga Hall chaired by Assistant Commissioner Mr. Fazal Wadood. N-STOP Officer Dr. Inayat Rehman briefed the Jirga participants on the objectives, benefits and schedule of Extensive Outreach activities. All influencers and local elders promised their full support and pledged to convey the message to their respective tribal people.





KHYBER PAKHTUNKHAW

Leveraging Networks to reach Community for Vaccination

By Huma Nayab

An outreach activity was conducted in Union Council Sumri, district Kohat, a far flung UC without Health Facility where the community became refusal after Peshawar incident reported during the polio campaign of April 2019.

The objectives:

- Build rapport in the community
- Gaining trust of the community
- Covering refusal of Polio & EPI

1. Identification of the Networks to support the outreach activity and Health awareness

District EPI officials and UC staff identified the networks, for implementation of the initiative and allocated vaccinators to hold intensive outreach services. Local Doctors, Religious leader and counselor were identified to support outreach activity through awareness raising.

2. Team Deployment

Vaccinators organized outreach services and vaccinated children according to eligibility and prepared records as per EPI protocols and registers. Polio teams provided data about the zero dose children. Health Promoters mobilized caregivers of defaulter and zero dose children for vaccination.

3. Integrated Health Services

The initiative was designed to offer integrated health services package to community including vaccination. Medical camp was arranged by District Health Office Kohat and a team of doctors along with vaccinators offered services and examined patients. Medicines were provided free of cost to the patients on the spot.

Outcomes

Integration of health services and engagement of local influencers proved to be an accepted model for the community. Synergy between EPI/PEI for increasing immunization coverage rates, particularly for targeting defaulter and zero dose children was also an effective exercise. 100% population was reached through awareness raising activities on immunization and covering defaulters.

Comprehensive Capacity Building Workshop on Communication

A comprehensive three-day workshop on issues, challenges, opportunities and preparedness level in communication was organized in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by the Provincial EPI cell. The workshop was attended by the Provincial and district health staff including EPI Coordinators, DSVs, LHW Programme Coordinators and N-Stop officers. Agenda was as follow:

1. Improving Communication Skills
2. Effective use of Social Media
3. How to Build Rapport with the communities?



4. Effective use of Negotiations Techniques
5. How to address community resistance?
6. Leveraging Personal Networks for Better results
7. Perception Management
8. Service delivery Point (Fixed EPI Center/ Outreach and Mobile)
9. Crisis communication

The curriculum for training was developed by a joint communication committee incorporating basic training guidelines of UNICEF.

The same guidelines were replicated for vaccinators training conducted in 14 districts. The capacity building workshop for communication helped in strengthening the IPC skills of health care providers to address challenges in implementation.



PUNJAB

Comprehensive EPI Review Punjab

By Dr. Imran Qureshi

A detailed comprehensive review of all components of EPI was held in Lahore and Multan that engaged all stakeholders including EPI Cell Punjab, Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB), Acasus CM Roadmap, Partners; WHO, UNICEF, USAID, WB & BMGF. In the review all important process and performance indicators were assessed through scoring and grading mechanisms to determine overall district ranking. A comprehensive EPI Review under one roof, with all stakeholders, helped the program to identify real situation to identify root causes of low coverage. Timely actions were recommended to improve overall programme performance.

All stakeholders provided the required data for the monitoring period (2018) to calculate the desired indicators and suggested addition of suitable indicators which could be included in the evaluation criteria. All participants actively participated and contributed in identification of the grey areas.

Experience sharing from good performing districts motivated others to apply similar tactics in their district. The results were so encouraging that the activity will be conducted on a regular basis in the future.





SINDH

Accelerated Outreach Activity in Interior Sindh

Sindh EPI organized accelerated outreach activities in a phased manner. Phase 1 was completed in 2018 while phase 2 started in December 2018 and completed in January 4, 2019. Phase 3 was completed in February while phase 4 was conducted from April 29 – May 13, 2019. Phase 5 of outreach activity is being conducted during the month of July.

19 districts were targeted in first three phases while 21 districts were reached in next 4th and 5th phases. 42 supervisors were engaged at district level in first three phases while 69 supervisors participated were involved in next two phases. At taluka level, 134 supervisors were engaged during first 3 phases of accelerated while 209 in 4th and 5th phase.

A total number of 1161 vaccinators conducted the accelerated outreach activity in first three phases while 1654 vaccinators were engaged in the 4th and 5th phase. In Karachi 718 vaccinators are being engaged in ongoing outreach activity. Large number of LHWs and LHSs also participated in the activity.

An important highlight of the activity was refusal conversion that was achieved through effective social mobilization.



AZAD JAMMU KASHMIR

Coordination Committee Meeting

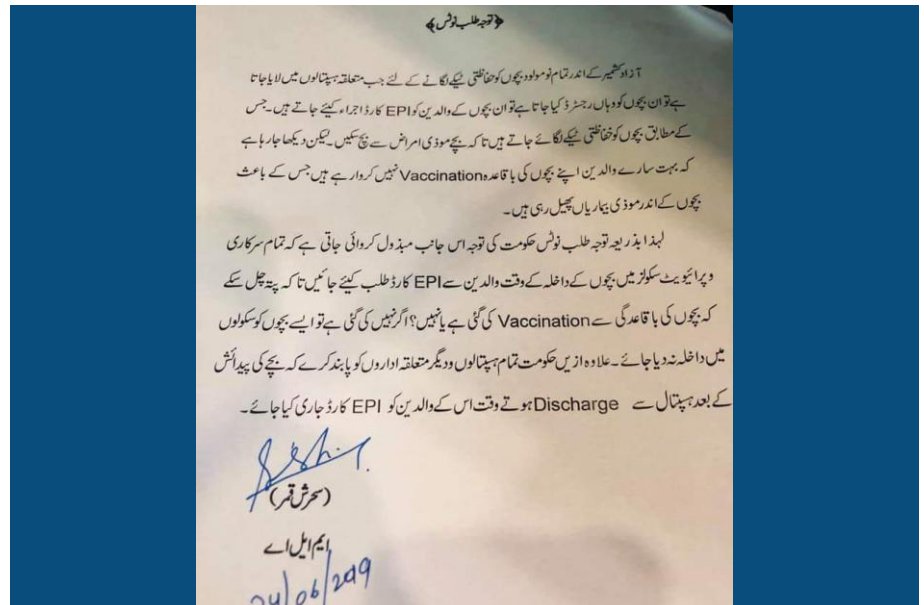
Abdullah Durrani

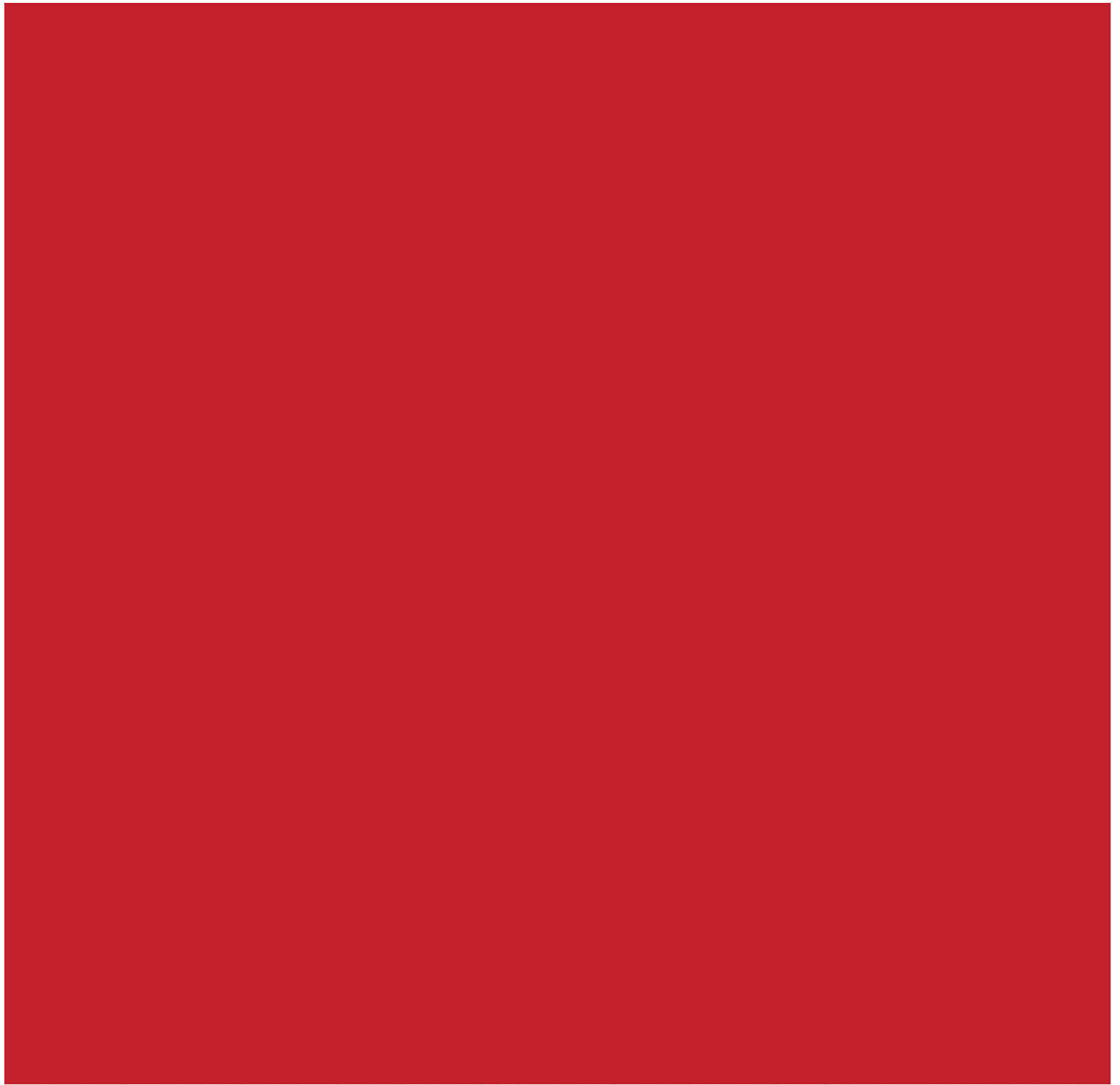
Provincial Coordination Committee of the AJK conducted its meeting to improvise the routine immunization coverage. Focus was laid on EPI/PEI synergy. During this meeting influx of the tourists in District Neelum and Ramlakot was also highlighted for an effective planning to vaccinate children of eligible age groups.

Provincial EPI Review was held to gauge the progress of the Programme with emphasis on underperforming areas. The subject of the meeting remained coverage improvisation, catch up of due defaulters and developing strategy for missed children.

During June, a comprehensive brainstorm activity to make the Micro-planning more effective was held in the Provincial EPI Office with the participation of relevant stakeholders.

Calling Attention Notice in the Legislative Assembly of AJK for Compulsory immunization





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