



Expanded Program on Immunization  
Government of Pakistan



# **FEDERAL EPI**

## **UPDATES**

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*“Universal Immunization is the only option. Let us set our clear vision. We should not take it business as usual and need to ensure that no child is left behind”,  
Dr. Zafar Mirza*



## **Universal Immunization Coverage (UIC) in Pakistan is the ONLY option, says Dr. Zafar Mirza**

A high powered meeting of the National Inter-Agency Coordination Committee was held on September 5, 2019 in the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination chaired by the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health (SAPM). The meeting was attended by Dr. Nausheen Hamid, Parliamentary Secretary NHSR&C, Federal and Provincial Managers-EPI and representatives of the development partners (WHO and UNICEF representatives).

The meeting was organized in the backdrop of the visit of the Joint Supervision, Evaluation and Monitoring (JSAEM) mission to Pakistan (Gavi, World Bank, BMGF, USAID, UNICEF-ROSA and KfW) August 26 - September 06 2019. The mission held extensive deliberations with the provincial EPI program and their respective planning and finance departments. The mission apprised the minister NHSR&C on their findings and shared key recommendations towards reaching the unvaccinated children in Pakistan. The mission members also stressed the Federal and Provincial program for ensuring sustainable financing through the National and Provincial recurrent budgets for procurement of the vaccines and delivery of un-interrupted immunization services across the country.

The meeting highlighted the need for achieving universal immunization coverage across the country as a priority. SAPM on Health, Dr. Zafar Mirza stressed that it is a high time to mainstream the universal Immunization agenda through engaging national and provincial leaders and policy makers. “To win political support and ownership at national and provincial level, advocacy supported by evidence and data is needed, opined SAPM during his remarks.

On the occasion, the National Program Manager, EPI presented the targets set by provinces and areas for achieving Universal Immunization coverage. He also shared the determination of the program in achieving the set targets.



Senior Country Manager, Gavi, briefed the Minister on behalf of Mission members regarding the progress made so far in immunization program. While debriefing the SAPM he underscored the need of expansion of fixed sites, improving microplanning and quality of outreach services and highlighting the need to generate demand for immunization services.

### **Sub Group of SDGs Parliamentary Task Force prioritize Immunization agenda as a priority**

SDGs Parliamentary Task Force has notified sub groups on all SDGs goals for dedicated focus on each component of the SDGs. The Sub Group on Goal 3 held its first meeting on September 26, 2019. During which Dr. Nausheen Hamid was elected as a chairperson of the committee. In the first meeting, Chair of the Sub Group took up Routine Immunization and achievement of Universal Immunization in Islamabad as a priority agenda.

National Program Manager, Federal EPI, officials from the CDA and ICT attended the meeting and presented the progress on the universal immunization coverage in Islamabad. Officials not only presented the plans, progress but also highlighted the bottlenecks in the process.

Members of the Sub Group on the SDGs Parliamentary Task Force highlighted the need to engage public representatives in social and community mobilization. They were of the view that public representatives should be taken on board ahead of outreach activities so that they can engage communities and constituencies effectively to utilize immunization services. It was agreed to hold detailed meetings with elected representatives of the Islamabad to win community support and increase coverage through engaging local government representatives at grass root level. Government of Pakistan envisages to achieve Universal Immunization Coverage in the country by December 2019.



## Objectives:

- 1.To orient the participants on project's introduction and planned activities
- 2.To provide updated information on national and global cervical cancer disease burden
- 3.To identify technical working group members and share their TORs
- 4.To share tools and get inputs from participants for finalization
- 5.To get inputs on the stakeholder list from the participants of the meeting



## Inception Meeting to devise roadmap on Human Papillomavirus vaccine introduction

The meeting took place on September 13th, 2019 at Federal EPI Office, Prime Minister Health Complex, Islamabad. The inception meeting was chaired by Dr. Arshad K. Chandio (National Program Manager, Federal EPI), and attended by EPI managers from all the provinces, representative - DG Health Services, WHO representative, Federal EPI representatives, as well as Jhpiego & IVAC consultants, including jhpiego team.

The meeting oriented the participants on the project and formation of TWG. Besides this, the finalization of tools and stakeholders list was also discussed with the participants. The aim of the meeting was to orient participants on the project before formal initiation of data collection process.

## Planning Workshop to finalize Training material for TCV Catch-Up Campaign

Federal EPI organized a three day planning workshop to review and finalize training material for TCV Catch-Up Campaign in Sindh. In this workshop officials and representatives from Sindh and Punjab participated in the workshop. During the workshop, training material for each cadre, guidelines, and modalities were finalized.



# ACTIVITIES

Undertaken  
across Pakistan for  
EPI

## SINDH

The Government of Sindh has undertaken huge and meticulous preparation for the upcoming TCV catch-up campaign in Sindh.

### ***ToT for TCV campaign - IPC and Social Mobilization***

As a part of forthcoming TCV campaign, EPI has started pre-campaign activities. In this regard, the ToT was conducted at divisional level by Provincial EPI team included EPI officers, WHO and UNICEF partners. Role plays and visual demonstration were performed to deliver the IPC component in the training. Participants were briefed about key role regarding imparting communication activities at ground level and how to trickle down the trainings to campaign team. IPC videos and budget was also shared with town and district supervisor to plan accordingly.

### ***Print and Electronic Media Coverage for Preparatory Activities of TCV Campaign***

Community level activities for TCV campaign and introduction in the Routine Immunization are being conducted while local print media has covered activities in local newspapers to raise awareness among communities. Addition to routine activities, mass media is also engaged to arrange TV talk shows on Typhoid vaccine awareness. Provincial EPI has participated in the TV talk show and briefing on importance of routine immunization and typhoid vaccines were given.

### ***Advocacy Meetings – TCV campaign***

Advocacy meetings have been started at all levels. Typhoid vaccination campaign has been discussed in DPEC meeting chaired by DCs. Provincial level advocacy meetings were also conducted with Pakistan Pediatrician Association and different CSOs were engaged in the process to support demand generation. Advocacy meetings were also held with Education department. A meeting with Director Private Schools and Chief Advisor Health Education was also conducted in this regard.

### ***Schools Activities – TCV promotion***

Many sensitization meetings are also being organized in schools to engage and mobilize teachers and children.



## Security Provision for teams during TCV Catch-up Campaign in Karachi

High profile meeting with Inspector General Police, Department of Sindh was held to ensure fool proof security during execution of TCV catch-up campaign.



## Azad Jammu & Kashmir

A Mid-Level Managers training was organized by the Provincial Office EPI, at Rawala Kot from September 2-7, 2019. The training was attended by the District Health Officers, Deputy Directors for Training and Surveillance, Assistant Directors, UNICEF & WHO officers, MNCH officers, EPI coordinators & DSVs, with the technical support of WHO.

The Training course was formally inaugurated by Director Health Services AJK Dr. Asghar Chaudry. The Provincial Program Manager EPI Dr. Bushra Shams welcomed the participants and highlighted the objectives & significance of the training with regards to EPI's Effectiveness & Efficient program discourse. The training was facilitated by the Training wing of AJK EPI and WHO.

The training focused on various aspects of Micro-planning, Program Management, Implementation, Vaccine forecasting, skills and abilities required for oversight, management and supervision of the expanded program on immunization. Concepts and operational modalities regarding Disease Surveillance, Communication & effective service delivery were discussed and deliberated in detail along with Group work & exercises. Director Health Services AJK & Provincial Program Manager EPI distributed certificates among the participants.





# Punjab



## **Director General Health Media Forum on Immunization**

A meeting of Director General Health Media Forum on Immunization was organized on 19th September 2019. The Media Forum was engaged to raise public awareness on the importance of immunization. Lead pediatricians, consultants and public health experts from participated and shared their perspective on the importance of the Routine Immunization. The forum will help in creating public awareness on the importance of vaccination which will help in building trust of the communities and support in vaccinating children against 10 vaccine preventable diseases.



## **Routine EPI microplanning ToT Workshop**

Routine Immunization EPI Microplanning ToT Workshop was conducted on September 3-4, 2019 in Islamabad for 10 districts of Punjab. Dr. M Saeed Akhtar DHS-EPI, Dr. Asad Aly Deputy Director M&E Federal EPI, Dr. Osama Mere Medical Officer EPI WHO Pakistan and other officials attended the meeting.



Another session of the same workshop was conducted in Multan for 9 districts of Punjab on September 6-7, 2019. Participants were DHO-PS, PD DHDC, DSV/CSV and EPI Focal Persons from these districts.

## **Routine EPI microplanning cascade Training Workshops**

Routine EPI microplanning cascade training were conducted at the tehsil and district level in all the districts of Punjab during the month of September 2019, where standard tools were used for the training of UC level staff to develop RI Micro-plans. District level compilation will be done from UC level RI micro-plans once finalized.



## **PEI-EPI Synergy review**

PEI-EPI Synergy Review was conducted in Lahore on September 12-13, 2019 for 13 districts of Punjab to review progress on building synergy between EPI and PEI to strengthen both programs.



## **Chief Executive Officers Monthly Meeting**

During the Executive Officers monthly meeting, Secretary P&SHD reviewed the district performance on immunization coverage through video-link on 14th September where the low performing districts were questioned and coverage indicators zero-dose children were identified and added. Director Health Services also updated the Secretary that EPI has developed an indicator to track number of children vaccinated by vaccinators. Vaccinator attendance and geographical coverage remained high at 97% and 99% respectively by enhancing monitoring & data systems.





### **Weekly EPI Coordination Meeting**

Weekly EPI Coordination Meeting was conducted at EPI Cell Punjab on 17th September 2019 chaired by DHS-EPI and attended by all stakeholders including WHO & UNICEF where all technical aspects of the program were discussed with primary focus on monitoring and supervision

### **Crash Program for Routine Immunization**

Crash Program for Routine Immunization was conducted in many districts of Punjab where all due and defaulter children were vaccinated by mobilizing extra resource. TT Vaccination mop-up campaign was conducted in district Rajanpur.



## **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

### **Enhanced Outreach Activity Phase VI**

By the mid year 2019, the reported immunization coverage rates in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were less than the desire target i-e 95% for all EPI antigens (BCG, three doses of OPV, Penta, PCV-10, Rota, Inactivated Polio Vaccine, two doses of measles vaccine and Tetanus Toxide). After recent outbreak of Polio in Southern belt (Bannu division) and Torghar, the 5 phases of the Enhanced Outreach activities for essential immunization in district Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Karak, Torghar and Kohistan, the coverage remained sub-optimal as well as Zero dose children remained on the higher side. Sprouting cases of diphtheria in southern belt and central Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also indicated poor coverage/ missed opportunities for Pentavalent vaccination.



### **Mid-Year Review Meeting**

Provincial EPI Cell in collaboration with WHO & UNICEF conducted Midyear review meeting at Swat. In this review meeting Tribal Districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were also reviewed along with the settled districts. Review meeting conducted from 24th - 27th September, 2019.



The Meeting was Chaired by Dr. Muhammad Saleem Director, EPI.

### **Major Decisions:**

During review meeting following directives were issued to all the EPI coordinators.

1. Submission of plan to establish new EPI centers in Public Health facilities in each district.
2. Improvement plan for poor performing UCs.

### ***Issues and Challenges of Districts***

1. Political Interference
2. Demotivated Staff
3. Increasing refusals for EI
4. Capacity of the EPI technicians
5. Capacity of the supervisors
6. Poor/No Accountability
7. UCs without EPI centers
8. Division of UCs as per Polio
9. Absentees of Staff
10. Less staff compare to the population
11. Poor Quality of Data
12. Understanding of staff on Data and indicators

In light of the above mentioned issues it was agreed that all districts will prepare a plan to open new EPI centers in UCs.

Moreover, KP districts were also advised to conduct community sessions in 5 high risk UCs of their districts.

Training of Vaccinators is already scheduled under the RED-REC strategy. Moreover, all the coordinators were asked to notify the TORs from the respective DCs and DHOs.





# Balochistan

## Training of Trainers for Roll out of the Parenting Package

The Government of Balochistan, with the support of UNICEF has developed an integrated parenting education package, which follows a life course approach (conception to eight years of age). The target age group is parents and care providers of 0-8 years old children. The package consists of visual material for educating parents on positive parenting which has been shared as draft with Ministry/ Department of Health at both Federal and Provincial levels.

To roll out the package, Training of Trainers (ToTs) will be organised in the province to train selected multisectoral participants on the package, its content and how to roll it out. The training will then be cascaded to train frontline workers in various sectors.

### Rationale for conducting Training of Trainers:

Parents and family constitute the first social environment of the child on whom s/he depends for care. Evidence has shown that experiences in the early years of life determine the health and productivity in adult life. Therefore, the concept of positive parenting needs to be understood by families in order to support young children's survival, growth and development.

Therefore, knowledge and skills about positive parenting is critical and the capacity improvement of parents and caregivers is required in this regard. Therefore, the rationale for conducting the Training of Trainers is first to develop a pool of trainers using the training manual; who will then cascade the training to the front-line workers such as LHWs, Family Care Workers, ECE teachers, CSOs etc. These frontline workers will then educate families and care givers using the counseling cards.

### *Specific objectives will be to:*

- Increase knowledge among participants on the importance of the Early Childhood Development;
- Increase knowledge among the participants on child rights and the roles and responsibilities of the duty bearers towards children;
- Increase knowledge and improve skills of the participants on positive parenting and its benefits for the holistic development of the child and the specific family care practices;
- Educate participants with hands on practical exercises on using the counseling skills;



