



B4H Workplace TB Wardens serve on the front line in the battle against drug resistant TB.



The focus on the TB wardens visit the Joseph Bana Koiri (JBK) TB Clinic at the Port Moresby General Hospital this week was testing and treatment for DR TB.

With DR TB being found in 5% of all new cases, there is an urgent need to find, test, treat and support every cases drug resistant TB. Rates of drug resistance is up to 25% amongst previously treated cases. “Our TB wardens are doing their job brilliantly, but now they are finding more and more cases of DR TB, so engaging the TB wardens and their businesses to mobilise long-term support to keep people

on their treatment and alive is incredibly important to reducing the spread of DR TB, said Dr Clarke, project manager B4H.

By 2017, 960 cases of drug resistant Pulmonary TB have been registered. “Last year, we only heard about DR cases that had died, this year, we have a several businesses working to support DR TB patients, even though they are not yet cleared to return to work. We have one DR TB case who has returned to work, and others who receive a range of help to keep on their medications and prevent the spread of TB into their communities. Its wonderful to see.”

TB wardens also ensure patients are not paying for TB drugs. The cost of privately accessed medicine for drug susceptible TB can catastrophic for a family or small business, but the cost of DR medication is more than three times the price.

Some individuals or employers are spending money unnecessarily on TB treatment, when registered at clinics like JBK, 6 mile or Lawes Road, treatment even if it is for two years, it is free” says Catherine Ramoni, B4H training and case support coordinator.

The treatment for Drug Resistant (DR) cases of TB can be up to 24 months, 6 months of injectables and 24 months of tablets.

“Our TB wardens are doing early case findings in their offices, finding drug resistant cases. In response to the number of cases and the JBK having newly arrived ‘Gene-expert’ machines that are used for diagnosis of drug resistance, we felt the need to update the TB wardens on the pathways to TB treatment,” Catherine said.

The role of the TB warden is to ensure that cases are found and that they understand the knowledge of the Drug Resistant TB diagnostic process. This excursion provided such opportunity for TB wardens to familiarize themselves with this process up at the JBK TB clinic having already done tour to the Lawes Road and the 6 mile clinics.

TB wardens Stella from Swire Shipping and Alfred from Pryde Furniture were very impressed with the design of the JBK TB clinic as it provided excellent ventilation, which is a key factor of reducing the risk of TB transmission. Another

TB warden, Ila from the Stanley Hotel, recounted how important the role of the clinic is in supplying drugs and the easy registration process.

“They were amazed to see 16 drugs laid out including injectables for treating a person with drug resistant TB.” said B4H TB training Nerrie Eremas.

All the TB wardens expressed how overwhelming these drugs may be for a DRTB patient without a proper treatment supporter and understand the important role they play in the work places.

“This was a definite refresher for our wardens, they have already been to workplace TB training but, they were able to follow and understand the importance of finding and treating DRTB cases, here at JBK.” said Catherine.

TB treatment is a free but the process complex, so B4H TB wardens are equipped to find and support people with TB in their workplaces and communities to get tested and treated through in the best way.



TB wardens from Swire Shipping, The Stanley, Pryde Furniture, Nambawan Super, Capital Insurance, Kramer Ausenco, PNG Gardener, Anita, JSS4D, GFI, Curtain Bros', Coral Sea Hotels at JBK TB Clinic.



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