Strengthening the Community System Through Local Collaboration: Lessons Learned from Ehlanzeni, Mpumalanga Province

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The aim of the National Adherence Guidelines (AGL) is to provide a minimum package of interventions aimed at supporting linkages, adherence and retention in care programmes.

Retention in care and adherence to antiretroviral treatment (ART), TB and chronic medications underpins a successful treatment programme.

The Mpumalanga Province initiated the roll-out of the AGL in August 2016.

The Province, in collaboration with District Support Partners, decided to roll out the AGL in three phases.
Background: Decanting patients to community adherence clubs

- Universal access to ART requires innovative approaches to ensure quality care for new and stable patients within the existing health system.

- Decanting HIV positive stable patients to community adherence clubs (ACs) contribute to the decongestion of health facilities.

- Community based organisations (CBO) offer an alternative support to stable patients through community ACs.
Background: Zoekenog Clinic and Obrigado Home Based Care

**Obrigado Home Based Care (HBC)**
- Community-based organisation (CBO)

**Zoekenog Clinic**
- Provincial primary health care facility;
- Included in the first phase of the decongestion strategy roll-out
Intervention: Collaboration and communication

- Building the capacity of Obrigado HBC and individuals at community level to facilitate sustainable access to quality comprehensive care and support services closer to the patients:
  - Conducting community ACs and distribution of patients’ medications pre-packed by Zoeknog clinic,
  - Home based care services,
  - Patient Referral services.

- The relationship established is based on collaboration and communication:
  - Support and mentoring of Obrigado HBC by the facility,
  - Provision of service delivery by the CBO in Zoeknog,
  - Weekly communications to assess progress, barriers and opportunities arising out of the development activities.

- Working together to implement interventions in support of the 90:90:90 targets and the AGL to improve the quality of life for all patients living with chronic and life-threatening diseases.
Intervention: AGL in Practice, Zoeknog clinic supported by Obrigado HBC

Step 1: community consultation—traditional leaders, councillors, Indunas

Step 2: training of staff and community AC facilitators

Step 3: mobilisation of medication delivery to establish community AC

Step 4: establishment of community ACs serving HIV positive patients

AGL, Community AC initiation
The USAID-funded Care and Support for Improved Patient Outcomes Project (CaSIPO) aims at developing the capacity of organisations and individuals at community level to facilitate sustainable access to quality comprehensive care and support services closer to the patients.

| One Adherence Club Facilitator (ACF) from Obrigado HBC trained on Adherence Club Facilitation | One Data Capturer from Zoeknog clinic trained on Adherence Club Registers | On-going technical assistance to Obrigado HBC on adherence club facilitation and organisational development |
Results: Facility and CBO took ownership of the decanting

- Following the training of their ACF, Obrigado HBC allocated one more staff member to act as an ACF:
  - One ACF stays in facility to do continuous recruitment of patients for community ACs;
  - One ACF accompanies a facility Nurse in the community, in the provision of HBC services when the need arises.

- Initiated the registration of the ACs with the Central Chronic Medicines Dispensing and Distribution (CCMDD) Programme to collect their pre-pack medication.
Results: Decanting to community ACs at Obrigado HBC

Zoeknog Clinic
798 patients remaining on ART (February 2017)

Obrigado HBC
10 community adherence clubs established (April 2017)

By the end of April 2017, **253 HIV Positive stable patients**, representing **32% of the total number of patients remaining on ART at Zoeknog clinic**, had joined the **10 community adherence clubs established by Obrigado HBC**.
Results: Referral and retention at Obrigado HBC

100% retention rate in adherence clubs.

Zoeknog clinic dedicated a nurse to provide assistance to Obrigado HBC.

Two way referral between the CBO and facility using an official referral form.
Conclusion

✓ Strengthened relationship and support from CaSIPO and Department of Health (DOH) to the CBO and Facility;

✓ General increase in the numbers of patients enrolled in the adherence clubs at the facility;

✓ Continued district and facility support of the Adherence programme;

✓ Continuation of Joint meetings between the Obrigado management with Operational Managers and Facilitators to ensure alignment to DOH and facility needs inline with the AGL.
The collaboration between Obrigado HBC and Zoeknog Clinic led to a higher than expected number of patients joining the community ACs.

Working together and building on each other strengths, Zoeknog clinic and Obrigado HBC implemented an innovative approach to fast track the decanting process.
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http://search.info4africa.org.za/Organisation?Id=87819
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Thank you,

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