Malaria transmission in Kenya ranges from intense in lowland areas to unstable epidemic-prone in the highlands. The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2018 was 9,950,781.
Malaria

Sustaining Essential Health Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is putting an incredible strain on health systems across Africa. Health systems are required to maintain routine health services for other illnesses even as they handle the additional burden. In order to prevent widespread morbidity and mortality, it is of vital importance that we work to sustain the delivery of essential life-saving interventions during this difficult time including for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent health and malaria.

WHO underlines the critical importance of sustaining efforts to prevent, detect and treat malaria during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is of vital importance to ensure the continuity of malaria prevention and treatment services including distribution of insecticide-treated nets and indoor residual spraying, as well as chemoprevention for pregnant women (intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancy). Any intervention must consider the importance of both lowering malaria-related mortality and ensuring the safety of communities and health workers given the ease of transmission of COVID-19.

For Kenya, it will be of vital importance to ensure that the universal coverage campaign for long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) scheduled for 2020 goes ahead, whilst taking into account physical distancing, in accordance with the recent guidance and recommendations from WHO and the RBM Partnership to End Malaria. Without this campaign, coupled with the need to sustain essential health services including malaria case management, there will be an increase in malaria cases and deaths. Under the worst-case scenario, in which all ITN campaigns are suspended and there is a 75% reduction in access to effective antimalarial medicines, WHO estimate that there could be a 37% increase in malaria cases, and a 144% increase in malaria deaths in Kenya. This scenario would represent a complete reversal in the substantial progress in malaria mortality reductions seen over the last 2 decades.

Progress

Kenya has secured the resources required to sustain universal coverage of essential malaria control interventions in 2020. The country has carried out insecticide resistance monitoring since 2015 and has reported the results to WHO. Kenya has completed the national insecticide resistance monitoring and management plan. Kenya has a high rating in terms of public sector management systems (CPIA cluster D). The country is implementing iCCM. The country has significantly enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms for malaria with the development of a Malaria Control and Elimination Scorecard.

Impact

The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2018 was 9,950,781.

Key Challenge

- Sustaining the delivery of essential life-saving interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic including for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Adolescent and Child health including malaria.
Previous Key Recommended Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Suggested completion timeframe</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Comments - key activities/accomplishments since last quarterly report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address funding</td>
<td>Ensure the GF malaria funding application is submitted by Q3 2020 and ensure that resources are allocated to malaria control at a level that is sufficient to sustain the gains made in recent years. Work to fill other outstanding gaps</td>
<td>Q3 2020</td>
<td>The country successfully submitted the Global Fund funding request</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vector control</td>
<td>Work to address the falling LLIN coverage</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
<td>Over 3 million LLINs were shipped to Kenya in Q2 with the LLIN campaign launched in Q3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Ensure that malaria services including case management and vector control are sustained and implemented whilst using COVID-19 sensitive guidelines during the pandemic</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
<td>A letter from the Director General for Health was written to all the county health executives to ensure continuity of malaria health services at all levels. A county engagement forum was initiated to discuss the modalities of ensuring the patients visit the health facilities despite the pandemic. The malaria program has developed and disseminated messages to counties. The Cabinet Secretary for Health emphasised the importance of treatment seeking for malaria during his regular COVID-19 pandemic updates. The plan of action for the LLIN campaign has been revised to incorporate the necessary mitigation measures and approaches to be followed amidst COVID-19 during the campaign implementation. The programme submitted a GF reallocation request to procure PPEs to be used in the mass LLIN campaign. This was approved. The country has stocks of ACTs and RDTs, with additional commodities under procurement.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

RMNCAH and NTDs

Progress

Kenya has achieved high coverage of the tracer RMNCAH intervention exclusive breastfeeding and has recently increased coverage of DPT3. The country has significantly enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms with the development of a Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Scorecard.

Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Kenya is measured using a composite index calculated from preventive chemotherapy coverage achieved for lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis, soil transmitted helminths and trachoma. Preventive chemotherapy coverage in Kenya for trachoma is very low at 1%, and is not reported for lymphatic filariasis, soil transmitted helminths and schistosomiasis.
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<tr>
<td>RMNCAH(^1): Impact</td>
<td>Ensure that essential RMNCAH services are sustained and implemented whilst using Covid-19 sensitive guidelines during the pandemic. Address any stock-outs of essential RMNCAH commodities</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>The MoH developed and circulated guidelines on the continuation of service delivery to all counties. Health facility attendance has improved in most of the counties following the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions although attendance is below the optimal. Health workers and Community Health Volunteers have been trained on COVID-19 including on the general guidelines of protection and use of PPEs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**
- Action achieved
- Some progress
- No progress
- Deliverable not yet due

\(^1\) RMNCAH metrics, recommended actions and response tracked through WHO