



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES THE COMMUNITY-BASED MANAGEMENT OF MULTIDRUG-RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS

SEPTEMBER 11 -- With the support of the United States Government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) launched the Community-based Programmatic Management of Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB) Program. The purpose is to improve the detection and treatment of this disease while reducing cost. Tuberculosis is a major health problem in Bangladesh with 330,000 new cases each year. MDR-TB, a more serious form of the disease, is resistant to at least two of the most powerful first-line anti-TB drugs. With almost 6,000 new cases each year, MDR-TB treatment normally requires long hospital stays and costly treatment of more than 2,40,000 taka (US \$3000) per case.

In support of the National Tuberculosis Control Program (NTP), the program procured eight GeneXpert machines to be deployed at high-volume chest disease clinics nationwide. An additional four will arrive by the end of the year. The machines allow accurate diagnosis of MDR-TB in two hours as compared to over two months with existing technology. With quick detection, patients can start treatment the same day. The community-based treatment model reduces the in-hospital treatment time from 6-8 months to just two months or less. This allows patients to move home once the disease is under control. Shortening the extended hospital stays will reduce the extensive waiting lists for TB hospital admission and lower overall costs. Under the community-based care approach, USAID also supports the training of upazila health workers to manage patient care in their communities.

Since 2007, USAID has invested approximately US\$30 million in tuberculosis control.

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The U.S. Government, through USAID, has provided over \$5.8 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since 1971. In 2011 alone, USAID provided more than \$180 million to improve the lives of people in Bangladesh. USAID supports programs in Bangladesh that: promote democratic institutions and practices, expand food security and economic opportunity, improve health and education services, and increase resiliency to climate change through adaptation and low carbon development.

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