



500 Million Treatments

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praziquantel every year from Maikeffi.

“If you take this medicine, it will help you,” Musa, one of six children of a retired police officer, told the crowd.

The half-billion treatments targeted onchocerciasis, trachoma, lymphatic filariasis, soil-transmitted helminths, and schistosomiasis, and were distributed in

Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Ecuador, Niger, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Mali, Mexico, Uganda, and Venezuela



Figure 1. Carter Center-assisted annual NTD treatments (1996–2016*), totaling 555,599,941 as of November 2016

At a meeting Aug. 2–4 in Kampala, the Uganda Onchocerciasis Elimination Expert Advisory Committee (UOEEAC) determined that four foci in Uganda had successfully finished post-treatment surveillance for river blindness transmission and now meet World Health Organization criteria for elimination.

The four foci are Imaramagambo, Itwara, Mt. Elgon, and Mpamba-Nkusi,

ongoing transmission of onchocerciasis, the most important of which is the very large Madi-Mid North focus in northern Uganda on the border with South Sudan. More than 1.4 million people live in the Madi-Mid North focus, posing the largest challenge to reaching Uganda’s goal of eliminating river blindness nationwide by the year 2020

Uganda Recognizes Key Partnerships on World Sight Day

Uganda's national trachoma program held a SAFE promotion week in conjunction with World Sight Day on Oct. 13, 2016, in the Karamoja region, the most trachoma-endemic region in the country.

Following World Sight Day's theme of "Stronger Together," the events held in the Karamoja region's subcounty of Nabilatuk in Nakapiripirit district focused on partners working together for trachoma elimination and assisting the Uganda Ministry of Health. All aspects of the SAFE strategy—surgery, antibiotics, facial cleanliness, and environmental improvement—were highlighted.

Partner organization CBM conducted a surgical campaign, screening 561 individuals for signs of trachomatous trichiasis (TT), the blinding stage of the disease that warrants surgery. Of those screened, 59 needed TT surgery and 38 agreed to receive it. In addition, 94 people were found to be cataract patients and referred to a nearby hospital. The remaining individuals with other eye conditions were

provided treatment when possible or, for more complicated cases, referred to another clinic or hospital.

USAID's ENVISION project led by RTI International launched a mass drug administration campaign with Zithromax® to increase awareness of the importance

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Initiative Employs New Approaches to Eliminate Surgery Backlog

Ethiopia's Fast Track Initiative saw its first full year of implementation in 2016. Introduced in 2014, the initiative aims to clear the national surgical backlog of trachomatous trichiasis (TT) cases in 18 months.

A six-month pilot, conducted in four regions in 2015, including the

Amhara region where The Carter Center assists, demonstrated success in implementing new strategies to reduce the TT backlog. One novel approach enabled integrated eye-care workers, health care providers trained to conduct TT surgery, to support TT surgical activities full time, rather than

dividing time among a host of activities. Although piloted in only one of the 10 zones of the Amhara region, the success of the 2015 pilot contributed to surpassing the annual regional surgical target for the first time in the history of the program.

New strategies for the Fast Track Initiative pilot have been extended throughout the Amhara region. As of September 2016, the initiative had been launched in 106 of 152 districts in the region, with zonal and district-level trachoma task force committees established to monitor activities and review progress.

With dedicated, full-time integrated eye-care workers planning and conducting TT surgical activities throughout the region, the program provided surgery for more than 82,000 TT patients between January and September 2016, reaching 81 percent of its annual target of 102,476 surgeries. Figure 3 shows the number of surgeries conducted from January through September 2016 and the annual target for 2016.

Through an increased emphasis on TT surgeries with the Fast Track Initiative, zones are making significant strides toward their annual targets and, in turn, reaching the highest number of TT patients with surgery in one year in the region. ■



In East Amhara, Ethiopia, trachoma patients await eyelid surgery (in front and at right) or

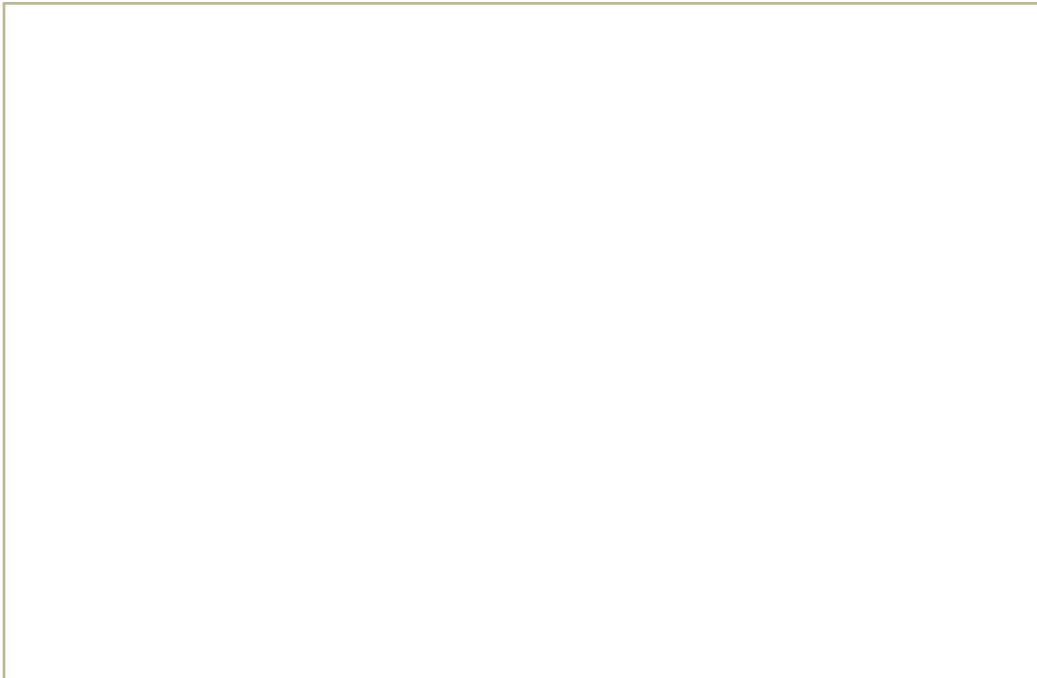


Figure 3. Number of TT Surgeries Achieved (January–September) and Annual Target, 2016, Amhara Region, Ethiopia

prevent and treat trachoma infection,
working with health extension workers



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