

ROTOM MEDICAL SERVICES REPORT

QUARTER TWO 2020



Reach One
Touch One
Ministries
UGANDA

Older Persons Living Dignified and Fulfilled Lives!

July 2020

The new normal.....

Experiences of health care delivery to older persons during COVID -19 Pandemic!



Greetings in the name of Lord Jesus Christ!

For many seniors in Uganda, the outbreak of COVID-19 and the resultant total lockdown in March 2020 had significant impact on their health. Despite being among the very most vulnerable group for catching COVID-19, the seniors were not only worried about contracting the disease, but also how to access medical treatment for their already existing medical illnesses like Diabetes, HIV, Dementia, Hypertension among others.

During this period, ROTOM developed and implemented a community outreach model which aimed at ensuring that seniors have access to health care while keeping them safe at home and happy.

Our doctor and clinicians used innovations like virtual consultations through video and audio calls to our community volunteers since majority of older persons have no phones. The community volunteers worked hard to ensure that seniors` health needs are met by alerting the medical workers about the conditions of older persons. At the ROTOM health centers, the medical workers ensured that the prescribed medicines are well packaged, labelled and delivered to seniors using motor cycles. At the center of all this was the **ROTOM field nurse (Nurse Olivia)**, who was on phone calls 24/7. Every day, Nurse Olivia made calls to volunteers (also seniors who are still stronger between the ages of 60 &

70years) who are in close touch with our seniors and these informed us of the health status of all seniors on a daily basis.

In case a senior had an acute illness that required emergency treatment, the volunteer would inform the field nurse who in turn with assistance from the ROTOM doctor and clinicians, assess the senior on phone and later decide the next move of action. This would include either sending medicines through a motorcycle, a nurse's home visit or an emergency pick up using the ROTOM ambulance. This model also enabled stable seniors have medicines for chronic illnesses without necessarily coming to the health centers as a way of limiting their movements to avoid catching COVID-19.



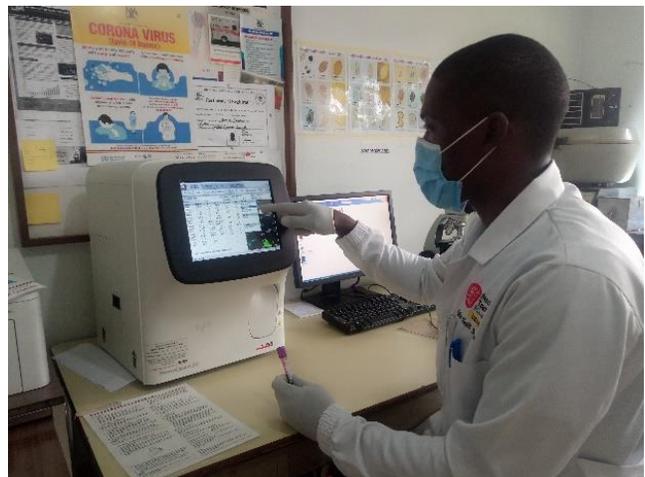
"I was too worried about how I was going to get my medications in absence of public transport and several COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. I usually use a motorcycle (boda-boda) to take me to ROTOM health center to pick my Diabetes, Hypertension pills and also have my catheter changed monthly. I knew it was all over for me because all public transport was banned as a restriction to contain the spread of COVID-19. However, I was overjoyed with gladness when my ROTOM Nurse came to my home to change my catheter. She also brought for me my monthly pressure

and diabetes pills. Thank you so much nurse Olivia and all our supporters for thinking about us during these uncertain times." Senior Wandera Emmanuel, captured in the picture above, narrates. He suffers Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension, Osteoarthritis, Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia with a suprapubic catheter.

PERFORMANCE OF THE ROTOM HEALTH CENTERS.

The ROTOM health centers remained open at all times to offer specialized geriatric health care to older persons. Some of our nurses who stay far away from the ROTOM health centers were accommodated at the health centers due to a ban on public & private transport. Some services like the ultrasound and physiotherapy in Rukiga were put on hold until early July when transport restrictions were eased.

The numbers of private clients from the community reduced from 623 in quarter one 2020 to 561 in quarter two 2020. The incomes from user fees paid by private clients in the community also reduced from **USD 12,384** in quarter one to **USD 8,147** in quarter two 2020. This affected our operations greatly in terms of purchase of medicines and salary payments for some of staff whose salaries depended on user fees.



We have continued to educate our staff and seniors about the dangers of COVID-19 and how to avoid catching the disease. We have also ensured that all our health staff have access to adequate personal protective equipment.

SUCCESS STORY HIGHLIGHT.

A few years when Senior Nakirijja Sauda had just joined ROTOM, she suffered a very bad stroke. After treatment at ROTOM health center, she was allowed to go home to be taken care of by her only 2 grandchildren. Unfortunately, these mistreated her by locking her up in her house and moved to an unknown destination. ROTOM rescued Sauda when she was at the verge of death. She was very malnourished, had bed sores and had suffered a second stroke. After over 3 months of treatment and rehabilitation at ROTOM health center with full recovery, ROTOM took her back to her home. ROTOM provided her with food items including hiring 2 women from her village to take care of her. Unfortunately, for all this time, the care given to Sauda was not satisfactory and she continued getting multiple strokes despite monthly reviews by the ROTOM doctor! She was always lonely, had meals & medicines late and the women couldn't keep her clean because of urine incontinence.



In June 2020, we made a decision to have Sauda move into one of our **ROTOM Village Outreach Center (VOC)** at Lwanyonyi village for a better care and close monitoring. She now has a full time Home Based care giver (trained by ROTOM) who takes care of her. She is always clean, has her meals & medicines on time and also gets the opportunity to interact with other grannies at the VOC. The field nurse visits her weekly and has an opportunity to be reviewed by the doctor every 2 weeks.

We have modified a duplex meant for senior residence into an 8 room care center to accommodate 8 frail older persons without families or whose families are unable to provide the needed care. As older persons under our care become more frail, the need for assisted care has increased, especially for those without families. Having 8 seniors under one ROTOM house with 2 care takers enables us offer them affordable and quality care with dignity.

Conclusion.

As the lockdown is being eased in Uganda, we are encouraging all our seniors and their grandchildren to continue washing their hands, stay at home, wear a face mask when in public and to always call our community volunteers and field nurse in cases of an emergency. Thank you all friends for supporting the older persons in Uganda.

Compiled by; Dr. Nakabugo Katumba Irene Nsingo.