COVID-19 Situation Update 9

Date: September 27th 2021

Background

The current wave of COVID-19 in Tak Province of Thailand, bordering Burma, has been ongoing for the past three month, starting with large outbreaks detected in factories in the area. The biggest city in the province, Mae Sot (home to the clinic), along with its neighboring districts, continues to accumulate over 100 new patients per day, resulting in a steady, severe strain on the local medical system. There are currently 3,179 patients currently receiving care for COVID-19 in Tak Province and over 15,168 patients have been diagnosed since April 1st of this year alone, an increase of 1,466 patients from the last weekly update. On Monday, September 27th, there were 172 new cases diagnosed in Tak, with 114 of those in Mae Sot, home to the clinic, and the nearby districts of Phop Phra, Mae Ramat, and Tha Song Yang. (Tak Provincial Public Relations Office Page)

Since June 28th, the Mae Tao Clinic has been an official field hospital for the Mae Sot public health system, providing care for infected individuals deemed low risk for developing complications or severe disease. While MTC staff members are responsible for providing daily care, they work in partnership with medical staff of the Mae Sot Hospital and other Thai public health entities, closely monitoring patients for evidence of clinical deterioration and facilitating timely referrals if necessary. There are 26 people infected with COVID-19 who are currently under MTC's supervision, a decrease of 18 since the last weekly update. Since the start of the current wave, MTC has treated 660 COVID-19 patients who have either been referred from the Thai health system, are staff from MTC and partner organizations or are residents of the surrounding communities.

The ongoing steady increase in the number of newly infected persons in the Mae Sot area has placed a serious and prolonged strain on the local health system. In order to help alleviate the pressure on the Mae Sot public health system, beginning in early August, the MTC partnered with the Mae Sot Hospital to form a local COVID-19 control committee. The committee worked to establish alternate isolation systems for mildly ill patients or those without symptoms, thereby freeing up health facilities and personnel to care for those more severely ill, while also while closely monitoring patients and facilitating timely referrals, if needed. These measures also helped provided another source for isolation and quarantine services to help control community spread. Home isolation guidelines were also developed and disseminated to those being isolated and treated at home, in factories and in the community. The MTC, working closely with other members of the committee, began providing services for patients undergoing these alternative isolation procedures in the Tha Sai Luat District, just west of Mae Sot city, bordering Burma. These include not only providing monitoring and assessments, along with referrals, for patients, many of whom live in remote areas, but also testing services for COVID-19, medical waste management, and food support.

The ongoing spread of COVID-19 has also added other, severe, indirect strains on the health system. With health facilities forced to close or curtail their services to address the epidemic, those still operational have faced additional demands for non-COVID-19-related services, particularly for maternal and child

health services. Thus, MTC made the decision to resume care for expectant migrant women, many of whom would otherwise face multiple challenges in accessing essential maternal and child healthcare. These services were resumed on the 17th of August. In addition, in order that interruptions to essential child preventive health care be minimized, immunization services for women and children resumed on August 30th. The clinic also resumed outpatient reproductive health services on September 6th to provide care for migrant women with high-risk pregnancies. Prior to the resumption of all these services, strict COVID-19 prevention guidelines and protocols were put in place in order that these essential services could be provided safely, including controls on the number of clients waiting at any given time. Services were initially resumed in a limited fashion, in order to comply with these guidelines and due to limitations in staffing and infrastructure. However, due to high demand, an additional day a week has been added. In order to avoid or reduce treatment interruptions for our patients in need of services to help manage non-communicable diseases or HIV/AIDS, we have also resumed adult outpatient health services on September 22nd. We will continue to closely monitor patient flows and gradually resume other essential outpatient services as soon as it can safely be done.

Category	Total case	New case	Referred to MSH	Currently under supervision	Recovered/ discharged
Clinical staff	66	0	5	0	66
Non clinical staff	100	0	12	0	100
Household contact	110	0	2	0	110
Surrounding community contact	85	0	5	2	83
Patient	91	5	13	21	63
RH delivery patients and their family	9	2	4	2	6
Field Hospital	**199**	**1**	**6**	**1**	**198**
Total	**660**	**8**	**47**	**26**	**626**

** Last updated on **September 22nd 2021***

As of September 22nd, 26 people infected with COVID-19 (25 staff members, household contacts, surrounding community members, patients and their household members, and 1 referred from the Mae Sot public health system) are in isolation within the clinic compound. Those who have had close contact with patients confirmed to have COVID-19 are also quarantined. A total of 626 people infected with COVID-19 have recovered and have been discharged after at least 14 days isolation and monitoring. The clinic is currently in the process of screening staff members who have recovered from COVID-19 to assess for potential longer-term impairments which may impact their ability to work prior to their return.

Under the Thai national COVID-19 vaccine rollout plan, frontline health workers, including staff from MTC, have been receiving vaccinations this year. Currently, 262 MTC staff have received vaccinations, of which 116 are now fully vaccinated (with two doses of Sinovac, Sinopharm or AstraZeneca) and 10 staff who have completed the two-dose series of Sinovac received an additional 3rd booster dose of AstraZeneca.

An additional 140 will get their second dose of vaccine either in the last week of September or early October.

MTC has been designated to be a vaccination site for the migrant community in Mae Sot, working as part of the Thailand vaccination rollout plan. As part of this initiative, during the second week of September, 437 staff of MTC and its partner organizations, along with community members on the priority list for exposure to and consequences of COVID-19, were given their first or second vaccine dose with Sinopharm by trained health workers of MTC and its partner organizations. In addition, on September 21st and 24th, 234 people on the priority list (comprised of the elderly, those with chronic diseases or HIV/AIDS, and pregnant women) received their first dose of Sinopharm. The next round of vaccinations at MTC will take place on September 28th, 29th, October 2nd, 12th and 15th, and 594 people will be given their second vaccine dose of Sinopharm.

MTC, CBOs and EHOs will continue working with International NGOs to advocate for vaccine equity, helping expand access for vulnerable populations living along the Thai-Burma border. Expanding such measures will not only protect the lives and livelihoods of among the most marginalized populations in the region but will also help to address the significant and growing health security threat posed by COVID-19 to Thailand the region, particularly given widening conflict, human rights abuses, displacement and forced migration in Burma.

Clinical Services

To prevent and control further transmission clinical services except those in reproductive health care, adult care and immunizations (as detailed above), remain closed. Please refer to the Facebook pages of the Mae Tao Clinic (in English and Burmese), which will frequently be updated to incorporate the most up-to-date information as it becomes available, particularly during the current unpredictable situation.

There have been many inquiries about testing and vaccinations for COVID-19. Unfortunately, the clinic is unable to provide these services at the present time as they are all currently handled through the Thai health system. If you think you have been exposed and would like testing, please contact the Mae Sot Hospital call center Tel. 065-461-1120 or the COVID-19 call center Tel. 1330. To access COVID-19 treatment, you can register in the Thai health system through the call center Tel. 1130, extension number 14, or add the Line account @sabaideebot and follow further instructions. If you have tested positive using a rapid test (antigen test kit), please call migrant home isolation center at Tel. 065-476-9295 or 065-476-6560. Services are available in Burmese and the center will help provide services including monitoring and health assessments, food and medicine support, and transportation support, if necessary.

For the latest vaccine information, please visit the Thai Government Public Relations Department's official Facebook page. For those who are in need of assistance in management of non-communicable (chronic) diseases or HIV/AIDS, please contact Ms Sophia Hla (English, Burmese and Karen language), Tel. 081-037-5800 or Ms Sable Moe (Burmese and Karen language), Tel. 06-2945-6208. For information or to make an appointment for routine (non-COVID-19) immunizations such as for hepatitis B, BCG (tuberculosis), or diptheria/tetanus/pertussis, please contact Mr Pai Soe Moe (Burmese and Karen language), Tel. 09-4431-4984.

MAE TAO CLINIC

Donations/Support

We are deeply thankful for all those that have and continue to support our work and the communities we work with. For those interested in doing so, please understand that as a COVID-19 field hospital in the midst of a serious epidemic, to ensure safety for everyone, we are very limited in what we are able to accept. We are currently **not** able to accept **cooked food** or **individually purchased medicines**. If you would like to donate clothes or bedding, we respectfully request that these are new and in their original packaging. The supplies that we are currently most in need of are listed below.

General Social Support
Dry food (rice; tinned fish; cooking oil; salt; yellow beans; chili powder; seasoning etc.)
Nutritional supplements (milk; milo)
New bedding (mat; pillow; blanket; mosquito net)
Medical Supplies
PPEs (surgical mask for medical use; face shields; medical/ hospital grade gloves; medical coveralls)
N95 face mask
Infrared Thermometers
Pulse oximeters
Surgical Scrubs
Disinfectants
Alcohol 70% + Glycerin 1% or Alcohol Gel
Lab Supplies
COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Testing Kits (approved by Thai FDA)*
Glucose test (50/box)
Hygiene Supplies
Personal Hygiene Kit (soap; shampoo; tooth paste & tooth brush; sanitation pad; toilet paper)

*The list of approved kits can be found on the Thai FDA website, here:
https://www.fda.moph.go.th/sites/Medical/SitePages/test_kit_covid19.aspx

Please note that this list is dynamic and, given the rapidly evolving circumstances, will be frequently updated to reflect our changing needs and priorities. For further questions regarding donations, please contact the designated persons listed below.

Contact information

For general inquiries and donations, please contact the following:

- Ms Nwe Ni (English, Burmese and Thai language), Tel. 084-820-3743
- Ms Naw Annie (English, Burmese and Karen language), Tel. 089-916-5855
- Ms Pattinee Suanprasert (English and Thai language), Tel. 087-677-1415

For media inquiries:

- Communication team, fundraising@maetaoclinic.org
- Ms Pattinee Suanprasert (Thai language), Tel. 087-677-1415

For clinical inquiries:

- Ms Sophia Hla (English, Burmese and Karen language), Tel. 081-037-5800
- Ms Wah Kuh Paw (Burmese and Karen language), Tel. 089-961-7316

For those interested in supporting our COVID-19 emergency response efforts directly: this can be done through deposits/wire transfer to the following account:

Account Name: Suwannimit Foundation for Mae Tao Clinic
Account Number: 016-8-83807-7
Bank and Branch: Kasikorn Bank, Mae Sot
SWIFT Code: KASITHBK
Bank Address: 84/9, Prasart Withi Rd., Mae Sot, Tak Province 63110, Thailand

For more donation information, please visit our donation page: https://maetaoclinic.org/how-to-help/donate/ or contact at fundraising@maetaoclinic.org