

Finding and treating people with TB in

Lao

People's Democratic Republic

- Mobile technology and a public-private partnership expand access to care
- Private sector clinics offer TB care and other services such as family planning and childhood illness
- Initiative incorporated into Global Fund projects and will continue after TB REACH funding ends



Saravan District - In Lao People's Democratic Republic, the National Tuberculosis Centre is working with Population Services International (PSI) to improve the lives of Lao people by bringing the private sector into already established national programmes. By integrating in this way, existing private clinics are enlisted to expand tuberculosis (TB) services to even the most remote and vulnerable populations. These populations have poor access to care under the public health system and instead may turn to private care of dubious quality. In September 2010, PSI launched a network of social franchise clinics called Sun Quality Health to initiate this expansion. PSI has successfully run these types of clinics for TB services in other countries including Myanmar. As of now, over 50 private sector providers in 12 provinces have been trained and equipped by PSI to offer TB services in their communities. This model has dramatically increased the number of places where free, high quality TB diagnosis and treatment are available to patients. Thousands of patients have been screened for TB but are also able to receive other

forms of care, including family planning and management of childhood illness, thus improving overall health.

This initiative has been undertaken in concert with other efforts to reduce the prevalence of tuberculosis in Lao PDR. For instance, educational text messaging is used together with Google Earth mapping technologies to help raise awareness of symptoms among groups identified as being at high risk of TB. SMS messaging links these people with locally available Sun Quality Health clinics and services. Active screening among the most at risk population groups by TB outreach workers has increased case detection and a mass media campaign is raising awareness in the population as a whole.

With pharmacies also being enrolled to help scale up and expand TB case detection, the role of the private sector in reducing the prevalence of active TB disease in Lao PDR is positive and growing. The project has shown such good early progress that it will be included in Global Fund programming, ensuring that the successes will continue for years to come.

