

PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE - SOME BEST PRACTICES FOLLOWED DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC IN KOLLAM DISTRICT

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COVID 19 has invaded the entire country. Our health workers and front-line workers along with various stakeholders were fighting against it determinedly for one year. First case of COVID 19 pandemic was reported in Kerala on 30th January 2020. Soon, the District has started its pandemic preparedness activities. The response activities can be divided into three phases. In **phase 1 (JAN-APRIL)**, the focus was on creating awareness regarding the disease, preparation of protocols and action plan. With the first case reported on March 26, 2020, the district has started its COVID 19 treatment facility at GMC, Kollam. With the influx of international and interstate travellers in May 2020, case load started increasing in the district towards its peak along with the development of community clusters. Surveillance played a key role in **phase 2 (MAY-AUG)** and “Testing, Tracing and treating” became the key principles. Strengthening of quarantine and cluster containment activities were the main strategy during this time. In October 2020, district confronted a peak in the epidemic curve with increased number of large community/institution clusters and an increase in number of deaths among elderly. **In Phase 3 (SEP-DEC)**, District strengthened testing and intensified isolation measures coupled with micro-cluster containment strategies. Five tier system of care (HOME CARE, DCC, STEPDOWN CFLTC, CFLTC, CSLTC) was introduced in the district along with a district referral protocol. Following the election, school reopening and festivals in December, the district came up with an innovative surge prevention plan on December 15, 2020 anticipating a surge (Triple zero campaign: Group oriented target based decentralized intervention strategy in a phased manner - long term vision “zero infection, zero transmission and

zero death”). Morbidity and mortality reduction by strengthening the post COVID Clinics, e-Sanjeevani and NCD Clinics were a remarkable breakthrough in the pandemic mitigation efforts. Being a pandemic, extraordinary effort needed from the entire team across the strata for the coordination of pandemic activities and control of COVID 19. **Key words:** Surveillance; Pandemic; Tracing; Surge; Quarantine