

Regional Update 2018

Southern Africa Region

For our Southern African region, 2018 was a year of consolidation and transition, as well as a period in which several challenges were faced along the way. As a result of our efforts to expedite Health System Strengthening (HSS), 27 of the Southern African clinics established by North Star, were prepared for transition in early 2019 to Ministries of Health within 11 of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States. This provides a further example of North Star's wider footprint and sustainable impact, which can be largely attributed to our joint strategic collaborations with governmental partners throughout the region.



When perspectives unite

Together,
we can change
the world.

#thepowerofmany



North Star has embarked on a new exciting path, in which we've reviewed our revenue generation opportunities across several countries. This aligns with our strategy to explore options for diversifying funding sources to strengthen North Star's financial sustainability. Based on the research and reviews carried out, we decided to begin preparations for an innovative pilot to open a revenue generation clinic in South Africa in 2020. Should this prove to be successful, it's intended that the model will be scaled and replicated across the Southern and East African regions.

We continued our participation in the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) secondment programme by welcoming two new secondees, who worked in both our Southern and Eastern regions. Dirk Tuchbreiter, whose regular day job is a Senior Strategic Sourcing Manager at J&J, spent six months working with our Southern African team, whilst his colleague Dimitri Bois was seconded to our Eastern region. During their six months at North Star, Dirk and Dimitri lent us their expertise and provided valuable support to further improve our supply chain management processes and stock management systems. Their ideas and proposals were subsequently formulated into a harmonised approach, which has since been rolled out to 5 clinics and will be introduced across the rest of our network in 2019.

Our partnership with Aidsfonds has successfully continued with 9 roadside wellness centres operating as part of our HandsOff! joint collaborative programme. One of the most significant highlights has been the introduction of a new Crisis Response Teams (CRT) initiative. Research studies have revealed a number of indicators which suggest there is a direct correlation between violence, with a reduction in condom use and increased rates of HIV infection. The CRTs comprise of community representatives, including sex workers who volunteer in the role of peer educators. The main purpose of the CRTs is to provide a safety net mechanism to combat and protect other sex workers against violence and therefore, reduce the possibility of HIV being transmitted as a result. Since the CRT programme was initially rolled out, more than 100 cases of sexual and gender-based violence have been documented. This not only provides a deterrent to those carrying out violent acts, but also allows evidence to be gathered, which contributes to future preventative and collaborative actions being taken. The rollout and continuation of the CRT project also contributed towards North Star securing additional Aidsfonds funding for 2019–2020.



We continued to make good progress with the implementation of further strategic initiatives to improve clinical performance and the patient experience. As a key member of the South African governments national plan to promote Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), we gained significant momentum by increasing the number of PrEP and Anti-Retrovirals (ARVs) treatments across the region. Our Pap smear programme was also introduced at our Musina, Ngodwana, Cato Ridge and Pomona clinics, resulting in 205 Pap smears being conducted throughout 2018.

As a result of our continued partnerships with Astron Energy (formally Chevron) and Sappi South Africa, we've ensured the sustainability of the Ngodwana and Cato Ridge Roadside Wellness Centres, both of which are located in South Africa. Our work with the Tuberculosis (TB) in Mines for Southern Africa project was completed at the end of March, for which our mandate was to establish a number of state of the art TB clinics. The operations for eleven of these clinics was overseen by our partner the ORGA Foundation. The dedication and hard work of our team ensured that each of these clinics were opened and successfully up and running within a relatively short timeframe.

We recognise the value and importance of continued staff development and the important role it plays in the progression and strengthening of our organisation. To this end, our clinical staff participated in a training session on sensitisation as part of the HandsOff! project. Training events were also organised for 240 sex workers including 16 sex worker peer educators, in which they learnt about health rights and safety.

In June we said goodbye to our Regional Director Paul Matthews who stepped down to pursue a new challenge, having been with North Star since the very start. As we wished Paul the very best with his new adventure, the reigns were handed over to Michael Becker, who'd previously managed operations across the Southern region. Mike's background and vast experience in the field has ensured a smooth and seamless transition, as the Southern region moves into this new period.

The efforts in the coming year will be channelled towards strengthening the Southern region's funding base both with donors and within the private sector. We will continue to focus strategically on the value that we deliver to patients, by continuing to improve the safety and quality of our clinical care, as well as the quality of the patient experience and opportunities to improve operational efficiency. At the same time, we'll focus on opportunities to develop an integrated Southern African healthcare delivery model for the target groups we work with going forward. Largely as a result of the adaptability, hard work and continued dedication of our 130 team members both in the field and within our regional offices, we believe we're strongly positioned to achieve these objectives.

As we look ahead, we firmly believe we have the right strategy and people in place to enable our operations in the Southern Region to consistently grow, as we have done during the past twelve years. With the formation of the matrix model we look forward to focusing on key areas of our work, to ensure the sustainability and collective strengthening of the organisation. This will above all enable us to continue providing mobile workers and the communities with whom they interact, access to quality health services across Southern Africa.

Images: @Opmeer Reports, Johnson & Johnson
Design: Synsation.nl