



Photo credit: Abay Akalu, Abt Associates

CBHI member gets prescriptions filled at Bekele Internal Medicine Specialty Clinic, Burie town.

Service Contract with a Private Clinic Expands Health Care Options for CBHI Members in Amhara Region

Members of community-based health insurance (CBHI) schemes in Burie town and Burie Zuria and Womberima woredas in Amhara region used to incur out-of-pocket expenses for medications and diagnostic services when they were not available at the public health facilities that were contracted to provide care for CBHI beneficiaries. This can occur when the facilities have drug stockouts or limited laboratory and radiology services. In addition, the CBHI members experienced long waiting times when seeking reimbursement for their out-of-pocket payments.

Recognizing these challenges, Amhara Regional Health Bureau with support from the USAID Health Financing Improvement Program initiated contractual arrangements with private health facilities to improve access to drugs and diagnostic services for CBHI members. As a result, the CBHI schemes in Burie town and Burie Zuria and Womberima woredas signed agreements with Bekele Internal Medicine Specialty Clinic, a private health care facility located in Burie town. With the agreement, the clinic provides CBHI members drugs and diagnostic services (including laboratory and imaging) when they are not available in the contracted public health facilities. This arrangement has expanded access to critical drugs and services and eliminated the financial hardship of paying out-of-pocket.

Community-Based Health Insurance Benefits Communities in Somali Region

The contracting arrangement is a win-win that alleviates constraints to care for CBHI members and provides private facilities with an additional way to complement public health constraints to addressing priority health issues. According to Mr. Yenehune, Burie Zuria woreda's CBHI coordinator, "the arrangement benefits the community in getting service without additional direct out-of-pocket expenditure during stockouts at contracted [public] hospitals or health centers." Mr. Zelalem, the manager of Bekele clinic, describes how fulfilling their partnership has been, "we are pleased to be part of the [CBHI] program and feel we are being socially responsible. [Participating in the CBHI program] also widens our client base."

Throughout Amhara, 124 of the 184 CBHI schemes have contractual agreements with private health facilities, including private pharmacies and diagnostic service centers, to alleviate constraints to care for their members. The USAID Health Financing Improvement Program continues to work with the regional health bureau and CBHI schemes to standardize the bidding and contracting processes (including the cost of services and drugs) and to strengthen supervision of these processes.

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