

Addressing Basic Needs at Bo-Mphato Litsebeletsong tsa Bophelo, Lesotho

Food supplementation

Chronic food insecurity is a major concern in Lesotho (as it is at almost all PIH sites) and threatens good patient outcomes even when adequate medical therapy is available. For this reason, food supplementation is a key element of HIV and TB therapy. The following groups receive food supplementation:

- All patients on ART
- All patients on TB therapy
- All HIV patients with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of less than 18.5, regardless of ART status

Food supplementation is provided for the eligible patient and up to four additional family members. Children under the age of 12 months are given breast milk substitute if the mother is HIV-positive.

After 12 months of direct food supplementation, patients are transitioned off food support. During their 12 months of direct food support, patients receiving training in agricultural methods, led by local partners. Patients are then provided with the tools they need to adequately provide for themselves and their families. Patients continue to be monitored during this period of self-provision: if BMI falls below 20, direct supplementation is re-introduced until self-provision can be maintained.

A food distribution register is maintained monthly. Food is distributed once a month at the clinic for patients to pick up.

Housing assistance

Substandard housing conditions may contribute to poor health outcomes. As such, assistance with housing may be provided by PIH for patients and their families meeting the following criteria:

- More than eight people living in a standard-sized house (*rondoval*)
- More than four people sleeping in a bed
- No mechanism for heating the home during the winter

Prior to receiving housing assistance, a home assessment is made by a trained Village Health Worker and either a nurse or a physician. Upon agreement, repairs/construction are made using local staff and materials wherever possible. PIH hires and supervises the home repair team.

Funeral assistance

In the event of the death of a patient or family member of a patient under PIH's care, PIH makes a contribution to funeral expenses. All attempts are made to use local burial grounds and burial products (i.e., coffins) to minimize costs. This assistance is available to each family for each death that may occur. If patients or their families incur additional funeral expenses, they are eligible for a 12-month, no-interest loan from PIH. Patients or family members are asked to sign a register upon receiving this money. Whenever possible, receipts should be maintained.