



Aga Khan Health Services

### **AKHS launches Emergency Response Centre for COVID-19 Patients in Garamchashma, Pakistan**



**Garamchashma, Pakistan, 9 June 2020** - The Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan (AKHS,P) today inaugurated a 20-bed health facility in Garamchasma, Lower Chitral, for COVID-19 patients. The Emergency Response Centre for COVID-19 Patients will provide care to COVID-19 patients with mild and moderate symptoms. Half of the beds will be allocated to female patients.

The Emergency Response Centre for COVID-19 Patients will be staffed by 29 health professionals, including 7 doctors, 10 nurses and 3 nursing assistants. All staff working at the facility have been equipped with essential equipment and supplies, including medicine and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The health facility has been purpose-built by the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, using locally manufactured prefabricated sandwich panels, adapting hard and soft structures to the requirements of each site.

Speaking at a ceremony to mark the inauguration of the Centre, Chief Guest, Mr Naveed Ahmed, DC, Lower Chitral, said: “The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented crisis for which the private sector and the government need to work together to respond. We look forward to partnering with AKHS,P to face this crisis.”

Also present at the event, Dr Nisar Ullah, Public Specialist, District Health Department, said: “This facility by AKHS,P is a timely and welcome intervention to provide care for people of Lower Chitral battling COVID-19.”

“These are uncertain times for everyone. COVID-19 has left an impact on people from all walks of life. We are honoured to play our role and compliment the government’s efforts to respond to this pandemic. Our aim is that this facility can provide care, comfort and hope to people afflicted by this disease,” said Mr Miraj Uddin, Regional Head for Chitral, Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan.

Construction of the COVID-19 Emergency Response Centre in Garamchashma, Pakistan.  
AKDN

Earlier, in May, a 28-bed Emergency Response Centre for COVID-19 Patients was inaugurated in Booni, Upper Chitral. Special arrangements have also been made to accommodate COVID-19 patients in a make-shift quarantine centre in Booni.

In an effort to supplement AKHS,P’s existing services in Upper and Lower Chitral, AKHS,P’s facilities have been further strengthened to facilitate COVID-19 patients at both the primary

and the secondary levels. The Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) and global health experts have provided training to AKHS,P clinical personnel on various aspects of COVID-19 related treatment, including, managing critical patients, waste management, handling PPE kits, screening strategies, and collecting, as well as storing and transporting specimen. In collaboration with AKUH, AKHS,P has also extended support for testing patients for COVID-19 locally to the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The COVID-19 response has taken place without any interruption to the primary and secondary healthcare services that AKHS,P offers through its broad network of 30 basic health centres, three comprehensive health centres and one medical centre across Chitral.

Similarly, all clinical units continue to offer secondary care services, with the Aga Khan Medical Centre, Booni, offering several specialised services, including doctor consultations and telemedicine facilities.

AKHS,P, working with the Government and private institutions has also worked to raise awareness about COVID-19 through their staff, including health workers. Various activities at different forums and at the grass roots level have been conducted to ensure that communities, including those in remote and far-to-reach areas, are equipped with essential information to take appropriate preventive measures for COVID-19.

**For more information and interview requests, please contact:**

Younus Khan, Manager Communications  
Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan  
Email: [younus.khan@akhsp.org](mailto:younus.khan@akhsp.org)  
Cell number: 03325543255

**NOTE**

*Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan* (AKHS,P), an ISO 9001:2015 certified organisation, provides equitable, service oriented, innovative and community-based health services through four strategic objectives: supporting government health policies and plans; supporting health needs of catchment and target populations; increasing sustainability of operations; and contributing to global standards in health and health care. For more information visit <https://www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-health-services>

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