

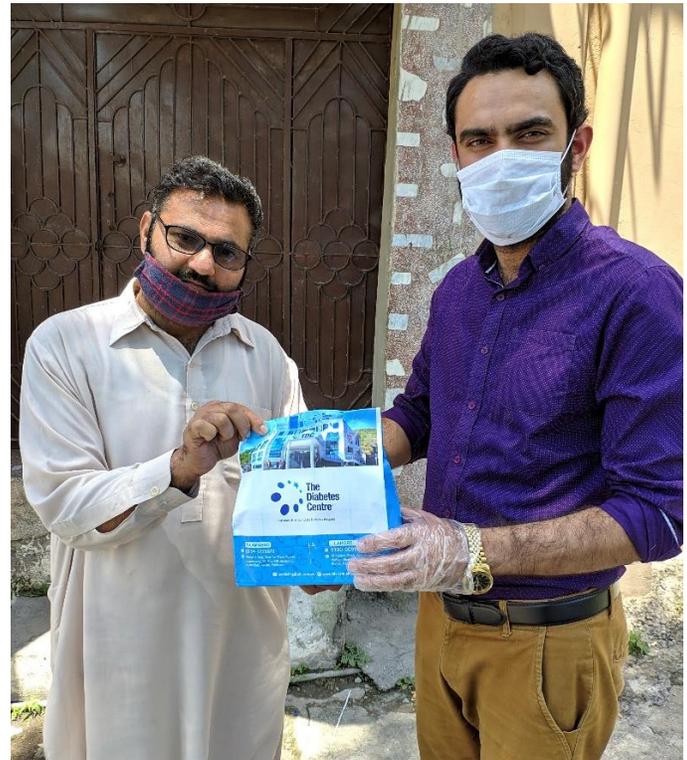
DIABETES, A SERIOUS PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE: *The Distribution of Free Medicines at the Doorsteps Initiative Turned out to be a great relief for the lock downed Diabetics*

“While watching the ‘breaking news’ flashing all over the TV channels announcing a nationwide lock down, it was not the Corona Virus I was fearing rather the main culprit was Diabetes also known as the ‘Silent Killer’ which was haunting me the most” the flashbacks were shared by Shahbaz Khan Mughal, a 42 years old shop owner and a father of 2 sons and 3 daughters.

Mr. Mughal hails from Village Panjgran, Tehsil Patika of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Pakistan. While talking to us he further shared that the news of lock down was just the beginning of the black days to come as within a week’s time I had a major break down of business seriously effecting my home economics and on the other hand due to no access to medical health facilities my diabetic complications started to rise.

During this tough time, SURVIVAL seemed to be the only objective of my life. I knew I have to live to provide for my family. I started to half dose my diabetes medication as my aim was to capitalize on the available stock of medicines at home. It was a perfect equation of misery where I had no income to procure my monthly Diabetes Medication costing roughly PKR 3500 to 4500. If I could arrange for the money there were no means to go to a medical health facility for consultation and diagnostics and lastly there were no commuting sources to travel outside with a restriction in place not to leave my home.

One day, while I was staring to have edema in my foot and thinking about the future of my children, I received a telephone call from The Diabetes Centre Islamabad that turned out to be a ray of light in my life. Since I am registered with The Diabetes Centre (TDC), The representative from TDC hooked me on with a Doctor online who interacted with me for a good 15 minutes and after a complete video medical examination and going through my latest lab reports shared with me the best news of my life; that I will be receiving a package of Free Medicine for the next 2 months along with some information literature on how to stay safe from COVID-19. That call got rid of my anxiety and fears as I knew deep



TDC Representative Delivering Free Medicine at Doorsteps During Complete Lockdown

down in my heart that all I need to survive right now, rest all the business and other aspects of life, I can re-build on those aspects later once the life comes back to usual.

Just a couple of days later, a representative from The Diabetes Centre along with the local AJ&K Basic Health Unit health official visited our house with the said package and what a relief that was as now I have a stock of life saving diabetic medicines worth 4000 PKR that includes insulin as well. In addition, we have received 2 pamphlets that educate me and my family members on how to identify symptoms of COVID-19 and how to stay safe from the said Corona Virus.

This is the story of one of the 5000 plus nationwide beneficiaries of the “COVID-19 and Diabetes Joint Response Plan” being implemented by The Diabetes Centre (TDC), The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Government of Pakistan. The Program intend to cater for the COVID-19 vulnerable groups and bring smiles to the faces of vulnerable communities like the smile on Shahbaz Mughal’s face.