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USINGA HDSS Strengthens Community Input into Future TB Vaccine Rollout Planning

By Olwethu Mlangeni and Sindisiwe Ngobese

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The Umlazi Surveillance Initiative to Nurture Grassroot Action (USINGA) HDSS, under the leadership of Nodal Director, Dr Nompumelelo Mbele, has taken an important step towards supporting the future rollout of tuberculosis (TB) vaccines by implementing the *Developing an Integrated Model of Delivery for Novel TB Vaccines in South Africa* (IMD-TBV) study.

Tuberculosis remains one of South Africa's leading causes of morbidity and mortality. While the current Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine provides early-life protection, evidence suggests that its effectiveness declines over time, necessitating the development of novel vaccine strategies for adolescents and adults. In this context, the IMD-TBV study seeks to generate empirical evidence on community perceptions and inform the design of feasible and acceptable vaccine delivery models.

The broader IMD-TBV project brings together partners including the Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI), the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre, the Aurum Institute, the GRT-Inspired HDSS, and the National and Provincial Departments of Health. Within this multi-institutional framework,

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USINGA led stakeholder sensitisation, field activities, and community interactions within its surveillance site, with support from AHRI on key activities.

The process commenced on 22 January 2026 with a Community Advisory Board (CAB) sensitisation workshop led by Sindisiwe Ngobese, the Nodal Research Coordinator, supported by a dynamic research team, Nothando Nzuza, Minenhle Mbanjwa and Olwethu Mlangeni, with additional support from AHRI on the day. CAB members were introduced to the study objectives, informed consent procedures, and data collection tools, and were encouraged to engage with their communities on discussions around future TB vaccines.

Subsequently, on 4 February 2026, USINGA convened community dialogues in which CAB members presented perspectives gathered from their communities and facilitated structured presentations and discussions. Participants were organised into age- and sex-specific groups to ensure a comprehensive range of viewpoints. The sessions addressed tuberculosis, vaccination beyond early childhood, and the acceptability of future TB vaccine interventions.

Data collected through these engagements is currently being processed and analysed across all participating sites. The findings will contribute to collaborative scientific publications and inform evidence-based strategies for future TB vaccine implementation in South Africa.

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