



the
virtual
doctors



A review of 2025

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In summary....

Thank you for your continued support of The Virtual Doctors. Your generosity played a vital role in strengthening healthcare delivery for rural communities across Zambia and Malawi in 2025. I'm pleased to share a brief update on the impact you helped make possible.

Last year, our clinicians submitted 3,277 cases through our telemedicine platform, representing a 27% increase from 2024. We also expanded our reach by onboarding staff from 79 new clinics and welcomed 80 additional Zambian doctors to the service, helping to build a more locally led and sustainable model of care.



A major milestone in 2025 was the successful launch of the Arclight Project, delivered with the support of the Sir Halley Stewart Trust and the University of St Andrews Medical School.

The solar-powered Arclight device, designed for low-resource environments, is now enabling frontline clinicians to capture high-quality eye and ENT images for specialist diagnosis.

We trained 200 clinicians in June 2025, with endorsement from the Ministry of Health. The participants were drawn from Zambia's 116 districts.

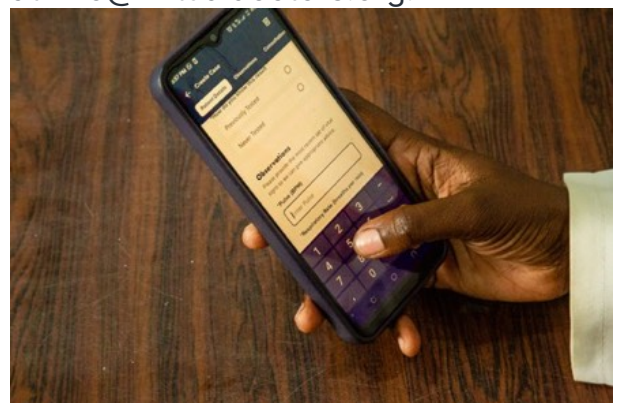
We also made significant progress in Malawi, renewing our partnership with the Health Informatics Association of Malawi (HIAM) to relaunch the service in Lilongwe, with plans to onboard 100 clinicians in early 2026.

In addition, we completed the rollout of our new Virtual Doctors mobile app, improving responsiveness from volunteer doctors and strengthening local capacity. Further enhancements are planned as resources allow.

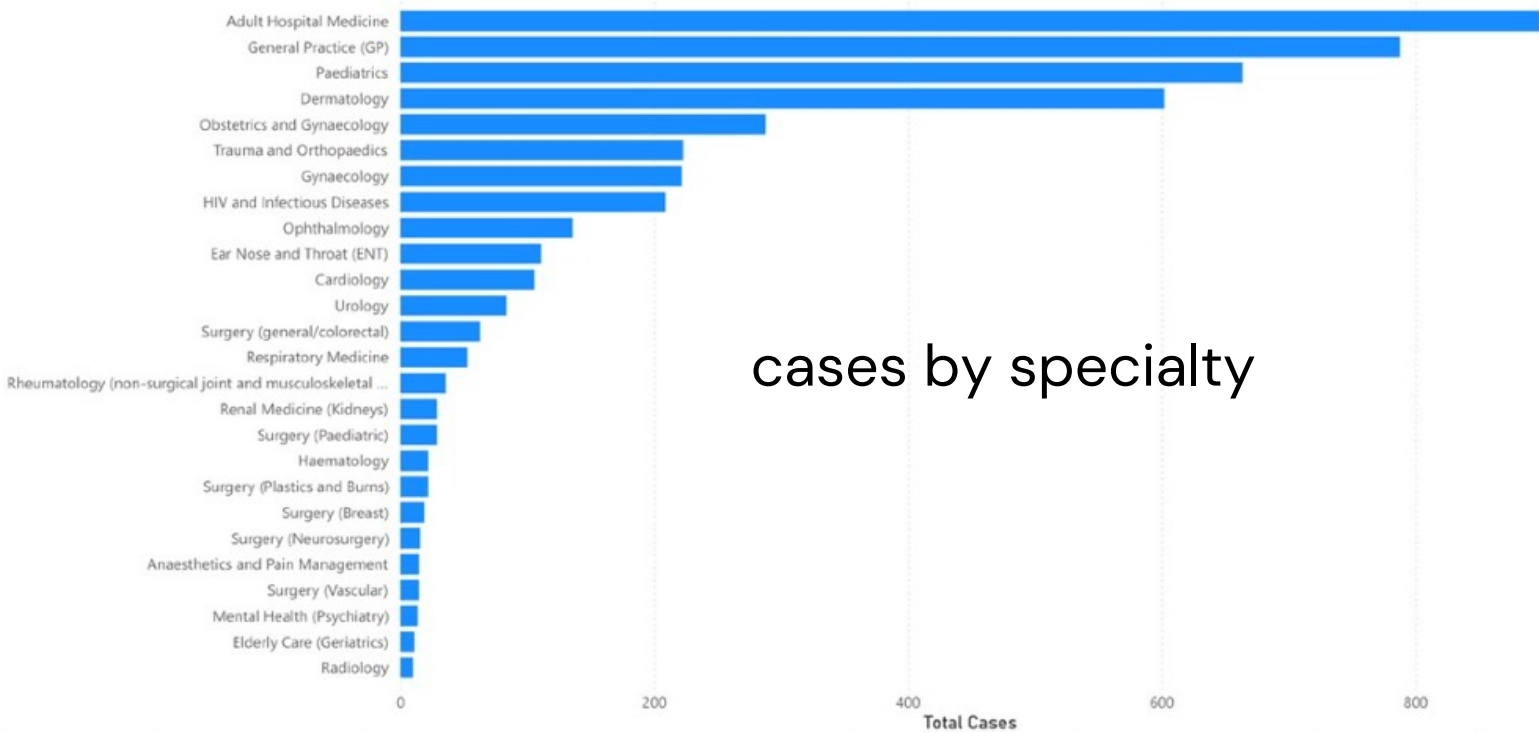
Your support has directly contributed to these achievements and most importantly, to better and faster healthcare for patients who would otherwise have limited access to specialist medical expertise.

Thank you for helping reduce unnecessary referrals to distant hospitals and enhancing the knowledge of community-based clinicians.

If you'd like to learn more or continue supporting our work, please visit www.virtualdoctors.org or contact us at info@virtualdoctors.org.



Some highlights!



178

UK volunteer doctors responded to cases

3,277

cases submitted in 2025

27%

Increase in case numbers from 2024

200

Clinicians trained

550

Clinicians attended case Healthcare Show & Tell webinars (HCST)

80

New Zambia-based Doctors onboarded



In April 2025, The Virtual Doctors received full accreditation as a clinician-to-clinician telemedicine provider from the Health Professions Council of Zambia (HPCZ), further strengthening governance, clinical oversight, and national credibility.

A Year in Review

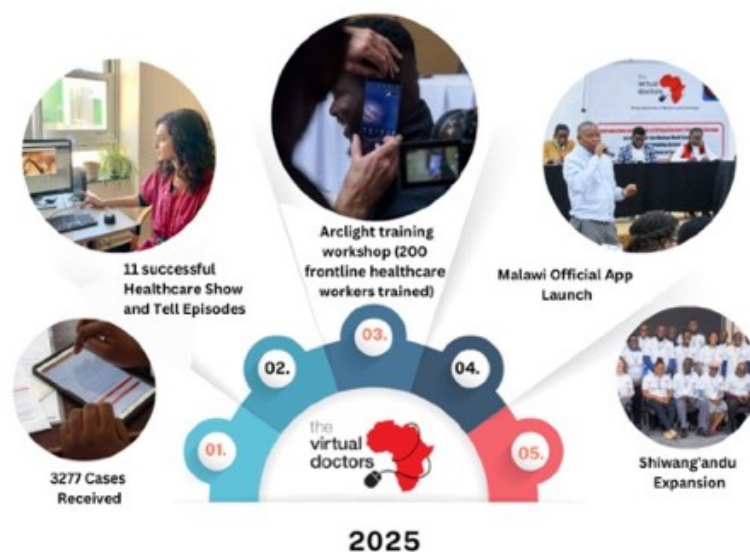
The Virtual Doctors is committed to improving healthcare delivery in underserved rural communities by connecting local clinicians to a network of specialist doctors. Through our innovative telemedicine platform, we provide diagnostic support, continuing professional development, and remote clinical guidance - supporting Ministry of Health efforts to bridge critical gaps in access to medical expertise at the community level.

This donor update highlights our key milestones and the difference your support has made in transforming lives across Zambia and Malawi. With your support, we continued to expand our reach and impact, onboarding new clinics, enhancing our mobile app, and launching collaborative initiatives to strengthen the capacity of frontline healthcare workers.

Over the past year, the Virtual Doctors service experienced steady growth, with a total of 3,277 cases handled in 2025. This represents a 27% increase from 2024, reflecting strong recovery and growth following the app rollout phase.

In addition to the growing caseload, we onboarded users from 79 new clinics across three provinces in Zambia - Muchinga, Central, and Eastern - and added 80 local doctors to our service.

Together, we are reducing unnecessary referrals, lowering patient transport costs, easing hospital overcrowding, accelerating treatment at community level, and strengthening local clinical confidence and knowledge.

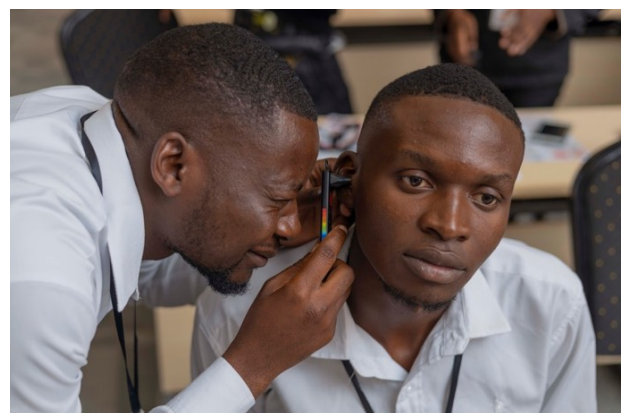


Arclight project delivered

In 2025, one of our most meaningful undertakings was the Arclight Project, which was brought to life through the support of the Sir Halley Stewart Trust and our collaboration with Dr. Andrew Blaikie and his team at the University of St Andrews Medical School in Scotland.

The Arclight device represents a remarkable blend of simplicity and innovation. Solar-powered, compact, and purpose-built for low-resource environments, it combines a direct ophthalmoscope, an anterior segment loupe, and an otoscope in a single tool. When integrated into the Virtual Doctors telemedicine system, it becomes a powerful extension of our clinical reach. Clinicians can now capture clear, detailed images of eye and ENT conditions, enabling specialists to offer deeper insights and more accurate guidance. In many of the rural clinics where we work, this capability can mean the difference between uncertainty and a confident diagnosis.

In June 2025, over four days, 200 clinicians representing all 116 districts of Zambia attended training on using the Arclight device for diagnosis, many from clinics newly onboarded to the Virtual Doctors service. Some travelled for as long as three days to attend. Each day, 50 clinicians came together not just to learn how to use a tool, but to expand what was possible within the constraints of their local clinics.



With support from the Ministry of Health

During the launch, Dr Richard Nsakanya, Director of Clinical Care & Diagnostic Services at the Ministry of Health, captured the significance of this moment in his keynote address:

“Such innovation not only strengthens service delivery at the primary level but aligns with our national vision of universal health coverage. I am particularly pleased with the ongoing efforts to localise the model by onboarding Zambian doctors in collaboration with ZMA and RDAZ — a critical step in enhancing ownership and sustainability.

Equally noteworthy is the Arclight Initiative, whose solar-powered, portable diagnostic tools offer a practical and cost-effective solution for the early detection of ear and eye conditions in low-resource settings. Backed by clinical validation and endorsements from organisations such as the World Health Organisation, UNICEF, and Médecins Sans Frontières, the Arclight device is being adopted globally to improve diagnostic capacity where it is needed most.”

Dr Nsakanya’s remarks underscored the national importance of the initiative, highlighting both its practical impact and its alignment with Zambia’s broader health strategy. Throughout the project, close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Zambia Eye Health Coordinator, and the National ENT Coordinator ensured strong alignment with Ministry of Health national priorities.

Since the rollout, clinicians are submitting higher-quality ophthalmology and ENT cases, enabling faster and more accurate specialist responses.



Malawi Expansion

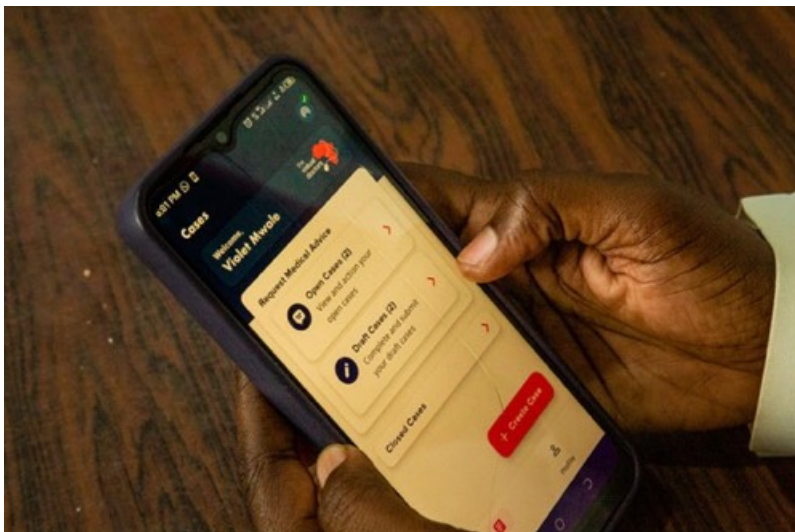
In 2025, we entered a collaborative partnership with the Health Informatics Association of Malawi (HIAM) to relaunch the Virtual Doctors service in Lilongwe. The initiative brought together senior District Medical Officers and health leaders from across Malawi, laying the groundwork for onboarding 100 clinicians in the first quarter of 2026.



As we continue expanding the service to more clinicians, we are also working to strengthen partnerships and collaborative efforts with the Ministry of Health and local organisations. This approach helps maximise our impact and maintain operational efficiency.

Virtual Doctors App Enhancements

The rollout of our new Virtual Doctors app was completed in early 2025, consolidating 18 months of work with our software developers and 6 months of dedicated testing and piloting in the field. The app introduced several key improvements, including enabling our volunteer doctors to respond to cases on mobile devices, increasing their flexibility and responsiveness.



The new app also allowed us to be more effective in recruiting local doctors, with 80 Zambian doctors successfully added to the service. As funds allow, we plan to further enhance the app, including the development of interactive dashboards and the integration of learning credits for clinicians to validate their Continuing Professional Development assessments.

Healthcare Show & Tell

The Healthcare Show & Tell meetings serve as an engaging platform where front-line clinicians share their knowledge, interact with one another, and receive feedback from peers. To ensure accessibility, we provide clinicians with data for accessing Zoom meetings. We conducted 11 shows during 2025.

We extend our gratitude to all our volunteer presenters who shared their knowledge and experiences during the year as well as our very special team of volunteer doctors.



**2025
Healthcare
Show and
Tell
presenters**



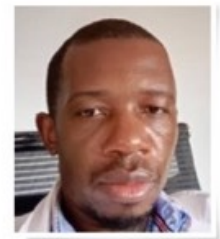
EP 37.
Hope Zulu
Chibombo District



EP 38.
Geoffrey Musonda -
Sinda District



EP 39. Rodgers
Nguwo - Lumezi
District



EP 40. Webster
Mwale - Siavonga
District



EP 41.
Gift Sakala -
Lumezi District



EP 42. Akamandisa
Lubinda - Sesheke
District



EP 43. Castro
Mulenga -
Chibombo District



EP 44.
Mary Nyirenda -
Shiwanga'ndu District



EP 45.
Sr. Petronella Mutamba
- Kasama District



EP 46.
Mukango Shumba -
Katete District



EP 47.
Dr. Hassan Zaheer
United Kingdom

Health Care Show & Tell episodes

Episode	Presenter	Summary
37	Ms. Hope Zulu from Chibombo	Discussed the management of a 6-year-old boy who sustained a forehead injury after hitting a metal bar.
38	Mr. Geoffrey Musonda from Sinda	Examined a 49-year-old man presenting with penile and scrotal swelling against a background of BPH.
39	Mr. Rogers Nguwo from Lumezi	Shared the case of a 77-year-old patient with prolonged constipation, abdominal bloating, and mouth dryness.
40	Mr. Webster Mwale from Siavonga	Reviewed the case of a 16-year-old experiencing severe abdominal pain, distention, and painful scrotal swelling.
41	Mr. Gift Sakala from Lumezi	Discussed the case of a 25-year-old woman with facial swelling, generalised edema, and oliguria.
42	Mr. Akamandalisa Lubinda from Sesheke	Discussed a 27-year-old patient with a rapidly enlarging breast lump accompanied by bloody discharge and later, pus.
43	Mr. Castro Mulenga from Chibombo	Reviewed the case of a pregnant 35-year-old woman in her third trimester presenting with generalised weakness and pallor.
44	Ms. Mary Nyirenda from Ilondola	Presented the case of a 10-year-old boy treated for puff adder envenomation.
45	Sr. Mutamba Petronella from Kasama	Discussed the management of a newborn diagnosed with gastroschisis.
46	Mr. Mukango Shumba from Katete	Reviewed a 62-year-old woman with a five-month history of a painful genital mass sensation.
47	Dr. Hasan Zaheer from the UK	Provided a focused teaching session on effective clinical history taking and concise case presentation.

Finally....

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all our volunteer doctors, donors, partners, and supporters for standing with The Virtual Doctors throughout the past year. Your commitment continues to strengthen healthcare access for rural communities that need it most.

We are deeply grateful to the clinicians across Zambia and Malawi, their facility leadership, and the officials within both Ministries of Health. Their dedication and collaboration make our work possible every single day.

Special thanks to everyone who supported and facilitated the successful implementation of the Arclight Project, including:

- The Permanent Secretary–Technical at the Zambia Ministry of Health, represented by Dr Richard Nsakanya, Director of Clinical Care & Diagnostic Services
- Dr Phyllis Moonga, Zambia Eye Health Coordinator
- Dr Rachel Hapunda, National ENT Coordinator, and her team of ENT facilitators
- Our lead trainers: Dr Andrew Blaikie’s Arclight team at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, and Dr Nikki Hall, one of our long-standing volunteer doctors.
- Our volunteer ophthalmologists and training facilitators, led by Dr Grace Mutati, Founder of the Oculus Foundation, together with her colleagues Dr Mulubwa Serenje and Dr Vrundaben Patel

With your continued partnership, we can expand this model to reach even more underserved communities in 2026 — supporting the strengthening of local healthcare systems and ensuring that geography is no longer a barrier to quality care.

James R Phiri
Executive Director

