



PRESS RELEASE

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HRSA Awards New Twinning Program Cooperative Agreement to AIHA

New grant provides for expansion of successful partnerships and programs led by AIHA over the past decade, will help further strengthen host country organizations in support of PEPFAR goals

Washington, DC, March 18, 2014 — The American International Health Alliance (AIHA) is pleased to announce that it will continue to manage, strengthen, and expand its Twinning Program in support of the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) thanks to a new 5-year cooperative agreement just awarded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the US Department of Health and Human Services.

"We're thrilled to continue our collaboration with HRSA to provide improved facilitation, management, and technical support for the formation of country-driven, country-owned, and locally sustainable HIV/AIDS responses," says AIHA Executive Director James P. Smith.

AIHA's twinning model uses institution-to-institution partnerships and peer-to-peer relationships to benefit both sides, emphasizing professional exchanges and mentoring for effective knowledge sharing. With support from PEPFAR, HRSA, and US Government agencies in target countries, AIHA has established 51 partnerships and placed more than 105 highly skilled health and allied professionals in long-term volunteer assignments since the Twinning Program's inception in 2004.

"Over the past 10 years, AIHA has built successful, mutually-supportive relationships with health-sector stakeholders, from national ministries and schools of the health professions to hospitals, clinics, and grassroots NGOs, in host countries," Smith says. "Under the leadership of Program Director Carl Henn, we'll work to strengthen these relationships to better ensure that twinning projects promote local ownership and create synergy with host country goals from day one."

Through the new award, AIHA will expand its current twinning and volunteer activities in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean Region to support PEPFAR's strategic vision to create an AIDS-free generation by bolstering existing projects and developing new initiatives that address gaps in HIV-related services. This includes sharpening our focus on addressing the unmet needs of people living with HIV/AIDS, orphans and vulnerable children, and most at risk populations, as well as increasing integration of gender issues into partnership activities.

AIHA will continue to support partnerships that work to expand access to care through health systems strengthening and expanded training of human resources for health, particularly the development and integration of new mid-level cadres, such as clinical associates, pharmacy technicians, and social welfare assistants. Other areas of focus will be supporting specialized training to incorporate HIV in emergency medicine and obstetrics and strengthening allied fields like laboratory science and biomedical technology, which play critical roles in quality HIV care.

AIHA will also engage key strategic partners, including the University of Wisconsin Global Health Institute, the National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors, and the South African Cochrane Centre, who will provide targeted technical assistance in areas such as continuous quality improvement; program integration into national frameworks; and evidence-based clinical practices.

"During the next five years, our goal is to create the requisite capacity to manage twinning projects locally, whether at the country or regional level," Smith explains, concluding, "This represents the ultimate outcome we hope to achieve through all our twinning partnerships — that they have attained and can sustain a level of institutional and human resource capacity that enables them to respond effectively to the health needs of the communities they serve."

*For more information on the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center, visit www.TwinningAgainstAIDS.org.
For more information about AIHA, visit our Web site at www.aiha.com.*

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