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AIHA Partners Launch Exciting New Telemedicine Initiative in Zambia

Working in partnership with the Government of Zambia, the Zambian Defense Forces (ZDF) Military Medical Services, and the Global Partnership for TeleHealth (GPT), AIHA celebrated the launch of a telemedicine initiative that will improve access to high quality diagnostics and specialized care to people living in rural, underserved parts of Zambia in Lusaka on September 3.

Supported by PEPFAR and the US Department of Defense (DOD) in Zambia, this innovative national eHealth initiative links clinical experts at Maina Soko Military Hospital with pilot ZDF health sites in Lusaka West, Mansa, Kabwe, and Kaoma, as well as at the Defense Force School of Health Sciences in Lusaka.

Distinguished speakers at the launch ceremony — which took place at Maina Soko from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. — included Honorable Rose Sale, Permanent Secretary, Zambian Ministry of Defence; Brigadier General Frank Sinyangwe, MD, Director General ZDF Military Medical Services; General Evans Malyangu, MD, Commandant of Maina Soko Military Hospital; General Panganani Njovu, MD, Commandant of the Defense Force School of Health Sciences; and Eda Lifuka, DOD PEPFAR Program Manager based in Lusaka.



Zambian Ministry of Defense Human Resources Director Mr. Ranford Simuumbwe lauded the new telemedicine initiative being implemented by ZDF and GPT with AIHA support.

ZDF oversees more than 50 health sites across the country that serve both civilian and military populations, which puts it in an excellent position to take the lead on new and cutting-edge health initiatives like telemedicine.

Because many of these health sites are situated in rural areas and lack access to specialized care, patients — particularly those living with HIV or other complex or chronic conditions — often face significant barriers to accessing health services, including time, distance, transportation, and cost concerns.

Telemedicine effectively eliminates these barriers and therefore has great potential

to reduce morbidity and mortality rates, as well as to improve the quality of life for people living in rural areas.

"We are proud to be part of this important eHealth project, which is sure to have a positive impact on people and communities across Zambia in the months to come," AIHA President and CEO David Greeley said at the launch.

"It will improve their access to the knowledge and expertise of the many clinical experts at Maina Soko and even at other medical facilities throughout the world, who can share their knowledge and advice through telemedicine."

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Training Social Workers to Mitigate GBV / VAC Helps Survivors Regain Their Dignity



Tanzanian social worker Kingmoto Massa (left) talks with a young rape victim (seated on ground at right) and her family during a supportive visit. Mr. Massa says he is better prepared to work with his community to reduce incidences of GBV/VAC and respond to the needs of survivors when they occur thanks to a PEPFAR-supported gender-based violence and violence against children (GBV/VAC) training program he attended last March.

"The skills I gained enabled me to better assist ward-level social welfare officers and Most Vulnerable Children Committees within the district to systemically address GBV and VAC issues, including how to deal with disruptive cultural norms that have perpetuated such practices."

— Tanzanian Social Worker
Kingmoto Massa.

Dusk was falling in Tanzania's Mkuranga District when Kingmoto Massa received a disturbing report: a 10-year-old girl from a distant village had been raped and seriously injured.

News of such a heinous crime is often devastating to social workers, but it can be particularly alarming for social welfare workers who lack the knowledge and experience they need to effectively help victims and their families cope with the trauma and begin healing.

Mr. Massa, however, knew exactly what to do. He immediately began working with clinicians at the district hospital to make sure the young girl received proper care and attention, including post-exposure prophylaxis treatment to prevent HIV. He also coordinated psycho-social care and support for the child, who was not only physically injured, but also greatly traumatized.

When the girl was discharged from the hospital a few days later, Mr. Massa — working closely with the district and ward level social welfare teams — continued to provide care to the child and her family. This included establishing a supportive environment at school, where they had become privy to the assault, and helping the family access justice dispensation services.

Noting that he is glad he was able to provide support to the girl and her family at their most vulnerable time, Mr. Massa stresses that social workers who are equipped with targeted knowledge and practical skills can play a vital role in responding to GBV/VAC cases.

"This child required interven-

tions at different levels, ranging from clinical care to legal support," Mr. Massa explains, noting that he helped create a bridge between the victim and her family and the facility and community-based services they so desperately needed.

"As a trained social worker, I assisted the child with her psycho-social needs, but also helped her navigate many various social barriers and layers of service so she could get the care she needed to recover," he continues.

Unfortunately, GBV/VAC cases are far too common in Tanzania and throughout the world. Around the time of his client's assault, the Mkuranga District Social Welfare Section and Police Force Gender Desk reported at least 13 cases between February and June 2015 alone.

Mr. Massa admits that he is now able to better support his community's efforts to prevent and respond to such gross violations and abuses of children, women, and other vulnerable individuals thanks to training he received through an AIHA social welfare workforce strengthening initiative supported by PEPFAR and CDC/Tanzania. Experts from the Tanzania Association of Social Workers conducted the GBV/VAC training in March 2015.

"The skills I gained enabled me to better assist ward-level social welfare officers and Most Vulnerable Children Committees (MVCC) within the district to systemically address GBV and VAC issues, including how to deal with disruptive cultural norms that have perpetuated such practices," Mr. Massa reports.

Given the alarming increase in child abuse cases, Mr.

Massa developed a strategy to support community volunteers, MVCCs, and village authorities to help ensure that children are protected.

Elements of his strategy include creating awareness among parents, caregivers, and the community at large of the importance of child protection, various ways of protecting children, GBV, and how to prevent and report cases to responsible authorities.

Admitting that the community used to be complacent and gave far too much leeway to perpetrators, Mr. Massa says attackers often were allowed to get away with rape and other forms of abuse by a system that encouraged settlement outside of court.

Now, more active collaboration among the MVCC, local government authorities, and law enforcement agencies has empowered survivors to speak out and given families the impetus to support them.

AIHA is working closely with the Tanzanian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to roll out GBV/VAC training for social workers in priority districts.

This training program uses national curriculum and trainers and is designed to empower existing social welfare workers with the knowledge and skills they need to provide a more comprehensive safety net that helps make HIV/AIDS interventions more effective for high-risk individuals exposed to GBV/VAC.

AIHA Partners Launch New Telemedicine Initiative in Zambia

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AIHA, the Georgia-based Global Partnership for Telehealth, and ZDF began collaborating on this groundbreaking locally driven, locally owned telemedicine program in March 2014.

Telemedicine uses telecommunications technology to enhance, expedite, or even directly provide healthcare services by accessing offsite databases, linking clinics or care providers to central hospitals, or transmitting x-rays or other diagnostic images for examination by experts at another site.

AIHA's partnership with ZDF Military Medical Services was launched in 2005. AIHA has been providing direct technical assistance to ZDF since 2007 through our

Knowledge Management Initiative and pre- and in-service medical training in targeted fields such as emergency medicine, injection safety, and infection control at the Defense School of Health Sciences.

The project is designed to improve provider access to evidence-based clinical resources as a means of enhancing care management for PLHIV and other military and civilian patients treated at ZDF clinical sites throughout the country.

AIHA has to date established 21 Knowledge Management Centers (KMCs) at ZDF clinical sites and we are continuing to train medical personnel in effective research and implementation techniques to improve quality and efficacy of patient care.

At these KMCs, healthcare personnel can easily tap into

a wealth of up-to-date clinical research, texts, case studies, treatment protocols, and other evidenced-based resources that can guide their practice and improve quality of care and HIV/AIDS treatment outcomes.

AIHA supports effective use and scale up of KMCs by providing targeted training on evidence-based medicine, emergency medicine, proper research protocols, online resources, and other relevant topics both through workshops and distance learning courses.

From October 2014 to March 2015 alone, ZDF KMCs logged nearly 250 visits from users looking to access clinical resources. During that same timeframe, local KMC coordinators trained 114 individuals in the use of evidence-based clinical tools and research, clearly demonstrating ZDF's



Brig. General Dr. Evans Malyangu, Commandant of Maina Soko Military Hospital (above right), and Warrant Officer Christopher Rose, DOD Coordinator at the US Embassy in Lusaka (below), were among those who spoke at the telemedicine initiative launch.



AIHA Showcases Debre Berhan / Elmhurst Partnership at 39th World Hospital Congress

AIHA staff and partners advocated twinning as an effective — and cost-effective — way of strengthening health system capacity in low and middle-income countries and getting US hospitals engaged in global health and development at the International Hospital Federation's 39th World Hospital Congress in Chicago Oct. 6-8.

On Oct. 5, AIHA President & CEO David Greeley, along with Dr. Joe Masci of Elmhurst Hospital Center, Dr. Fiseha Tadesse of Debre Berhan Referral Hospital in Ethiopia, and AIHA Director of Communications Kathryn Utan shared insights on

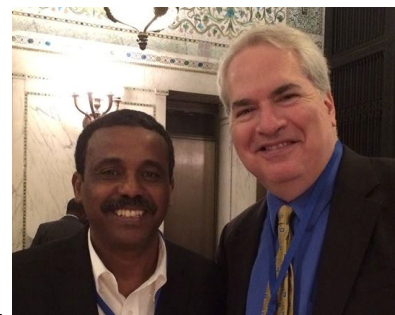
partnering to build hospital capacity at a pre-conference symposium organized by one of AIHA's very first hospital partners, Charlie Evans, who served as coordinator of our USAID-funded Murmansk, Russia / Jacksonville, Florida partnership.

During the symposium, Debre Berhan Medical Director Dr. Fiseha Tadesse and Elmhurst Medical Director Dr. Joseph Masci shared some insights on what made their hospital partnership so successful.

"The nature of the twinning model ... working so closely with our exact counterparts over several years and devel-

oping these long-term professional and personal relationships is something that is just not possible with any other form of technical assistance," Dr. Masci told attendees.

"There is a special value to this process where colleagues can work and grow together", he said. "When we go over as a team, we get to see each other in a different light as we respond to the challenges of working in the Ethiopian setting. It fosters a genuine camaraderie among the Elmhurst staff and gets us to look at our own processes more critically."



Dr. Fiseha Tadesse of Debre Berhan Referral Hospital and AIHA President & CEO David Greeley at the IHF World Hospital Congress.

Pharm Techs Play Important Role in Improving Patient Care in South Africa



NMMU pharmacy technician student Andiswa Hlanjwa speaks about her externship experience at a community pharmacy during a university event.

Mid-level healthcare workers are in high demand, yet short supply as South Africa works to meet its rapidly increasing needs for health and allied care professionals. Pharmacy services are no exception, but unfortunately the country currently produces fewer than half of the optimal number of 2,500 pharmacy support personnel it needs to graduate annually, according to the South African Pharmacy Council.

Pharmacy technician students like Andiswa Hlanjwa are poised to make a tremendous difference thanks to the education and hands-on training they are receiving through Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's (NMMU) programs for training two new mid-level pharmacy cadres known as Pharmacy Technical Assistants (PTAs) and Pharmacy Technicians (PTs).

"I was interested in pursuing a health science career, so I enrolled in NMMU's Pharmacy Technician course in 2013. That year, I studied for the first-level program that qualifies you to be a PTA," Hlanjwa explains, noting that at first she had little knowledge of what the program would entail.

"After attending lectures, class activities, and practicum, I soon found out that the course presented a broad spectrum of knowledge. What I was learning not only focused on my own scope of practice, but also helped me to understand how other health professionals work within the health sector," she continues. "This prepares us to work together as a team that has one goal in mind — the patients' wellbeing."

Acquiring hands-on practical skills is a key element of the PTA and PT training programs at NMMU. This helps prepare students to hit the ground running as important members of the healthcare team once they complete their studies.

"During externships, students are given the opportunity to work in a pharmacy under the supervision of a pharmacist. For me, this was an adventure on its own," Hlanjwa admits with a smile on her face. "I had never worked in a pharmacy before and this

was such a worthwhile experience. I was in a place where I got to take part in real-life discussions with patients who were asking for advice, as opposed to role-playing or imagining different scenarios during practical sessions at school," she says.

Hlanjwa selected a community pharmacy, which she says provided a very welcoming place to learn.

"Staff there were happy to have me. They guided me throughout the duration of my externship," she recalls, explaining that at first she was very scared. "It felt like all the knowledge I had learned was gone from my mind, but then some of the patient cases started relating very well to what I learned in class. Working in the pharmacy helped me understand my school work even more," she says, stressing, "What inspired me the most was seeing how the patients trusted with the health professionals and the confidence they had in their treatment and advice."

"Andiswa is a wonderful young lady and it was a pleasure to have her in our store," says Andre Nel, a pharmacist at Dis-Chem Somermall, where Hlanjwa did her externship in July 2015.

"She was extremely helpful and really made a difference in our dispensary and the over-the-counter section. If she continues with this positive and friendly attitude, then there lies a great future ahead of her. People like Andiswa give me great hope for the future of our youth in South Africa."

From her perspective, Hlanjwa says that she learned so much about various diseases and conditions and

the medications used to treat them. "I also learned the importance of attention to detail and accuracy to ensure treatment does not result in an adverse event that will be harmful to the patient," she explains, noting that her experience working in a primary healthcare center exposed her to a different environment that painted a clearer picture of the roles of nurses, doctors, and other caregivers. "My school and externship experiences helped me see the treatment of patients and the shortage of staff back home in a better way."

South African faculty and staff who implement NMMU's PTA and PT training programs have been supported in their efforts through a twinning partnership with the St. Louis College of Pharmacy (STLCOP) that was launched in May 2013 by AIHA with funding from PEPFAR and CDC/South Africa.

Faculty development is a primary objective of the partnership and is implemented through development of teaching materials and workshops in innovative teaching and assessment methodologies. To enhance the experience of students before they enter the workforce, US partners have been helping NMMU develop and manage a clinical experiential rotation program in various pharmacy work settings, such as Hlanjwa's externships.

"I believe that the program is not only creating job opportunities, but also it brings forth hope that more patients are going to be given the best service and treatment in the communities where they live, both through public and private sector healthcare facilities," Hlanjwa concludes.

US Office of Global Health Diplomacy Honors Two AIHA Volunteers as Health Diplomats

During Global Diaspora Week Oct. 11-17, the US Office of Global Health Diplomacy celebrated the achievements of Dr. Aelaf Worku, a Clinical Associate of Medicine in the Department of Medicine at the University of Chicago, and Dr. Bisrat Hailemeskel, Associate Professor and Director of Drug Information Services at Howard University in the College of Pharmacy.

Dr. Worku — who served as both a quality improvement advisor at Debre Berhan Referral Hospital in Ethiopia and a medical education

advisor to the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health, helping with the launch of 13 medical schools — shared his vision with Global Diaspora Week launch participants at the Department of State in Washington, DC, stressing the important contributions that all members of the healthcare team make, as well as the need for medical professionals to understand the context of the country in which they are working.

Dr. Hailemeskel, who was born in Ethiopia, said he always dreamed of giving

back to his country — even more so when he discovered that one of the biggest challenges in the country's health sector is human resource capacity.

He led a Twinning Center partnership linking Howard with Addis Ababa University School of Pharmacy, helping develop a more clinically focused 5-year curriculum that is now the national standard for training pharmacy students.

Congratulations to our dedicated partners!



The Office of Global Health Diplomacy at the US Department of State honored AIHA volunteers Dr. Bisrat Hailemeskel (left) and Dr. Aelaf Worku (right) as Health Diplomats during Global Diaspora Week in October.

AIHA, KCCB Launch New DREAMS Initiative Project in Western Kenya

AIHA, in collaboration with our longstanding partners at the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops General Secretariat (KCCB), is excited to announce the launch of a new DREAMS Initiative project targeting girls between the ages of 10-14 in the counties of Siaya and Homa Bay in Western Kenya.

Supported by PEPFAR, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Girl Effect, the overarching goal of the DREAMS Initiative is to help girls develop into **D**etermined, **R**esilient, **E**mpowered, **A**IDS-free, **M**entored, and **S**afe women.

HIV prevalence rates in Siaya and Homa Bay counties are above 23 percent, so our efforts will focus on arming young girls with the knowledge and life skills they need to avoid behaviors and situations that put them at even greater risk for HIV and gender-based violence.

AIHA and KCCB have been collaborating since 2006 to implement a national-level

HIV prevention program for youth in Kenya. Through KCCB's Commission for Education and Religious Education, the teacher-driven Making Life's Responsible Choices (MLRC) program developed through an HIV/AIDS Twinning Center partnership supported by PEPFAR and CDC/Kenya is being taught in more than 1,600 primary schools nationwide. To date, MLRC has reached more than 768,000 Kenyan youth.

In addition to this school-based program, AIHA and KCCB also implemented Families Matter!, a complementary evidence-based intervention that has been delivered to some 9,000 parents and other caregivers.

Partners worked with Radio Waumini, a national Catholic radio station, to deliver youth and family-friendly radio messages that reinforce HIV prevention messaging. A 15-minute radio show — called Love Life, Talk, and Live — airs several times a week and often features children enrolled in MLRC,

who act out various lessons and role play activities.

Guest speakers were also invited to talk about topical issues, such as peer pressure, HIV-related stigma and discrimination, substance abuse, and other challenges young people face in their daily lives.

In keeping with the DREAMS Initiative push to offer multiple solutions to a singular problem, AIHA's new collaborative project with KCCB will draw on this wealth of experience to develop and a similar portfolio of programs.

The project will also provide other support, including post-violence care, HIV testing and counseling, educational subsidies, and social asset building — all geared toward reaching the most vulnerable girls in both counties at a young age to effectively prevent new HIV infections and achieve an AIDS-free future.



ICASA Pictorial: AIHA Makes Strong Showing, Highlights Successful Programs across Africa

AIHA staff, partners, and volunteers showcased successful HIV/AIDS Twinning Center projects in Ethiopia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia at the 2015 International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) in Harare, Zimbabwe. Some 7,000 delegates working in the field of HIV, policymakers, people living with HIV, and others who are committed to ending the epidemic attended this biennial event, which was held Nov. 29-Dec. 4.

Presentations included:

- "A Twinning Partnership between Debre Berhan and Elmhurst Hospitals: A Model for Sustainable Health System & Human Resource Capacity Building" (Neil Landreville)
- "The Impact of Clinical Associates on the Provision of Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) in Rural South Africa" (John Capati)
- "Enhancing Nursing Education in Tanzania through Tablet Technology" (Ndementria Vermand, presented by Ronald Nakaka)
- "Standardizing Social Work Education to Strengthen Tanzania's Psychosocial Response to HIV/AIDS" (Asiya Mwanzi)
- "Use of Telemedicine Technologies and Systems to Increase Equity of Access to HIV/AIDS Specialist Clinical Care and Treatment: A Systematic Review of the Model Telehealth Program in Zambia" (Saviour Chishimba)

Scenes from ICASA 2015



AIHA Regional Director for Southern Africa John Capati (left) explains the impact Clinical Associates are having on VMMC programs in South Africa during a poster presentation at ICASA.



AIHA partner and VHC volunteer Neil Landreville, RN, (right) discusses his poster describing some of the accomplishments of Debre Berhan Referral Hospital in Ethiopia. Debre Berhan partnered with Elmhurst Hospital Center in Queens, New York, from 2007-2014.



AIHA partner Dr. Asiya Mwanzi showcases efforts to standardize social work education in Tanzania as a way to improve psychosocial support to people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Often, this critical component of care and support is overlooked despite the fact that social workers and para social workers can play a critical part in the provision of comprehensive HIV care — including linking people to needed services and improving adherence to treatment.

AIHA/Tanzania's Ronald Nakaka (left) discusses a poster highlighting AIHA's pilot tablet project to enhance nursing education. Launched last year, the tablet project is part of AIHA's longstanding Tanzania Nursing Initiative — a national project designed to strengthen the nursing profession.



Conferences and Opportunities



2015 Rural Health Conference (RUDASA)
September 23-26, 2015
Dullstroom, Mpumalanga, South Africa

2015 Public Health Association of South Africa Conference
October 7-9, 2015
Durban, South Africa

2015 Connected Health Symposium
October 29-30, 2015
Boston, Massachusetts, USA

ICASA 2015
Nov. 29-Dec. 4, 2015
Harare, Zimbabwe

International Conference on Nursing (ICON)
March 25-27, 2016
Malang, Indonesia

10th International Workshop on HIV Treatment, Pathogenesis and Prevention Research in Resource-limited Settings
May 3-6, 2016
Yaounde, Cameroon

3rd International Conference on Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Engineering
May 11-13, 2016
Copenhagen, Denmark

Women Deliver 2016
May 16-19, 2016
Copenhagen, Denmark

eLearning Africa 2016 - 11th International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training
May 24-26, 2016
Cairo, Egypt

International Conference on HIV & Emerging Infectious Diseases
May 25-27, 2016
Marseille, France

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The HIV/AIDS Twinning Center mobilizes and coordinates the resources of healthcare and allied professionals in the United States and abroad to effectively build capacity to reduce HIV infection rates and provide care to those infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS in support of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Funded by PEPFAR through a cooperative agreement with the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, the Twinning Center is a project of the American International Health Alliance, a US-based nonprofit dedicated to helping limited-resource communities make positive, sustainable changes that improve accessibility to a broad range of high-quality healthcare services and preventive programs.

The contents of this newsletter are the responsibility of AIHA and the Twinning Center and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States government or other funding agencies.

