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CSIS Congressional Delegation to South Africa Visits AIHA Partners at Osindisweni Hospital



The important role Clinical Associates are playing in South Africa's HIV/AIDS response and ongoing efforts to overcome severe health workforce gaps was showcased for a US Congressional delegation led by CSIS during a site visit to Osindisweni Hospital in KwaZulu Natal on February 15.

The Washington, DC-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) recently conducted a study tour to examine PEPFAR's impact on South Africa's HIV/AIDS response, as well as the sustainability of related programs once they have transitioned away from US assistance and support.

The delegation included Lesley Anne Warner, Professional Staff Member, US House Foreign Affairs Committee; Mary-Sumpter Lapinski, Health Policy Director to Sen. Lamar Alexander, Chairman of the US Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee; Nick Bath, Health Policy Director to Sen. Patty Murray, US Senate HELP Committee;

Richard Downie, Deputy Director and Fellow, CSIS Africa Program, Consultant for the CSIS Global Health Policy Center; Audrey Jackson, Senior Fellow, CSIS Global Health Policy Center; and Sahil Angelo, Program Manager and Research Associate, CSIS Global Health Policy Center.

On Feb. 15, they visited Osindisweni Hospital in KwaZulu Natal Province to learn about the important role Clinical Associates are playing in the country's HIV/AIDS response, as well as its ongoing efforts to address its critical shortage of health workers. With support from PEPFAR and CDC/South Africa, AIHA has been providing technical assistance to this relatively

new mid-level medical cadre since 2010 through a variety of targeted interventions, including three university-to-university partnerships.

The introduction of this new cadre of mid-level worker is strengthening primary care services in the country by bolstering the number of trained healthcare providers working in district hospitals.

ClinAs are trained to provide a range of HIV prevention, care, and treatment services, including voluntary male medical circumcision (VMMC), which has been identified by the National Department of Health as a key prevention strategy for South Africa.

A total of 637 Clinical Associates have graduated and been deployed to date, and 1,048 students are currently enrolled in the 3-year degree program that is offered at Walter Sisulu University, University of the Witwatersrand, and University of Pretoria.

At Osindisweni Hospital, which is a clinical training site for the University of Pretoria's Clinical Associates program, the CSIS delegation met with a number of officials from the KwaZulu Natal Department of Health, hospital staff, University of Pretoria faculty and students, and AIHA representatives.

Osindisweni Hospital offers an array of out-patient services, so the University of Pretoria's clinical rotations there provide an opportunity

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AIHA Kicks Off Adolescent Disclosure Partnership in Mozambique

Current WHO guidelines recommend disclosure of HIV status to young people once they are of school age, while noting that younger children should be informed of their own status, as well as that of their parents or caregivers incrementally in accordance with their growing cognitive skills and emotional maturity.

In reality, however, HIV disclosure to adolescents living in low- and middle-income countries around the globe is often inconsistent with these recommendations.

WHO estimates that there are around 2 million adolescents and young adults between the ages of 10 and 19 worldwide who are living with HIV.

Most of these young people are unaware of their status, which can endanger their health and that of others, particularly as they grow older, take on greater responsibilities for their own care, and begin to engage in sexual relationships or other high-risk behaviors.

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In reality, however, HIV disclosure to adolescents living in low- and middle-income countries around the globe is often inconsistent

with these recommendations. According to a 2013 UNAIDS survey, Mozambique is home to some 110,000 youth in this age range who are living with HIV — about 64 percent of whom are girls.

While girls account for 73 percent of all new HIV infections among Mozambican youth between the ages of 10 and 19, fewer than one-third of those aged 15-19 demonstrate accurate and comprehensive knowledge about HIV and just 18 percent had been tested for HIV and received the results in the previous year.

In response, AIHA has engaged the Chicago-based Children's Place International (CPI) to support development of local capacity to address adolescent disclosure by providing technical assistance to local partners, including healthcare providers, NGOs, and training institutions.

CPI experts traveled to Maputo Feb. 28-Mar. 4 to

conduct a sensitization workshop on adolescent disclosure for representatives of local NGOs and public clinics providing services for adolescents, children and families in Mozambique.

The CPI team shared information about various interventions successfully implemented in the United States and internationally.

More importantly, participants shared information and perspectives on the specific issues being faced by children, adolescents, and their caregivers in Mozambique — information that will be critical as CPI develops a locally appropriate set of interventions to help NGOs and clinic staff to support families who are dealing with the issues related to adolescent and child disclosure.

This new twinning partnership is supported by PEPFAR through USAID/Mozambique.

AIHA, GE Foundation, EWH Launch New Public-Private Biomedical Training Initiative in Ethiopia



In many low-income countries around the world, 95 percent of the medical equipment found in hospitals is imported. Sadly, much of it is out of service, but could be easily repaired at minimal cost by trained professionals. This project is working to combat this by training BMETs.

AIHA concluded the first in a series of four in-service biomedical engineering and technician (BMET) trainings planned in Ethiopia through a year-long public-private partnership with GE Foundation and Engineering World Health (EWH) on March 4.

With support from, activities carried out through this mechanism are designed to complement the work of AIHA's existing partnership with Jimma Institute of Technology at Jimma University and Addis Ababa Tegbar-Id Polytechnic University.

Recently kicking off its second phase, the partnership has expanded to include Addis Ababa Institute of Technology at Addis Ababa University.

Some 29 BMETs from various

hospitals and universities spanning Ethiopia attended the training, which was conducted at Tegbar-Id Polytechnic College from January 10 through March 4.

Skills-based practical learning sessions were held at nearby clinical sites, including AIHA partner institutions Tikur Anbessa Specialized Hospital and St. Paul's Hospital.

Ethiopia's Ministry of Health and its international partners have committed increasing resources to expand and improve the quality of care available to its people.

This includes a strong focus on HIV diagnosis and treatment, which hinges on the availability of working biomedical equipment, such as hematology, CD4, and

microbiology machines.

Current estimates indicate that between 37-48 percent of Ethiopia's lab equipment is not working at any given time. Additionally, a large proportion of other critical equipment lies idle in health facilities across the country due to the absence of trained BMETs.

This new initiative provides much-needed training to help overcome these challenges and is creating sustainable institutional and human capacity to locally provide ongoing BMET training to meet the country's needs in the coming years.

The next training will be conducted at Tegbar-Id April 4 through June 10.

CSIS Congressional Delegation Visits AIHA Partners at Osindisweni Hospital

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for students to gain critical practical skills while at the same time supporting the delivery of quality primary care, as well VMMC, PMTCT, ART, and TB treatment and care.

In addition to partnerships, AIHA has established a

Clinical Associates Forum to further strengthen university training programs and support the introduction of this new profession into the South African healthcare system through advocacy and outreach; development and support for a new professional association for Clinical Associates; mentorship for students; and

development of a uniform national examination.

In an average day, a Clinical Associate placed in a district hospital consults with 31 patients, performs 28 diagnostic procedures, and provides care to 17 PLHIV.

Scenes from the CSIS Study Tour to South Africa



AIHA Launches New Biomedical Engineering & Technology Partnership in Uganda

AIHA has launched a new twinning partnership designed to strengthen Uganda's in-service training capacity in biomedical engineering and technology.

The overall goal of this partnership is to build the institutional and human resource capacity of national and regional equipment workshops operated by the Ministry of Health's Health Infrastructure Division (HID) and Uganda's Central Public Health Laboratories (CPHL).

Uganda, like many low-income countries around the world, imports the bulk of medical equipment used by its hospitals and public health laboratories. Much of this equipment is out of service, but could be easily repaired at minimal cost by trained professionals.

Unfortunately, biomedical engineers and equipment technicians in low-income countries are affected by the same challenges that doctors and nurses face, including inadequate numbers of qualified personnel to meet existing needs, limited educational opportunities, lack of on the job training, absence of regulatory bodies, brain drain to higher-income countries, and competition with the private sector for the limited pool of skilled professionals.

With support from PEPFAR and CDC/Uganda, AIHA has responded by linking HID and CPHL with the Lorma Consortium, a coalition of biomedical engineering and health sciences schools and international subject matter experts.

Together, partners will collaborate to develop sustainable, locally-driven interventions to improve in-service training programs; develop laboratory equipment maintenance guidelines, protocols, and training modules; and train personnel in first- and second-line equipment maintenance, routine safety training and calibration, and the servicing, maintenance, and certification of biosafety cabinets.

"This partnership between the Ministry of Health, AIHA, and the Lorma Consortium will focus on improving the human resources capacity in Uganda's regional medical equipment workshops to better manage and maintain laboratory equipment. Activities conducted through the partnership will provide a basis for the Ministry's in-service training and capacity development for our biomedical technicians," says Sitra Mulepo, Senior Engineer for Medical Equipment at HID.

"The Lorma Consortium, comprised of health professionals from the Philippines, Canada, and the United States, is honored to

be part of this AIHA Twinning Center partnership to strengthen the capacity of the Ugandan Ministry of Health's biomedical engineers and technicians," says US partnership coordinator, Ralph Plumb, PhD.

"We are very pleased to provide technical support to build on and help expand the Ministry's excellent work in this field. Further, we are very pleased to be contributing to PEPFAR and UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets through this new initiative."

Plumb and other members of the Lorma Consortium were in Uganda the first week of March to kick off the partnership with a series of site visits, assessments, and planning meetings that will serve to guide capacity-building activities during the coming year.

"Activities conducted through the partnership will provide a basis for the Ministry's in-service training and capacity development for our biomedical technicians."

— Sitra Mulepo,
Senior Engineer for Medical
Equipment, Ugandan Ministry
of Health, Health Infrastructure
Division.

In early March, AIHA's new biomedical technology partners in Uganda conducted a comprehensive needs assessment, which will guide their capacity-building activities in the coming year.



AIHA, GPT Conduct Telemedicine Support Visits to ZDF Roll-out Sites across Zambia

AIHA staff and experts from the Georgia-based Global Partnership for Telehealth (GPT) were in Zambia Feb. 1-5 to conduct a series of trainings at Zambia Defense Force (ZDF) medical sites in Kabwe, Luena, and Mansa.

These clinical sites are part of a collaborative telemedicine project launched in September 2015 to improve quality and access to care in rural communities where ZDF facilities are often the only provider of medical care to both soldiers and the local population.

During the visits, GPT Project Director Kelly Kesler and ZDF staff Lt. Col. Owen Mayapi (STI/TB Officer); Maj. Wamuyima Chigumbe (Medical Doctor and Maina Soko Military Hospital Telemedicine Lead); and Warrant Officer I Bernard Sichilima (Maina Soko IT Specialist) provided training and technical support to local telemedicine teams.

They also orientated health personnel on how to use the equipment to improve HIV care and treatment through

teleconsultations with Maina Soko Hospital, the Lusaka-based referral hospital for all ZDF health sites in Zambia.

Situated in Luanpula Province, the Zambia National Services (ZNS) Luanfumu health center in Mansa is one of the facilities that is benefitting from the program.

During the visit, Luanfumu's Major Joel Sakala told the AIHA team that the facility was using the equipment to conduct ob/gyn consultations with Maina Soko Military Hospital. He also said his staff have started to hold special consultation clinics for ART patients who have opportunistic infections.

"The new program will be of particular benefit for the treatment of pregnant women, especially those on PMTCT," Major Sakala said, explaining that he and his staff could now conduct ultrasounds on site, rather than referring women to the district hospital as had been done in the past.

"Pregnant women within the Luanfumu catchment area will no longer need to travel

long distances to seek care for ob/gyn-related complications," he stressed.

Thanking AIHA and GPT for supporting ZDF's rural and understaffed health facilities, Major Sakala said, "Through telemedicine, we will be able to reduce the number of patient referrals to Maina Soko and treat patients more effectively in their own community using teleconsultations."

According to Major Sakala, the facility plans to link nursing students who are interning at Luanfumu to the Defence School of Health Sciences in Lusaka using the teleconsultation platform.

While in the field, the AIHA team met with partners to plan site-level activities that support the country's efforts to attain UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets.

Staff at all three sites said they appreciated the new technology and noted that it would serve as a catalyst for improving the quality of HIV-related services available in the rural communities they serve.



AIHA's longstanding partnership with the **Zambian Defence Forces Military Medical Services** is working to strengthen HIV-related services through telemedicine, knowledge management, and other capacity building initiatives. The Georgia-based Global Partnership for Telehealth has been supporting efforts to improve care in rural parts of the country through telemedicine.

Tanzania Nursing Initiative Supports Ministry's Goal to Harmonize Health Information Systems

Tanzania's Directorate of Nursing and Midwifery Services (DNMS) at the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, held a stakeholder workshop January 27-29 to assess how national health information systems can be harmonized and integrated to improve HIV/AIDS services in high-burden areas.

Hosted by the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute at Muhimbili National Hospital in Dar es Salaam, the workshop was a forum for participants to assess data management mechanisms and the technical feasibility of the two main human resources for health systems in Tanzania (the Human Resources for Health

Information System and the District Health Information System) as a way to support task sharing and evidence-based management of nursing and midwifery services in the country.

According to Mr. Gustav Moyo, the newly appointed Director of DNMS, "Managing deployment of nurses and midwives to remote sites has been an ongoing challenge and there are data quality gaps within the existing systems."

Examining and thoroughly assessing the existing systems represents a critical step toward understanding the country's human resources for health needs and devising

a way to get experienced frontline health workers where they will do the most good.

The workshop was conducted with support from PEPFAR and CDC/Tanzania under the aegis of AIHA's Tanzania Nursing Initiative (TNI).

Launched in 2005, TNI began as a project to integrate HIV/AIDS care and treatment modules into nursing school curricula across Tanzania. Since then, it has evolved into a national project to strengthen both the nursing profession and practice using a multi-pillar approach that encompasses education, service delivery, regulatory bodies, and advocacy.



Mr. Gustav Moyo, head of Tanzania's Directorate of Nursing and Midwifery Services, discusses some of the challenges the Ministry is facing as it works to ensure that nurses and midwives are deployed to high-burden sites as the country works to ensure access to care and treatment for PLHIV.

Conferences and Opportunities



**Global Health
Mini-University**
March 4, 2016
Washington, DC USA

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

**Consortium of Universities
in Global Health Annual
Conference**
April 9-11, 2016
San Francisco, USA

**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 Infec-
tious Diseases**
May 25-27, 2016
Marseille, France

**International Workshop on
Clinical Pharmacology of
HIV & Hepatitis Therapy**
June 8-10, 2016
Washington, DC USA

**2016 World Congress on
Community Nursing**
June 20-22, 2016
Cape Town, South Africa

**8th International Work-
shop on HIV Pediatrics**
July 15-16, 2016
Durban, South Africa

AIDS 2016
July 18-22, 2016
Durban, South Africa

**4th IASTED African
Conference on Health
Informatics**
September 2-4, 2016
Gaborone, Botswana

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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.

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