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Brits Clinic and Affiliated Referral Sites Surpass 2006 Targets for Provision of ART, Palliative Care

Brits District Hospital in South Africa's North West Province and its affiliated referral sites exceeded their 2006 goals for two key performance indicators by initiating ART for 1,291 patients and providing palliative care services to 2,144 clients with HIV.

Brits HIV/AIDS Clinic and the Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) in Pretoria have been partnering to improve access to HIV/AIDS care and treatment in the rural province with support from the Twinning Center and PEPFAR.

Prior to the partnership's launch in September 2005, only 40 patients received ART at Brits and its referral sites. Today, some 30 times that

number receive the life-saving therapy. Even more have access to other HIV-related services, including voluntary counseling and testing, screening for—and treatment of—opportunistic infections, and HIV education.

A key focus of the partnership has been strengthening Brits' capacity to provide integrated HIV-TB prevention, care, and support services to PLWHA.

For example, at Letlabile Clinic—a down-referral site located 27 kilometers from Brits—all HIV-positive clients are screened for TB using a questionnaire developed through the partnership, according to clinic counselor Caroline Sopena. In addition, staff have set up a DOTS



Trained in 2006 through the partnership, Caroline Sopena now works as an HIV/AIDS counselor at Letlabile Clinic.

program for patients with both HIV and tuberculosis. "I feel confident that I know what I am doing and can help others thanks to the training I have received through this partnership," Sopena says.



Dr. Getachew Feleke, US Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt, President Bush, First Lady Laura Bush, and Angelina Magaga at a White House press briefing December 1, 2006.

Twinning Center Volunteer Honored at White House on World AIDS Day

Dr. Getachew Feleke of Nassau University Medical Center in East Meadow, New York, participated in a White House ceremony marking World AIDS Day on Dec. 1, 2006.

President George W. Bush lauded Getachew's participation in the Twinning Center's Ethiopia Diaspora

Initiative, a program that matches skilled professionals with volunteer opportunities at PEPFAR-supported sites in target countries.

Getachew volunteered with Mekdim, a national association of people living with HIV/AIDS, where he provided train-

ing and support for the group's ART program.

Relying heavily on the Volunteer Healthcare Corps, the Ethiopia Diaspora Initiative helps address the East African nation's severe lack of human resource capacity to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic.



Former Zambian Minister of Health Professor Nkandu Luu was one of the many HIV/AIDS experts and policymakers who shared their knowledge and insight with participants.



Bwafano Clinic—a community-based program that offers counseling and testing, ART, and nutritional assistance—was one of the sites participants visited during the workshop's practicum.

ZAMCOM Hosts Workshop on Editorial Leadership in HIV/AIDS Reporting for PEPFAR Countries

An unprecedented training in HIV/AIDS reporting brought journalists and editors from a dozen countries to Lusaka, Zambia, for a week of expert sessions and hands-on field reporting.

Held Nov. 27-Dec. 1, 2006, "Leadership in HIV/AIDS Reporting: Changing Hearts, Minds, and Behavior" was the third HIV/AIDS reporting workshop carried out through a Twinning Center initiative to improve the quality of media coverage of the epidemic in PEPFAR focus countries.

Changes in coverage of HIV/AIDS have been slow to come throughout most of the world, particularly in developing countries. Factual errors frequently appear in stories, sensationalism taints many reports, and "AIDS fatigue" has editors and journalists turning away in the midst of important developing trends. Boring stories about promotional events take the place of vivid, practical reports that can actually help people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

Although many HIV/AIDS journalism workshops have been held in the developing world, this training marks an important step forward because it targeted not just reporters but also editors, who are the "gatekeepers" that shape the news agenda.

Conducted in cooperation with the US Embassy in Lusaka, the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication Educational Trust, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center—the workshop resulted in the immediate production of more than 25 quality features on HIV to air worldwide.

Hailing from Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guyana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zambia, the 32 media professionals in attendance were galvanized by the presentations of medical experts, activists, and government experts they heard during the first part of the workshop.

Armed with plenty of story ideas, participants visited ARV clinics, orphanages, and sites where groundbreaking research is taking place, using what they had learned to create compelling stories that provided accurate, practical information for their audiences. At the same time, these stories depicted the human face of HIV/AIDS—in many cases, a hopeful face thanks to the advances in treatment and access to care that have been made.

At the end of the workshop, participants reported renewed energy and commitment to share what they had learned with colleagues back home.

Chilufya Mwamba-Phiri, a long-time AIDS activist in Zambia, spoke to the group on Dec. 1. She challenged the journalists to take their coverage of the epidemic more seriously, saying, "The way you feel charged up today is the way you must be every day. You must treat every day like World AIDS Day."

Tanzania Social Work Partnership Launches Training to Support Orphans, Vulnerable Children

Twining Center partners at Tanzania's Institute of Social Work and the University of Illinois at Chicago's Jane Addams College of Social Work/Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center held their first training course in Dar es Salaam March 19-23.

Titled "Equipped to Care: Building Skills to Assist Vulnerable Children and Families Affected by HIV/AIDS," the course attracted some 40 district social welfare officers and social workers employed by NGOs throughout Tanzania. Participants focused on topics such as leadership, case manage-

ment, and other skills needed to improve the lives of orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS.

The workshop was followed by a one-day symposium and media briefing designed to call attention to the 2.5 million Tanzanian children orphaned or made vulnerable by the AIDS pandemic.

"This collaboration provides social workers and other caregivers with a vital opportunity to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills they need to better support orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV and

AIDS," says Institute of Social Work Principal Dr. Hossea Rwegoshora.

Children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS are likely to experience isolation, stigma, limited educational opportunities, malnutrition, and a general lack of care and support. Community-based social workers and allied care providers can be instrumental in efforts to fill these gaps, yet the existing welfare system is severely overstretched with trained social workers assigned to only one-third of the country's 126 districts.

Nearly 2.5 million Tanzanian children have been orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS and the number is expected to reach 4 million by 2010 if effective prevention and treatment measures are not implemented.

LRC Improves Access to Evidence-based Research, Communication Technologies for Zambian Defense Force Medical Services

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) at Maina Soko Military Hospital has gone a long way toward improving the quality of care available to members of the Zambian Defense Force (ZDF) living with HIV/AIDS, according to Warrant Officer First Class Tommy Sajisa.

Services available at the LRC have "made a big difference by enabling us to practice evidence-based medicine and consult with our partners in the United States" says Sajisa, the center's information coordinator.

The LRC was established last year by a PEPFAR-supported Twinning Center partnership linking ZDF with the US Naval Hospital in San Diego. LRCs have long been a core part of AIHA's partnerships in Eurasia, and the facility at Maina Soko is one of two pilot centers opened in 2006 by Twinning Center partners in Africa to improve access to evidence-based medical resources and facilitate professional networking and communication.

With eight people on staff,

the Maina Soko LRC trains hospital personnel in Internet research, practice standard reviews, and basic computer skills. It also plays a key role in on-going research on topics such as HIV-TB co-infection and initiation of HAART, which in turn leads to improvements in patient care.

LRC staff also developed a patient tracking system that has led to Maina Soko's involvement in two projects of the Zambian Ministry of Health.



As information coordinator at Maina Soko Military Hospital's Learning Resource Center, Tommy Sajisa assists as many as 315 people each month with their requests for information and other info-tech needs.

Tanzania Zonal Lab Partners Learn New HIV Diagnostic Techniques during Boulder Exchange

Boulder Community Hospital hosted partners from five clinical sites in Tanzania and their affiliated laboratories for a professional exchange Dec. 1-15, 2006.

Tanzanian experts from Muhimbili Hospital in Dar es Salaam, Bugando Hospital in Mwanza, Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center in Moshi, Ikonda Mission Hospital in Iringa, and Mnazi Mmoja Hospital in Zanzibar were given a first-hand look at HIV/AIDS lab operations carried out in state-of-the-art facilities in Boulder and Denver.

With funding from PEPFAR and programmatic support from the Twinning Center, partners are collaborating to build laboratory capacity in Tanzania through mentoring and peer-to-peer collaboration.

Key partnership objectives include improving the quality and scope of training on the

use of automated laboratory equipment and rapid HIV testing procedures and facilitating implementation of sound laboratory policies, guidelines, and standards.

To that end, the exchange featured a series of site visits that included Boulder Community Hospital's molecular biology lab, the Colorado Department of Public Health's micro-biology lab, the Laboratories at Bonfils, and Health One School of Medical Technology.

Partners attended lectures and briefings on various lab diagnostics used to track and monitor HIV and AIDS cases. They also learned about professional training and continuing education opportunities available for medical technology specialists.

The remainder of the exchange was devoted to work plan development, a comprehensive process that charts a course for the work

the partners will do together in the coming year to help strengthen Tanzania's ability to provide much-needed care and treatment to some 1.4 million citizens living with HIV/AIDS.

Professional exchanges such as this one go a long way toward fostering the strong relationships that form the backbone of any twinning partnership, while at the same time giving individuals on both sides a clear picture of both the possibilities and the limitations of what can be realistically accomplished.



Medical Technologist Deb Spiers demonstrates a parathyroid analyzer to Mwanaisha H. Jumbe of the Zanzibar College of Health Sciences School of Medical Laboratories during a tour of the University of Colorado Hospital.



Professor Noel E. Sam of Kilimanjaro Christian College and Father Dutto Angelo of Ikonda Mission Hospital observe medical technologist Kim Blain's work in the molecular lab at Boulder Community Hospital.



Thanks to the mobile VCT unit, partners provided counseling and testing for nearly 1,400 people in Chipata and Lundazi last October-November.

Zambian Military Partnership Expands VCT Services Thanks to Mobile Medical Unit

Twinning Center partners at the Zambian Defense Force (ZDF) Medical Services based in Lusaka now operate a mobile unit that provides voluntary counseling and testing services to soldiers and other people living in remote locations.

The mobile medical unit was developed in collaboration with the San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, which continues to provide training and technical support. Additional support is provided by Project Concern International.

During an exchange held last October and November, 18 ZDF personnel completed a four-day workshop designed to prepare them for field work on the mobile unit. Topics covered at the training ranged from basic HIV education and risk assessment to national testing protocols and client-centered counseling.

Participants got the chance to put what they had learned into practice on deployment to Chipata and Lundazi where they provided counseling, testing, and educational

services to nearly 1,400 individuals.

Based on its early success, plans are being made to continue deployment of the mobile medical unit throughout Zambia.

Partners hope to scale up counseling and testing services by expanding both the number of mobile units and of trained personnel.

African Palliative Care Association to Host Regional Advocacy Workshop in Ghana



In an effort to improve access to pain medications in six West African nations, the African Palliative Care Association (APCA) will host an advocacy workshop May 8-10 in Accra, Ghana.

This event—which is co-sponsored by the Twinning Center—is designed to bolster participants' knowledge and skills so they are better

prepared to influence policies related to access to opioids and other medications crucial to palliative care in their respective countries.

Senior pharmacists, ministry of health representatives, heads of oncology and HIV/AIDS treatment facilities, and palliative care providers from Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, and

Sierra Leone are among those expected to attend.

Speakers include palliative care experts from WHO, OSI's International Palliative Care Initiative, Foundation for Hospice in Sub-Saharan Africa, National Hospice and Palliative Care Organisation, the Pain and Policy Study Group, Help the Hospices, and APCA.

Zambian Defense Force to Open Second LRC at Defense School of Health Studies in Lusaka

A training workshop was held Feb. 19-23 at Lusaka's Defense School of Health Studies in anticipation of opening a Learning Resource Center (LRC) at the institution later this year. The new center will be the second LRC established by a Twinning Center partnership linking the Zambian Defense Force with the US Naval Hospital in San Diego.

Divided into two tracks to better meet the needs of both technical staff and healthcare professionals, the workshop covered basic topics such as e-mail, Internet applications, computer skills, and Web site development, as well as more specialized material on the design of medical databases, evidence-based practice, health information retrieval, library management, and

critical appraisal of research and information.

Warrant Officer First Class Tommy Sajisa—information coordinator at the partnership's first LRC, which has been operating at Maina Soko Military Hospital for almost one year—joined the 17 participants for most sessions, sharing his own experiences and contributing to plans for the new center.

Learning Resource Centers help partners improve quality of care by providing access to the latest evidence-based clinical research and connecting them to a global network of HIV/AIDS experts.

Tanzania Nursing Education Partners Evaluate New HIV/AIDS Curriculum at Pilot Workshop

Twinning Center partners at Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences School of Nursing and the University of California-San Francisco's School of Nursing conducted a pilot workshop Jan. 22-26 in Dar es Salaam.

Marking a critical step in efforts to enhance HIV/AIDS teaching and learning in nursing colleges throughout Tanzania and Zanzibar, participants at this workshop focused on fine-tuning the first five modules of a comprehensive, 12-part training curriculum developed

by partners with support from PEPFAR. This work was initiated through a prior alliance between Muhimbili and the School of Nursing at the University of Michigan with funding from the World AIDS Foundation.

Special attention was given to ensuring that the training materials adhere to both Tanzania's National AIDS Control Program and WHO protocols for treatment of adults and adolescents, as well as the cultural norms and conditions of nursing schools in the country.

Based on recommendations made by the partners and other policymakers who took part in the workshop, curriculum development will proceed starting with revision of the modules already reviewed.

Concurrent with completion of all 12 modules, supporting materials are being compiled, so partners can move ahead with training a cadre of nurse educators well qualified to teach the new HIV/AIDS-specific curriculum through a variety of short courses, continuing education classes, and university programs.



Bhai I. Khamis, Amiri R. Mmaka, Sebalda Leshabari, and Bill Holzemer review HIV/AIDS nursing training modules during the January workshop in Dar es Salaam.

Mozambique Prevention with Positives Program Provides Support and Renewed Hope to PLWHA

When Laurinda Mojane learned she was HIV-positive, she says she could barely speak or even think for nearly a month. "Of course I was very sad and emotional, but after attending counseling at a local hospital in Matola I learned how to live as a person with HIV," she explains.

Laurinda told her husband about her positive diagnosis and encouraged him to get tested himself, but he didn't accept her words.

"He told me: 'You are the one who is sick and you should solve your own problems,'" Laurinda recalls, noting that his attitude and lack of support prompted her decision to leave her husband and move back to her family's home with her 9-year-old son.

That move brought her to Esperanca Center. "I actually went there to ask for a job," Laurinda admits, noting that a counselor named Fernando told her no jobs were

available. Instead, he encouraged her to volunteer as an activist, which she has been doing for nearly two years.

In January, a Twinning Center partnership supported by PEPFAR launched a pilot prevention program targeting PLWHA at Esperanca Center.

Commonly called Prevention with Positives (PwP), these activities have proven effective at stemming the spread of HIV, particularly in an era when ART is helping HIV-positive individuals live longer and better lives.

"After the PwP project came here, I was trained in group facilitation and other issues related to counseling. I also took training courses in general health and received a certificate from the Ministry of Health," Laurinda says.

Now she receives a decent salary from Esperanca Center and is busy making plans for the future.

"I feel so much better in this environment. When I was a volunteer I had a lot of financial worries, but I feel the most difficult time in my life has already passed," Laurinda says with a voice full of hope.

"I am living with my parents now, but I plan to build a house of my own on some land my mother gave me. I am saving money to buy bricks," she continues, describing the home she envisions for herself and her son. She describes her boyfriend, too. They have been together for two years.

"He is HIV-negative and sometimes he tells me that he loves me so much he wouldn't mind if he got HIV," Laurinda says. "He is a good man, but he doesn't know what being HIV-positive really means. I do; that's why we are working on keeping him negative."



Laurinda Mojane, 24, found the hope and support she needs to live a positive life at Esperanca Center. One of two community-based VCT sites in Mozambique's Maputo Province that is partnering with the University of California-San Francisco's School of Nursing, Esperanca Center launched a prevention with positives program in January 2007.

Conferences, Grants, and Opportunities



4th SAHARA Conference on the Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS

April 29-May 3, 2007
Kisumu, Kenya

Christian Connections for International Health 2007 Annual Conference

May 26-28, 2007
Buckeystown, MD, USA

2007 Global Health Council Conference

May 30-June 1, 2007
Washington, DC, USA

Supply Chain Management of HIV/AIDS Medicine and Supplies

June 3-16, 2007
Pretoria, South Africa

HIV/AIDS 2007

June 6-11, 2007
Kololi, Gambia

PEPFAR Implementers Meeting

June 16-19, 2007
Kigali, Rwanda

Deaf Women and HIV/AIDS in Africa: No Time to Wait

June 21-23, 2007
Johannesburg, South Africa

International Women's Summit: Women's Leadership in HIV and AIDS

July 4-7, 2007
Nairobi, Kenya

9th International Workshop on Adverse Drug Reactions and Lipodystrophy in HIV

July 19-21, 2007
Sydney, Australia
Scholarship Applications Due May 4, 2007

4th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment, and Prevention

July 22-25, 2007
Sydney, Australia

Palliative Care in Africa: Keeping it Real

September 19-21, 2007
Nairobi, Kenya
Abstracts Due April 27, 2007

38th Union World Conference on Lung Health: Confronting the Challenges of HIV and MDR in TB Prevention and Care

November 8-12, 2007
Cape Town, South Africa

International Summit on Infectious Diseases

November 20-24, 2007
Abuja, Nigeria

Under African Skies: The Imagination of Poetry and Storytelling in the HIV/AIDS Pandemic

Nov. 29-Dec 1, 2007
Nairobi, Kenya
Abstracts Due May 31, 2007

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Visit us on the Web at

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The HIV/AIDS Twinning Center mobilizes and coordinates the resources of US healthcare providers 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.

Funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center is a project of the American International Health Alliance, a US-based nonprofit organization dedicated to helping resource-constrained communities and nations make positive, sustainable changes that improve accessibility to a broad range of high-quality health-care services and preventive programs.

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