

# HIV/AIDS Twinning Center



## Field Notes

### Inside this issue:

Tanzania Partners Conduct Palliative Care Training in Same	2
HIV/AIDS Twinning Center: The Program in Numbers	2
Kenya Partners Launch Prevention Program for Young Men	3
Zambian Pharmacists Attend Training in Milwaukee	3
Building Capacity to Track and Analyze HIV and TB Data	3
Namibia Med-Tech Partners Participate in Arkansas Exchange	4
Twinning Center Co-sponsors Ethiopia Outreach Event	4
MISA/ZAMCOM Partners Share Media Survey Results	5
Partners Host Palliative Care Workshop in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire	5
Tanzania OVC Partners Train Para-social Workers in Mbeya	5

## First Ladies Laura Bush and Mama Salma Kikwete Launch Tanzanian's National Action Plan for MVC

US First Lady Laura Bush and Tanzania's First Lady Mama Salma Kikwete together launched the East African country's National Action Plan for Most Vulnerable Children Feb. 17 in Dar es Salaam.

"The American people are proud to stand with the people of Tanzania as you confront HIV/AIDS," Bush told the crowd of supporters who attended the ceremony.

"Tanzania is one of the first countries to develop a National Plan of Action for orphans and vulnerable children," Bush said, stressing that the United States is committed to supporting the plan. "Through this partnership between the United States and Tanzania, we can restore hope to orphans and their families," she noted.

Following the launch, the First Ladies toured booths that

highlighted a wide array of programs that currently provide care and support to Tanzania's orphans and vulnerable children. Exhibits covered service categories such as Health and Education, Psychosocial Support and Stigma, Household Care, and Community Care.

Twinning Center partners from Tanzania's Institute of Social Work in Dar es Salaam were on hand to share information about the para-social worker training program they are implementing with their partners from Jane Addams College of Social Work and the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center.

With support from PEPFAR and USAID, the partnership has already provided social work training to 410 community workers who provide care to vulnerable children.



Laura Bush applauds as Mama Salma Kikwete presents Tanzania's National Action Plan for Most Vulnerable Children.



Laura Bush and Mama Kikwete visit with staff and children at the Institute of Social Work's display on community-based care and support.

## Gaborone Workshop Introduces Palliative Care Concepts to Botswana Teachers, Caregivers

Twinning Center partners at the Botswana Institute of Health Sciences (IHS) and the Kampala-based African Palliative Care Association (APCA) conducted a Sensitization Workshop Dec. 18, 2007 at IHS's Gaborone campus.

The goal of the one-day event was to showcase the new partnership and familiarize the university and greater healthcare community with palliative care and why it is important to integrate its concepts in medical education curricula.

More than 70 people from Gaborone, Molepolole, Lobatse, Francistown, and other areas attended the event, which was officiated by representatives of the Ministry of Health and IHS, and supported by PEPFAR through BOTUSA.

## Palliative Care Training Empowers Healthcare Workers in Tanzania's Pare Diocese



Drs. Amini Mshighua and Rebecca Wiese conduct a lesson on pain management.



US partner Peggy Stecklein shares a moment with a group of Masai women in Pangaru village.



Participants included 38 healthcare workers from institutions throughout Same.

A team of Iowa palliative care specialists joined forces with counterparts from Tanzania to launch a palliative care training program in the East African country's Kilimanjaro Region.

Some 38 healthcare workers from Same District attended the 6-day event, which was conducted Nov. 19-23, 2007 by Twinning Center partners at the Pare Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) and the Southeast Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

"This course will help you as medical workers to care for those dying from AIDS," ELCT Bishop Stefano Msangi told participants on the opening day.

"We welcome all medical workers from government, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran facilities to this program and we know that you will provide this care to any person who is in need, regardless of his or

her religion. God bless your efforts."

Faculty included Dr. Rebecca Wiese, of Davenport, Iowa; Joe Sample, MSW, of Iowa Methodist Medical Center; Peggy Stecklein, MSW, executive director of the AIDS Project of Central Iowa; Dr. Amini Mshighwa, medical secretary for Pare Diocese; and Pastor Joas Mpinda, a recent graduate of a program in pastoral care for HIV/AIDS patients. Logistics and local support were coordinated by Todd and Lori Byerly, ELCA missionaries from Davenport.

Educational content was based on materials developed by the African Palliative Care Association and currently used by ELCT's Dr. Kristopher Hartwig in his program for staff at Lutheran hospitals throughout Tanzania.

According to US project coordinator Phil Latessa the intensive program was well received by the participants, who represented facilities in

both medical districts in the Pare Diocese. "The trainees insisted on covering every item in the course outline and stated that much of this material was new to them," Latessa says, noting, "They promised to work with others at their institutions to begin using what they had learned about palliative care as soon as possible."

This partnership builds on an existing "Companion Synod" relationship developed more than 15 years ago by Bishop Msangi in Tanzania and Bishop Philip Hougen in Iowa.

The partners have conducted a variety of projects together, including this Twinning Center partnership designed to improve palliative care services by training health and allied professionals in support of PEPFAR objectives in Tanzania. The partnership is funded by CDC.

## HIV/AIDS Twinning Center: The Program in Numbers

As of Dec 31, 2007, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center reports the following achievements:

- Organizations receiving technical assistance: 167
- Individuals trained through capacity-building activities: 3,701
- Partnerships established: 30
- Countries funding programmatic activities: 10
- VHC volunteers deployed: 21
- Individuals trained at Learning Resource Centers: 317
- Visitors to the Twinning Center Web site this quarter: 5,018

## KEC-CS/DePaul Partners Launch Health Education Program Targeting Young Men

Partners at Kenya Episcopal Conference - Catholic Secretariat and Chicago's DePaul University launched a PEPFAR-supported health education training program for young men in Kenya.

Some 40 men between the ages of 15-25 attended the first day-long "Awakening Men for Knowledge and

Action" workshop conducted by partners March 30.

Developed jointly by members of this CDC-funded partnership, the training focuses on providing participants with accurate information on health and hygiene, HIV/AIDS and STIs, drugs and alcohol, and a wide range of other health topics.

The curriculum arms young men with the knowledge and skills they need to more effectively communicate about sensitive, sometimes taboo, health topics.

Participants learn how to better deal with peer pressure and make informed decisions concerning their own health.

The KEC-CS/DePaul partnership has implemented a wide range of faith- and community-based HIV prevention programs targeting youth since it was established in 2006.

## Zambian Pharmacists Attend Clinical Training at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

Four Zambian pharmacists traveled to Milwaukee Sept. 24-28, 2007 to participate in an intensive training-of-trainers workshop on ART for mothers, infants, and children.

With PEPFAR and CDC support, the Twinning Center has linked Milwaukee's Center for International Health (CIH) with Livingstone General Hospital and the University

Teaching Hospital in Lusaka. Partners are improving HIV care for women and children in Zambia by strengthening clinical pharmacy training and better integrating pharmacy services into the continuum of care for PLWH.

Rachael Sikabalu of Livingstone General Hospital, along with Enock Chikatula, Davies Kampamba, and Nakululombe Kwendeni of the University

Teaching Hospital in Lusaka, worked closely with pharmacists, pediatric HIV specialists, and a wide range of healthcare professionals at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and other local institutions.

Key topics covered during the training included patient counseling and monitoring, dispensing medications, and adult learning principles.



Zambian pharmacists Nakululombe Kwendeni, Davies Kampamba, Rachael Sikabalu, and Enock Chikatula in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

## Partnership Helps Track and Analyze TB and HIV Data, Inform Health Policies in South Africa

Twinning Center partners at University of the Free State and the State University of New York Downstate Medical Center are working together to build South Africa's capacity to use HIV and TB-related data to develop more appropriate clinical interventions and better inform healthcare policy.

The Centre for Health Systems Research and Development at Free State provides information, data, and other resources to regional and national health departments and various institutions involved in the

provision of healthcare and related services. These institutions rely on the Centre's research and analyses to develop policies and clinical protocols on health conditions including HIV/AIDS, ART, reproductive health and STIs, and TB, as well as health economics, human rights, health information systems, and facility management.

With funding from PEPFAR and CDC, partners are working together to strengthen research and data management skills among Centre staff, improve their capacity to translate research into

policy and practice, and enhance their teaching and mentoring skills. Partners are also developing a multifaceted intervention that will provide HIV counseling and testing for TB patients.

"Given their extensive experience in Eastern Europe and very active work with marginalized populations in New York, our US partners have much to contribute toward enhancing our capacity to better integrate HIV-TB control in South Africa," says Dr. Christo Heunis, senior researcher at the Centre.



Free State partners Christo Heunis and Gert van Zyl (standing from left) and Anita van der Merwe and Letitia Moja (seated from left) with SUNY partners David Odegaard and Jack DeHovitz (standing at right) and the Twinning Center's John Capati (seated right).

## Partners Commence Efforts to Establish a New Medical Technology Program in Namibia

AIDS is the leading cause of death in Namibia, where an estimated 21 percent of the country's 2 million inhabitants are living with HIV.

Namibia's response to the epidemic is impeded by a severe shortage of qualified medical technologists, who play a critical role in HIV care by informing decisions about ART and related treatment by providing CD4 counts, basic metabolic profiles, and other necessary diagnostics.

Currently, there are only 160 medical technologists in the country and the infrastructure and expertise to train more lab professionals does not exist.

Members of a Twinning Center partnership established in December 2007 with PEPFAR support are working to change this by launching a new bachelor's degree program in medical technology.

The CDC-funded partnership links the Polytechnic of

Namibia in Windhoek with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) in Little Rock.

Partners are working together to develop a nationally accredited curriculum for the medical technology program, along with related training materials. They are also focusing on faculty and organizational capacity development to ensure more effective administration, expansion, and sustainability of the new four-year degree program.

Three experts from the Polytechnic traveled to Little Rock March 7-13, where they worked side-by-side with their UAMS counterparts.

During the professional exchange, Polytechnic decision-makers Tjama Tjivikua, rector; Neavera Olivier, director of planning and international relations; and Andre Cronje, head of the Bio Medical and Health Sciences Department, got a

first-hand look at successful medical technology programs in action.

The exchange also included tours of the Arkansas Department of Public Health Laboratories as well as various UAMS campus labs and teaching facilities.

Partners began curriculum development for the newly launched specialization in Namibia and Dr. Tjivikua made a presentation titled "Namibia: Health and Challenges" for UAMS staff and students.

According to US partnership coordinator Donald Simpson, chairman of Laboratory Sciences at UAMS, "Leaders at the Polytechnic understand that health is a resource for, and an outcome of, sustainable development. The support and infrastructure they are providing is truly amazing."

Currently there are only 160 medical technicians in all of Namibia. One-half of these are from Zimbabwe and another 30 percent are nearing retirement, yet the infrastructure to train additional lab professionals does not yet exist in the country.

## Twinning Center, Visions for Development, and NASTAD Host Outreach Event in Washington, DC



Ato Kare provides an overview of HIV and other healthcare needs in Ethiopia's SNNP Region at the February dinner and discussion.

The Twinning Center hosted an informational dinner Feb. 5 at Almaz Ethiopian Restaurant in Washington, DC.

Some 45 Ethiopian professionals in the Diaspora attended the event, which was co-sponsored by the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) and Visions for Development, Inc.

Heather Hauck, director of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's AIDS Administration; Ato Kare, director of the Southern

Nations, Nationalities, Peoples Region (SNNPR) of Ethiopia; and Amarech Agnedew, director of SNNPR's HIV/AIDS Prevention Control Office, discussed the HIV epidemic in Ethiopia and their collaborative efforts to strengthen the region's response. The two governmental health departments are partnering to build HIV/AIDS prevention and care capacity through NASTAD's CDC-supported Global Program.

Dr. Tedla Giorgis, executive director of Visions for International Development — a

professional organization working with the Twinning Center to match members of the Ethiopian Diaspora with volunteer assignments in their home land — and Laura Laskofski, HIV/AIDS Twinning Center program associate, discussed potential opportunities available in the region through AIHA's Volunteer Healthcare Corps (VHC).

To date, with funding from PEPFAR and CDC, the VHC has placed 18 skilled professionals in long-term volunteer assignments supporting HIV/AIDS programs in Ethiopia.

## MISA/ZAMCOM Partners Share Results of Survey on HIV/AIDS Media Coverage in Botswana

Partners from the Media Institute of Southern Africa in Botswana and the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication Educational Trust shared the results of a situational analysis conducted last fall at a media briefing held Nov. 1, 2007 in Gaborone.

With PEPFAR support, the partners initiated the study to

gain an understanding of key issues and attitudes toward HIV at top media houses in Botswana, assess the amount of coverage dedicated to the AIDS epidemic, and identify problems journalists encounter when reporting on HIV.

The data collected is helping direct content of journalism training courses members of

this BOTUSA-funded partnership are developing and implementing in Botswana.

According to MISA-Botswana Information and Research Officer Thapelo Ndlovu, "There are a large number of articles written about HIV in Botswana, but they are rarely lead stories and features often lack depth."

**"More important than trying to increase the number of articles being written about HIV/AIDS is improving the quality of these articles."**

**—Mwiika Malindima,  
ZAMCOM HIV/AIDS and  
Gender Specialist**

## Hope Worldwide, APCA Conduct Palliative Care Sensitization Workshop in Abidjan

Twinning Center partners at Hope Worldwide in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and the African Palliative Care Association in Kampala, Uganda, conducted a sensitization workshop March 5-6 in Abidjan.

Hope Worldwide staff and volunteers, members of the Ministry of Health's Technical Working Group, and representatives of area NGOs, teaching hospitals, and PLWH

groups attended the event, which was funded by PEPFAR and CDC.

In addition to providing an overview of partnership objectives, the workshop also featured discussions on key concepts of palliative care and its current status in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the importance of integrating palliative care into Hope Worldwide's existing programs.

Jean Claude Ouéllé, president of a local PLWH association, admits that talking about death during counseling has always been taboo. "After what we learned about palliative care, though, I am convinced of the importance of equipping our members with skills to help deal with death and mourning," he says.



Partners conducted a parenting workshop for PLHA about disclosure of their positive status and planning for their children's future.

## Tanzania OVC Partners Conduct Para-social Worker Training in Mbeya Region

Twinning Center partners at the Tanzania Institute of Social Work conducted a training course for para-social workers in the Mbeya Region in January and February.

A total of 128 participants from four districts of Mbeya Region—Mbeya City, Rungwe, Kyela and Mbozi—attended the eight-day workshop. The participants included community welfare officers and representatives from a variety of Most Vulnerable Children Committees, CBOs, FBOs, CSOs, NGOs, and other organizations.

The objective of the training was to provide community-based caregivers in Mbeya a forum to share experiences and gain the skills they need to expand and improve care and support for orphans and vulnerable children.

The Institute of Social Work is partnering with the University of Illinois at Chicago's Jane Addams College of Social Work and Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center since late 2006 to implement this project, which is supported by PEPFAR and funded by USAID. Partners are also

collaborating with Tanzania's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare on the effort to bolster the knowledge and skills of those providing care and support to the nearly 2.5 million orphans and vulnerable children living in the country.

Upcoming project activities include a workshop to train more than 110 para-social workers from the Ilala Municipality and Morogoro Region. Overall, the project expects to train in excess of 500 additional para-social workers across Tanzania.

**Participants in the para-social worker training program are awarded certificates from the Institute of Social Work upon completion of the training course.**

**Partners are also focusing on follow-up training, mentoring, and evaluation to ensure quality of care.**

## Conferences, Grants, and Opportunities



### 3rd National Conference on Peer Education, HIV and AIDS

June 18-20, 2008  
Nairobi, Kenya

### International Symposium on Infections in the Immunocompromised Host

June 22-25 2008  
Thessaloniki, Greece

### COMET 2008 - Communication, Medicine, and Ethics

July 2-4, 2008  
Cape Town, South Africa

### 3rd International Workshop on HIV Transmission

Aug. 1, 2008  
Mexico City, Mexico

### XVII International AIDS Conference

Aug. 3-8, 2008  
Mexico City, Mexico

### AIDS Vaccine 2008

October 13-16, 2008  
Cape Town, South Africa

### 7th Louis Pasteur Conference on Infectious Diseases

November 11-13, 2008  
Paris, France

### Research on HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis: Challenges for the Future

November 13-14, 2008  
Brussels, Belgium

### IAPAC 08 (Stronger Together)

Nov. 30 - Dec. 2, 2008  
New Orleans, United States

### The Imagination of Poetry and Storytelling in the HIV/AIDS Pandemic

December 1, 2008  
Nairobi, Kenya

### 15th International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA)

December 3-7, 2008  
Dakar, Senegal

### Gates Foundation Grand Challenges Explorations Grants

New \$100 million, 5-year program of small grants meant to nurture unorthodox approaches to global health. Open to scientists worldwide, particularly those in Africa and Asia where the burdens of diseases such as HIV, TB, and malaria are greatest. For more information, visit:

[www.gcgh.org](http://www.gcgh.org)

## HIV/AIDS Twinning Center

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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.

