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## New US-based Consortium Joins the Tanzania Nursing Initiative's Capacity-building Efforts

Dr. Noran Mbando, Acting Permanent Secretary and Director of Policy and Planning at Tanzania's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, welcomed a group of nursing experts from Wisconsin and Minnesota to Dar es Salaam last November.

The US-based consortium is providing technical assistance to the Tanzania Nursing Initiative (TNI), a health systems strengthening partnership project of AIHA, Tanzania's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) School of Nursing. TNI is supported by PEPFAR and CDC/Tanzania.

TNI's comprehensive framework — a four-pillared model that focuses on strengthening nursing education, services, regulation, and professional associations — is a unique approach to improving the quality of nursing care available to the people of Tanzania.

"The Ministry will continue to collaborate with AIHA and TNI, especially in relation to nursing education," Dr. Mbando said, explaining that the Government has plans underway to create a Nursing Directorate within the Ministry as a means to improve the contribution of nursing to the delivery of healthcare services in Tanzania.

"This Directorate will be headed by someone with a

background in nursing. Not only will it shorten the decision-making hierarchy for nursing issues within the Ministry, but it will also play the key role of building the capacity of the various nursing units," Dr. Mbando pointed out, telling those present that the new body will serve to improve supervision and oversight of nursing services while at the same time helping to create a continuum between health centers and patients.

Dr. Thecla Kohi, TNI Principal Investigator and a senior lecturer at Muhimbili School of Nursing, also welcomed the US delegation led by World Services of La Crosse in Wisconsin and Winona State University in Rochester, Minnesota.

"Our new US partners bring to the table a vast professional network, years of expertise, and a wealth of resources that will open up new opportunities to reinforce the success of the program," Dr. Kohi said.

"This initiative is not only an opportunity for cultural and knowledge exchanges for faculty and students in our respective institutions, it also represents a unique opportunity to elevate the standards of nursing globally," according to US partner and Winona State University Professor Dr. Lisa Shnepper.

"I feel privileged to work in a model where partners can learn from each other and work together to improve public health in both our countries," said Sandra McCormick, President and Chief Executive Officer of World Services of La Crosse.

"It is important to point out that TNI's "Four Pillar" model to improve nursing care is one that nurses in the United States can learn from and find ways to implement," she stressed.

TNI has evolved from initial collaborations with the University of Michigan School of Nursing (2005-2006) and the University Of California San Francisco School Of Nursing (2006-2011) into a dynamic, sustainable project that strives to ensure its outputs have long-term impact on Tanzania's efforts to strengthen its healthcare delivery system and improve the quality of care for its citizens.

This year, activities are focusing on curriculum and faculty development; tangible support to nursing schools, including provision of skills labs and mobile libraries; improving the safety of nursing service delivery; public protection through licensure, examinations, and nursing policy and leadership; and advocacy to improving the professional image of nursing throughout the country.

## First Lady Dr. Christine Kaseba Named Patron of the Palliative Care Association of Zambia



Zambian First Lady Dr. Christine Kaseba was honored as a patron of the Palliative Care Association of Zambia at a ceremony held in Lusaka on November 22.

Leadership from the Palliative Care Association of Zambia (PCAZ) honored Zambia's First Lady Dr. Christine Kaseba as a patron of the association during a gala ceremony held November 22 at the State House in Lusaka.

In her acceptance speech, Dr. Kaseba stressed that dignity at the end of one's life is one of the most critical rights a patient deserves without exception. Sadly, she said, only a small minority of people in Zambia are able to choose to die at home due to the current rigid system and unsupportive attitude of health professionals.

Dr. Kaseba told those in attendance that barring individuals from exercising their right to choose where and how they will die is a tragedy, expressing hope that the situation would change as more and more Zambians become aware of the concept of palliative care.

Dr. Kaseba made it clear that she did not accept the position of PCAZ Patron merely for prestige, but because of her heartfelt

desire to contribute to the improvement of the health and welfare of others.

"It is not the honor of becoming a patron for the Palliative Care Association of Zambia that made me accept this invitation, but the realization that we are all gifted differently and each one of us should use our special gifts to serve others," Dr. Kaseba said. She went on to explain how she wanted to be a champion of the palliative care agenda in Zambia by helping to ensure all patients and their families have access to quality, comprehensive pain management and end of life services.

Following her speech, Dr. Kaseba launched PCAZ's "Caring Beyond Duty" campaign, sharing an informational booklet developed by the association.

"Caring Beyond Duty" is an awareness raising campaign designed to instill the notion that human life is a gift from God among the general populace and to ensure that quality pain management and end of life care is available to all people who need it.

Another important objective of the campaign is to restore attitudes of caring and sharing, which are integral attributes of the extended family system in Zambia — particularly at a time when chronic diseases are on the rise.

"The call to caring duty should not be left to the hospitals, health workers, and community volunteers alone," Dr. Kaseba said. "Instead everyone must come on board as all are called to duty to serve one another."

The "Caring Beyond Duty" campaign complements the Ministry of Health's goal of providing quality, client-centered healthcare services.

The companion PCAZ Palliative Care Information Booklet provides basic information on palliative care and how and where people can get help for loved ones suffering debilitating illnesses. This booklet will be distributed free of charge as a way to increase public awareness of palliative care.

## Twinning Center Capacity Building Results

Through December 2012,  
9,859 African healthcare workers and para-professionals have received targeted training through an AIHA HIV/AIDS Twinning Center partnership program, including:

- **3,518 Nurses in Ethiopia and Tanzania**
- **254 Clinical Associates in South Africa**
- **132 BSWs & MSWs in Ethiopia and Tanzania**
- **5,955 Para Social Workers in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Tanzania**

## Working to Strengthen Social Services, Reduce HIV-related Stigma at Debre Berhan Hospital

For people living with HIV, antiretroviral therapy (ART) offers hope for a longer, healthier life, but that hope is predicated on their adherence to treatment.

In much of the world, HIV is an already difficult disease made so much worse by the additional burden of stigma and discrimination. This combination makes adherence a challenge for some individuals — particularly those who do not have access to adequate social support services.

Twinning Center partners at Debre Berhan Hospital in Ethiopia have been working with their US counterparts at Elmhurst Hospital Center in New York City since 2007 to improve medical and psychosocial care for HIV patients, first at Debre Berhan and, more recently, at two rural feeder hospitals in Mehal Meda and Enat.

Recalling how things were before the partnership began, Sharew Engidasewu, a nurse at Debre Berhan Hospital, explains, “The stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS was high and our staff did not fully address the emotional, as well as the physical, ramifications of the disease.”

Noting that the care provided to people living with HIV was far from optimal at that time, he remembers how amazed he was to see the American nurses chatting and dining with their HIV patients during his first visit to Elmhurst for a professional exchange.

“The Elmhurst nurses knew the science behind HIV/AIDS, including how the virus is transmitted, so they were not afraid to sit and dine with people living with HIV. Their humanitarianism and respect for their patients forever changed me,” he says.

In New York, Engidasewu received targeted training in HIV care and ART counseling, working side-by-side with the Elmhurst nurses and other healthcare professionals.

Struck by the quality of care he witnessed first-hand, his own desire to improve the treatment and care services provided at Debre Berhan was ignited. “I was determined that upon my return I was going to help change the way HIV-related care was provided at Debre Berhan,” he says, explaining that he was particularly concerned with helping to erase the stigma surrounding the illness.

Over the past six years, the partners have worked to upgrade and expand both the quality and scope of care and support provided to people living with HIV.

More recently, some Debre Berhan social services and nursing staff have attended trainings for psychosocial care and the supervision of psychosocial care workers, which were conducted by experts from the Addis Ababa University (AAU) School of Social Work.

The curriculum for these courses was developed through a triangular Twinning Center partnership linking the AAU School of Social Work with Jane Addams College of Social Work and the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center at the University of Illinois in Chicago and the Tanzania Institute of Social Work in Dar es Salaam.

Afterward, the Debre Berhan staff shared how the trainings helped them define key goals and objectives for future psychosocial care services at the hospital with their US counterparts, discussing ways to expand their linkages with

other community-based organizations that provide complementary services to people living with HIV and other vulnerable populations.

In particular, Debre Berhan’s psychiatric nurse and social worker met with Elmhurst experts, who stressed the need to build greater professional rapport and reinforce the importance of proactive consultation between the two departments.

The ongoing training, mentoring, and exposure to best practices through professional exchanges has played a pivotal role in building the institutional and human resource capacity needed for Debre Berhan to provide comprehensive, client-centered HIV treatment, care, and support services.

Efforts to implement a multi-disciplinary team approach by including not only the hospital social workers — but also case managers and outreach workers who are employed by outside agencies yet supervised by AIDS Clinic staff — were ramped up.

The US partners have been working closely with Debre Berhan’s Medical Director, stressing the importance of expanding the social work department to better ensure access to much-needed psychosocial services, such as palliative care and peer counseling that will help improve adherence to care.

“All HIV patients want to be treated with care and dignity,” Mr. Engidasewu concludes. “That is the way we provide services here at Debre Berhan Hospital and this service upgrade has everything to do with what we saw at Elmhurst Hospital Center.”



Debre Berhan social services and nursing staff participated in psychosocial care trainings conducted by experts from the Addis Ababa University School of Social Work.



Judi Brenner, Associate Director of Social Work at Elmhurst Hospital, conducts a training on patient counseling for a multidisciplinary team at Debre Berhan. Many of the participants were nurses, who often spend the most time with patients and can therefore be instrumental in improving quality of care.

## TANNA Holds Scientific Conference and Annual General Meeting in Morogoro

The Tanzania National Nurses Association (TANNA) held its Annual General Meeting and a Scientific Conference in Morogoro September 26-28.

Under the theme “Nurses Meeting the Challenges of Non Communicable Disease (NCD) in Tanzania,” the event brought together nursing professionals and policymakers from all over Tanzania.

The Honorable Dr. Hussein A. Mwinyi, Tanzania’s Minister of Health and Social Welfare, provided opening remarks, welcoming participants and lauding the efforts of the country’s nurses, who serve as frontline caregivers and constitute the largest healthcare provider workforce in this East African nation of more than 48 million people.

The meeting focused on the rising burden of non-communicable diseases in the country, highlighting the crucial role nurses play in community-based primary care and prevention.

In addition to sessions on prevention, treatment, and healthy lifestyles topics, another focus of the event was on ways of effectively strengthening the nursing profession in Tanzania, as well as ways of increasing TANNA membership.

Thanks to funding from the American people through PEPFAR and CDC/Tanzania, AIHA’s Twinning Center has been a key partner in strengthening the country’s health system through the Tanzania Nursing Initiative (TNI).

TNI is a broad capacity building partnership that links Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), School of Nursing; the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare’s Nursing Training Unit; TANNA; and the Tanzania Nurses and Midwives Council (TNMC) with a US-based consortium led by World Services of La Crosse and Winona State University School of Nursing.

TANNA has received a great deal of technical assistance and support through TNI. As a result, the association has successfully registered 8,000 members — roughly 32 percent of all nurses in the country.

TANNA has also markedly improved its management, outreach, and advocacy capacity, which, in turn, helps ensure organizational stability in the years to come.

Moving forward, TANNA’s will continue to advocate for increased compensation and benefits for nurses, including uniform allowance, housing, transportation, and health insurance. The association will also focus on increasing professional development opportunities for nurses, including continuing education and leadership training.

**In developing countries, people between the ages of 15-59 bear the greatest burden from NCDs, with most ailments caused by unhealthy lifestyle choices such as smoking, alcohol consumption, and lack of physical activity ranking among the leading contributors to poor health. Poverty also has a strong impact on health. As frontline caregivers, nurses play a critical role in combatting NCDs.**

## AAU Drug Information Center Raises Awareness about its Services, Serves as Rotation Site

AIHA’s clinical pharmacy partners at Addis Ababa University’s School of Pharmacy recently relocated the PEPFAR-supported Drug Information Center (DIC) established through their Twinning Center partnership with Howard University.

Previously housed in the basement of Black Lion Hospital, the DIC is now in a more central location that affords easy access to both pharmacists and other hospital staff.

Partners have also been working to educate Black

Lion’s healthcare workers about the DIC and its services by distributing drug information query forms and other marketing materials to the internal medicine wards to help raise awareness.

Staffed by AAU School of Pharmacy faculty, the DIC provides comprehensive, objective, unbiased, and evidence-based information that assists and informs health professionals as they plan and provide clinical care.

The DIC also serves as a training and research center, particularly as relates to the

countrywide scaling up of ART and other drug treatments for PLWH. Such treatment involves increasingly complex pharmacotherapy, making pharmacists a critical member of a multidisciplinary HIV/AIDS care team.

In addition, the DIC at Black Lion Hospital is being utilized as a rotation site. To date, 21 graduate-level pharmacy students have completed the two-week DIC attachment, as have all 54 fifth-year undergraduate students.

**The Drug Information Center at Black Lion Hospital serves as a model for a number of satellite centers opened at universities throughout Ethiopia.**



## AIHA Launches New Partnership to Strengthen Biomedical Engineering Training in Ethiopia

The Twinning Center recently established a new partnership that will strengthen Ethiopia's training capacity in the field of biomedical engineering thanks to the support of the American people through PEPFAR and the CDC in Addis Ababa. This is the first PEPFAR-supported partnership in Africa to focus on biomedical engineering and technology as an important component of health systems strengthening.

Ethiopia is currently facing a critical shortage of trained biomedical engineers and technicians capable of properly maintaining and repairing diagnostic and treatment equipment at healthcare facilities throughout the country.

Jimma University's Institute of Technology established Ethiopia's first biomedical engineering degree program in 2008, while Tegbar-Id Polytechnic College has been home to one of the country's only diploma-level biomedical technician vocational training programs since 2006.

The efforts of these institutions are greatly impeded by both a severe lack of qualified biomedical engineering instructors and a shortage of crucial training capacity, including well-equipped workshops; modern biomedical training equip-

ment and teaching methodologies; and evidence-based international standards on biomedical equipment maintenance and support.

In response, AIHA's HIV/AIDS Twinning Center has linked these two Ethiopian institutions with Rice University and Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, Texas.

Rice is consistently ranked one of the best teaching and research universities in the United States with its undergraduate and graduate programs in bioengineering respectively ranked sixth and eighth in the nation by *US News & World Report*. Both US institutions are members of the Texas Medical Center, the largest medical complex in the world, and have a longstanding and successful history of collaboration around the design and deployment of global health technologies that improve HIV and neonatal care in Africa, including in Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, and Botswana.

Together, partners will work to strengthen bioengineering capacity in Ethiopia, largely through curricula and faculty development and the improvement of practical training opportunities at both the pre-service and in-service levels.

Education and training opportunities developed through the partnership will focus on giving students and technicians practical, hands-on experience and problem-solving skills, as well as on creating and maintaining robust technologies designed to deliver highly effective care in low-resource settings.

Initially, partners will focus on HIV and neonatal care before later expanding to other priority clinical areas. Partners also plan to explore professional development opportunities for biomedical faculty, staff, and managers through ongoing training and mentoring.

An expert team from Rice University traveled to Ethiopia the third week of January to meet with their counterparts at Jimma University and Tegbar-Id Polytechnic College.

Together they visited local hospitals, health centers, and biomedical equipment suppliers in both Addis Ababa and Jimma, conducting a needs assessment and familiarizing themselves with the local context.

They also jointly developed a partnership work plan to outline their goals, objectives, and activities for the coming year.

**This new Ethiopian partnership will build training capacity at Jimma University and Tegbar-Id Polytechnic College and could serve as an effective model of building biomedical engineering training capacity in other countries throughout Africa.**

**According to UNAIDS, an estimated 330,000 children were newly infected with HIV in 2011, which represents a 24 percent reduction since 2009.**

**Still, there are some 3.4 million children living with HIV worldwide — about 3.1 million of whom are living in sub-Saharan Africa.**

**Only 28 percent of these youth are receiving ART.**

## Conferences and Opportunities



**4th Annual Consortium of Universities in Global Health Conference**  
March 14-16, 2013  
Washington, DC, USA

**8th Educational Conference on Palliative and End of Life Care**  
April 26, 2013  
Ontario, Canada

**African Cochrane Center Indaba: Global Evidence, Local Application**  
May 6-8, 2013  
Cape Town, South Africa

**7th INTEREST Workshop**  
May 14-17, 2013  
Dakar, Senegal

**International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (QI2013)**  
May 15-18, 2013  
Chicago, Illinois, USA

**8th eLearning Africa Conference**  
May 29-31, 2013  
Windhoek, Namibia

**2013 Conference of the International Association of Physicians in AIDS Care (IAPAC)**  
June 2-4, 2013  
Miami, Florida, USA

**2nd International Conference on Medical, Biological, and Pharmaceutical Sciences**  
June 17-18, 2013  
London, UK

**7th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention 2013**  
June 30-July 3, 2013  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**17th Annual Rural Health Conference**  
August 8-10, 2013  
St. Lucia, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

**US Conference on AIDS**  
September 8-11, 2013  
New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

**7th Social Aspects of HIV and AIDS Research Alliance (SAHARA) Conference**  
October 7-10, 2013  
Dakar, Senegal

**Medicine 2.0**  
October 23-24, 2013  
London, UK

**4th International Workshop on HIV & Aging**  
October 30-31, 2013  
Baltimore, Maryland, USA

**What Will it Take to Achieve an AIDS-free World?**  
November 3-5, 2013  
San Francisco, California, USA

**6th International Workshop on HIV Persistence, Reservoirs and Eradication Strategies Conference**  
December 3-6, 2013  
Miami, Florida, USA

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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.

