

HIV/AIDS Twinning Center Projects in Ethiopia

Establishing a Medical Information “Warmline” to Support Clinicians Who Provide ART

The AIDS Resource Center (ARC) in Addis Ababa is partnering with the AIDS Treatment Information Center (ATIC) in Uganda to strengthen ARC’s capacity to implement a telephone consultation service, or warmline, that provides clinical information and advice to physicians caring for PLWH.

Increased access to ARVs in Ethiopia has generated a need for members of the health sector workforce to rapidly increase their knowledge on HIV/AIDS care. In support of the CDC’s implementation of national IT systems, partners are establishing a warmline that physicians can call and record questions, which will then be researched by ATIC pharmacists and answered by telephone within 24 hours.

Specific objectives of this south-south partnership include increasing ARC’s capacity to:

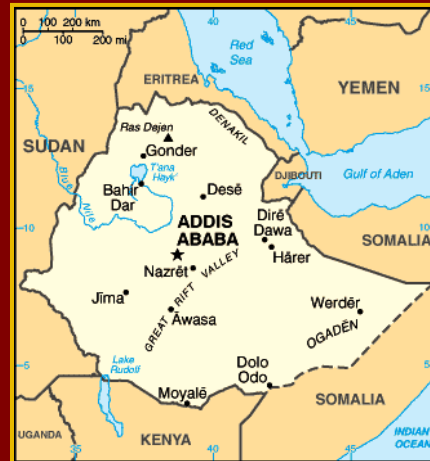
- strategically plan for and implement a call center that provides HIV/AIDS pharmaceutical and lab service delivery support;
- continuously monitor and evaluate warmline services; and
- effectively analyze logistical, educational, and infrastructural needs identified by the call center and disseminate that information to relevant partners.

Partners have conducted a formal assessment of healthcare providers and centers in five regions of Ethiopia. They have also hired and trained warmline staff in specific target topics utilizing local experts and ATIC partners as technical resources. The most recent training focused on standard operating procedures of a clinical warmline, communication, and a case study review of adverse reactions of common ARVs. Upcoming activities include mentoring and continued training of staff on warmline implementation, as well as the development of a data management system.

Pre- and In-Service Training for Pharmacists

Addis Ababa University School of Pharmacy and Howard University’s Pharmacists and Continuing

Ethiopia Country Overview



The impact of the HIV epidemic varies substantially among populations and geographic locations in Ethiopia with a national prevalence ranging from .9 to 2.5 among adults ages 15 - 49. In 2005, 1.3 million adults were estimated to be infected with HIV in Ethiopia. The principal modes of HIV transmission are heterosexual sex and mother-to-child transmission. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has led to a seven year decrease in life expectancy among Ethiopians and has also led to substantial decrease in the workforce.

With support from the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in country, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center currently manages six partnerships and a Volunteer Healthcare Corps initiative in Ethiopia.

In 2006, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center opened an office in Addis Ababa to provide programmatic and logistical support to partners and volunteers. Staff also work closely with local government agencies and the US Government team to identify and facilitate needs-driven partnerships and volunteer placements.

Education Center are collaborating to strengthen AAU’s capacity to train current and future pharmacists to support HIV-related care and treatment, including the provision of high quality ART.

Strengthening pharmacy services is critical to scaling up HIV treatment and support. Pharmacists are a fundamental part of the HIV/AIDS clinical team and, as Ethiopia works to rapidly scale up ARV treatment in hospitals and health centers throughout the country, the need for trained and qualified pharmacists has become increasingly important.

Partners are supporting ART expansion in Ethiopia by establishing an accredited continuing education program at AAU School of Pharmacy and Introducing a center of excellence in the clinical training of faculty, practitioners, and students providing pharmaceutical care services to HIV/AIDS patients.

They are also working to improve access to unbiased, up-to-date, clinically oriented, and evidence-based pharmaceutical health information for HIV patients, healthcare professionals, students, faculty, and the public in general, by building institutional capacity at AAU and Ethiopia's Drug Authority and Control Administration., a federal agency that works closely with the partnership.

Partners have conducted a baseline assessment of current levels of education and training, as well as work experience and attitudes of pharmacists in Ethiopia. They have also completed two seven-day training-of-trainers workshops on select topics in drug informatics and pharmacotherapeutics for Ethiopian pharmacists.

Upcoming activities include the establishment of a replicable Drug Information Center of Excellence at AAU, as well the development of policies and procedures for an accredited continuing education program.

Building Institutional Capacity in HIV/AIDS Care: Debre Berhan Hospital

As access to ART increases in Ethiopia, so too has the need to bolster health system infrastructure and human resource capacity to meet the growing needs of PLWH who are now receiving treatment or soon will be.

Partners at Debre Berhan Hospital and the Elmhurst Hospital Center in New York City are strengthening Debre Berhan's capacity to provide ART and other care and support services to the population it serves.

Specifically, partners are working to:

- Enhance medical and psychosocial care for PLWH to prevent complications and improve quality of life;
- Strengthen hospital services related to HIV/AIDS care at Debre Berhan; and
- Increase patient involvement as a way of improving quality of care.



Partners from Debre Berhan Hospital and Elmhurst Hospital Center during a professional exchange in New York City in 2007.

As of June 2008, partners have conducted three professional exchanges focused on mentoring and onsite training for staff at Debre Berhan.

During the most recent exchange to Ethiopia, the Elmhurst team—which included two doctors, two nurses, and two social workers—provided one-on-one mentoring on topics such as treatment of psychosocial issues, case management, adherence, and nurses' role in patient assessment and care. In addition, the Elmhurst partners assessed the hospital's infection prevention program and conducted an onsite staff training that focused on strategies for improving infection control practices at Debre Berhan.

Upcoming activities include the continuation of onsite mentoring and training for Debre Berhan staff and the initiation of a pen pal project between patients at both hospitals, who will share information about their experiences living with HIV, as well as strategies for coping and staying adherent to treatment.

Building Institutional Capacity in HIV/AIDS Care: Ambo Hospital

Partners at Ethiopia's Ambo Hospital and Jersey Shore University Medical Center are collaborating to strengthen Ambo's capacity to provide HIV-related treatment, care, and support—including ART—to PLWH.

Specific objectives of the partnership include:

- Strengthening Ambo Hospital's organizational and human resource capacity in the field of HIV care;
- Improving coordination of healthcare services provided to PLWH as a way of to increase client retention in ART programs; and
- Establishing an infection control program and related procedures at Ambo.



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As of June 2008, partners have conducted three professional exchanges that focused on providing onsite training and mentoring for Ambo staff.



Partners from Ambo Hospital and Jersey Shore University Medical Center during a professional exchange in New Jersey in 2007.

During their most recent exchange, Jersey Shore partners conducted an “HIV Basics” training for clinical staff, as well as a training on ARVs and medications used to treat common opportunistic infections. They also provided an interdisciplinary case review and conducted a Q&A session for Ambo’s peer educators group.

Upcoming activities will focus on continued training and onsite mentoring for Ambo staff, in particular on the topics of infection prevention, case management, and adherence counseling.

Supporting the Ministry of Health’s National Strategy for Scaling Up VCT Services

Launched in December 2007, this south-south partnership links Ethiopia’s Ministry of Health voluntary counseling and testing sites throughout the country with Kenya-based Liverpool VCT.

Partners are working to increase the capacity of the Ministry of Health to support the delivery of quality training activities in HIV counseling and testing on a national level. They will place special focus on developing services for disadvantaged populations, as well as increasing access to counseling and testing.

Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children

UNAIDS estimates that there are between 280,000 and 870,000 children orphaned or made vulnerable by AIDS living in Ethiopia. These children require comprehensive

care and support, yet many of the community caregivers currently working with this most vulnerable of populations lack the knowledge and skills they need to address their complex needs effectively.

The Addis Ababa University School of Social Work is collaborating with Jane Addams College of Social Work and the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center at the University of Illinois - Chicago to strengthen AAU’s capacity to provide both pre-service and in-service social work training in an effort to improve the quality and scope of support available to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in Ethiopia.

This partnership is working closely with a similar Twinning Center alliance linking the US partners with the Institute of Social Work in Tanzania, making it our first “triangle partnership.”

Partners are working to meet the immediate needs of OVC by developing a para-social worker training program that will arm community-based care providers with much-needed case management skills. They are also addressing Ethiopia’s long-term needs for trained social workers by strengthening AAU’s existing degree programs in social work.

As of May 2008, partners have conducted an initial assessment visit to Tanzania to observe para-social worker education and training activities at the Institute of Social Work and a professional exchange to the United States to develop the partnership workplan and budget, as well as to participate in a conference on the role of social work in HIV/AIDS care.



Representatives of the Twinning Center’s first “triangle” partnership during a professional exchange in Washington, DC. Three schools of social work from Ethiopia, Tanzania, and the United States are working together to build the institutional capacity needed to improve OVC care and support in the host countries.



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Ethiopia Diaspora Initiative: Skilled Volunteers Helping to Build Sustainable Capacity

The Twinning Center is partnering with Visions for Development, Inc. and three supporting Diaspora organizations to mobilize professionals to assist in Ethiopia's fight against HIV/AIDS through its Volunteer Healthcare Corps (VHC).

The Ethiopia Diaspora Initiative works to identify and place highly skilled Diaspora professionals at PEPFAR-supported ARV treatment sites and AIDS service organizations, where they serve as technical experts. Volunteers are placed at sites for a period ranging from three months to two years with the dual goals of building institutional capacity and increasing staff competencies.

To ensure a demand-driven program, the Twinning Center office in Addis Ababa works closely with potential placement sites to identify their specific human resource needs and jointly develops a scope of work for each volunteer assignment.

When the scope of work is finalized, our partnering organizations identify a qualified candidate from the Diaspora community. The Twinning Center then provides travel-related logistical support, extensive orientation, and on-going support throughout each volunteer's assignment.

As of April 2008, the VHC has placed 15 Diaspora volunteers in Ethiopia, including a laboratory health and safety guidelines developer, a monitoring and evaluation specialist, an infection and post-exposure prevention advisor, a Web content developer, and an ART nurse.



"I can really see the changes I've helped implement and know that I can still contribute so much more. My goal is to ensure these changes are sustainable by focusing on training staff and strengthening lab infrastructure."

—VHC volunteer, Dr. Wubshet Mamo (center, right), with members of the I-TECH Lab Support Team he helped establish.



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