

HIV/AIDS Twinning Center Projects in Ethiopia

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

The National AIDS Resource Center (ARC) in Addis Ababa is partnering with the National Clinician’s Consultation Center (NCCC) at the University of California-San Francisco to improve access to quality HIV/AIDS care and treatment in Ethiopia by providing expert consultation for healthcare providers 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 established FITUN Warmline, a call-in service that allows physicians throughout the country to record questions on clinical care, which will then be researched and promptly answered by ARC specialists.

Specific objectives of this partnership include:

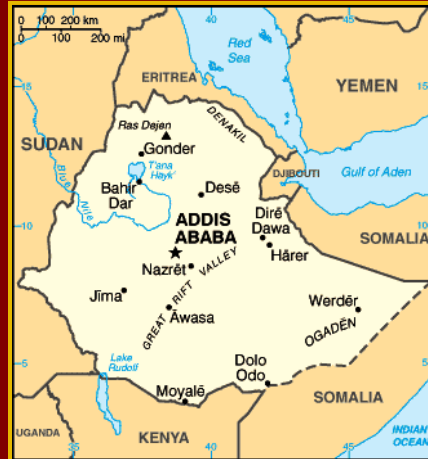
- Strengthening the clinical consultation skills of FITUN Warmline staff;
- Developing a strong continuous quality improvement program for the Warmline; and
- Strengthening the organizational and administrative capacity of the Warmline.

Partners have conducted training sessions to facilitate development of Warmline methodologies and expand clinical and technical expertise on HIV-related topics among staff. In addition, partners have distributed promotional materials to healthcare facilities throughout the country.

Upcoming activities include the development of a computer-based scheduling system, as well as manuals on consultation methodologies and global treatment strategies.

Partners are also developing specific standards for a continuous quality improvement program. In 2009, a total of six training sessions and 10 training modules on topics such as ART, perinatal care, PMTCT, post-exposure prophylaxis, clinical pharmacy, pediatric HIV, effective clinical consultation, treatment of opportunistic

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 2.1 among adults ages 15 - 49. According to UNAIDS estimates, more than 980,000 adults were living with HIV in Ethiopia at the end of 2007 and 67,000 people had died from AIDS-related causes. More than 650,000 children have been orphaned or made vulnerable by the epidemic. 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. A seventh partnership, focusing on building emergency medical services capacity, will be launched in spring 2009.

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.

infections, TB and HIV co-morbidity, and other co-infections will be offered.

Pre- and In-Service Training for Pharmacists

Addis Ababa University (AAU) School of Pharmacy and Howard University's Pharmacists and Continuing 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.

Well-trained pharmacists are a fundamental part of HIV/AIDS clinical teams in Ethiopia. Consequently, strengthening pharmacy services is critical to efforts to provide quality HIV treatment and support as the country works to rapidly scale up ART in hospitals and health centers nationwide.

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 for the clinical training of faculty, practitioners, and students who provide pharmaceutical care and services to PLWH.

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, training, work experience, and attitudes of pharmacists in Ethiopia. They have also completed three 7-day training-of-trainers workshops on selected topics in pharmacotherapeutics and drug informatics for Ethiopian pharmacists.



Olu Olusanya and Muhammad Habib of Howard University chat with a pharmacist during a 2008 partnership exchange to Ethiopia.

Partners established a replicable Drug Information Center of Excellence at AAU and celebrated its opening in May 2009. They are also developing policies and procedures for an accredited continuing pharmacy 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.



Based on the needs of the population served by Debre Berhan Hospital, partners are working to improve clinical capacity to manage ophthalmological conditions related to HIV/AIDS, as well as diabetes.

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;
- Increase patient involvement as a way of improving quality of care; and
- Enhance professional knowledge and training opportunities for Debre Berhan staff.

As of May 2009 partners have conducted four professional exchanges focused on mentoring and onsite training for staff at Debre Berhan.

During the most recent exchange to Ethiopia, the



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Elmhurst team — which included two doctors and two nurses — provided one-on-one mentoring on topics such as treatment of psychosocial issues, case management, adherence, and the role of nurses in patient assessment and care. In addition, the Elmhurst partners provided an introduction to palliative care and conducted onsite staff training for ocular manifestations of AIDS and diabetes and routine obstetric and gynecological care of HIV-infected women.

Upcoming activities include the continuation of onsite mentoring and training for Debre Berhan staff and a pen pal project between patients at both hospitals, who 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.



Partners and AIHA/Ethiopia staff celebrate the delivery of more than 100 new mattresses to Ambo Hospital. The US partners conducted a community awareness campaign in New Jersey and collected private donations to pay for the mattresses, which contribute to greater patient comfort and improved sanitation at Ambo.

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.

As of May 2009, partners have conducted three professional exchanges that focused on providing onsite training and mentoring for Ambo staff. 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 question and answer 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 develop and strengthen social work education programs in Ethiopia. The objective of this partnership is to improve community services, HIV information, and linkages to care and support for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

The Tanzania Institute of Social Work — an educational institution based in Dar es Salaam that participates in a similar Twinning Center partnership with Jane Addams



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College of Social Work — also participates in this partnership, contributing significant knowledge and practical experience providing community caregivers with training in social work and case management skills.

Specifically partners are working to:

- Improve the capacity of partner institutions to deliver quality pre-service social work education, in particular in the area of HIV/AIDS; and
- Design and implement programs that use highly qualified social workers to train and supervise para-professionals working at the grass root level on case management and HIV/AIDS.

To date, partners have conducted a training on psychosocial care and field supervision skills in healthcare settings. The objective of the training was to enhance the capacity of Ethiopian institutions engaged in delivering social services within a healthcare setting. Partners are also conducting a situational assessment on the existing training programs related to HIV/AIDS, case management, and social services in the area of psychosocial care and support programs.

Upcoming activities include, dissemination of the situational assessment findings and the development of an Ethiopia Para-Social Workers Training Manual.



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.

Ethiopia Diaspora Initiative: Skilled Volunteers Helping to Build Sustainable Capacity

The Twinning Center is partnering with Visions for Development, Inc. and three supporting Diaspora



"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."

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

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 2009, the VHC has placed 32 Diaspora volunteers in Ethiopia, including a pre-service education specialist, a pathologist, a communications advisor, an epidemiologist, a capacity building advisor, an IT consultant, and a patient services specialist.



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