



PRESS RELEASE

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New Drug Information Center Opens at Addis Ababa University Black Lion Hospital

PEPFAR-funded Partnership is Strengthening Ethiopia's Capacity to Provide Quality Pharmacotherapy Advice, Better Inform HIV/AIDS Treatment and Care

ADDIS ABABA, June 5, 2009 — HIV/AIDS Twinning Center partners at Addis Ababa University (AAU) and Howard University in Washington, DC, celebrated the opening of a model Drug Information Center (DIC) May 27 at Black Lion Hospital. AAU President Andreas Eshete and a number of AAU officials, deans, and department heads, as well as local and international stakeholders in the field of pharmacy education and training attended the event.

With support from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through CDC/Ethiopia, as well as from the World Bank, partners from the AAU and Howard University schools of pharmacy, along with Howard's Pharmacists and Continuing Education Center, established the DIC to serve as a center of excellence on drug information services in Addis Ababa and, eventually, elsewhere in Ethiopia. Staffed by trained faculty members from the AAU School of Pharmacy, the DIC provides comprehensive, objective, unbiased, and evidence-based information that assists and informs healthcare professionals as they plan and provide clinical care.

The DIC also serves as a training and research center, particularly as relates to the country-wide scaling up of antiretroviral therapy (ART) and other drug treatments for people living with HIV or AIDS. Such treatment involves increasingly complex pharmacotherapy, making pharmacists a critical member of a multidisciplinary HIV/AIDS care team. The DIC will provide experiential training for all pharmacy students to help better prepare them for their expanded role as drug information providers within all pharmacy settings. The center will also help prepare a cadre of more patient-oriented pharmacists who serve as a primary source of scientifically valid information and advice on safe, appropriate, and cost-effective use of medications.

Equipped with the latest drug information databases as well as reference books, the DIC represents an invaluable resource on drug research. Center staff will respond to queries related to drug therapy of diseases; drug therapy in special populations; adverse drug reactions; drug interactions; pharmacodynamics; pharmacokinetics; pharmacogenetics, and the social use of drugs. Users of DIC services are expected to include healthcare professionals, the pharmaceutical industry, health policy makers, academic health departments, hospital administrators, and researchers. Queries can be posed via different modalities, including telephone, e-mail, fax, or walk-in.

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