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Twinning Center Partners Open New HIV/AIDS Clinic and Training Center in Beira

PEPFAR-funded Partnership is Strengthening Mozambique's Capacity to Provide Quality Treatment and Care for PLWH, Train Healthcare Providers

Washington, DC, July 9, 2009 — HIV/AIDS Twinning Center partners at the Universidade Católica de Moçambique (UCM) and the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania celebrated the opening of a new HIV/AIDS clinic and training center. St. Luke's Health Center officially opened its doors at UCM's Beira campus on June 17, greatly expanding accessibility to high quality primary care and HIV/AIDS services to people in Mozambique's Sofala Province.

With support from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through CDC/Mozambique, UCM has been collaborating with the University of Pittsburgh since 2006. While the clinic site was undergoing lengthy renovations, partners focused on faculty and curriculum development through an extensive series of professional exchanges and trainings conducted in both Mozambique and the United States.

UCM Chancellor Dom Jaime, Archbishop of Beira; Associate Professor Deborah McMahon, Clinical Director of the HIV/AIDS program at the University of Pittsburgh; Frei Alberto Ferreira, UCM Rector; Dr. Marina Karagianes, Provincial Director of Health; James P. Smith, AIHA Executive Director; and Dr. Josefo Ferro, Dean of the UCM Faculty of Medical Science, offered remarks at the opening ceremony, which was attended by some 275 people, including representatives from both partner institutions, various local and international stakeholders, and members of the local community.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Peter Millard, Clinical Director of the Health Center at UCM's Faculty of Medical Science, said, "We have partnered with the Ministry of Health to create a vital service for the local community, as well as a critical opportunity for current and future healthcare workers in Mozambique to learn important clinical skills. St. Luke's will deliver HIV treatment in a primary care setting, which will help reduce stigma, improve accessibility, and provide 'one stop shopping' for many patients who would otherwise face long waits at the central hospital." Millard also explained that St. Luke's will "serve as a center of excellence, teaching current and future healthcare workers the planned care model, a cutting edge medical practice used to care for patients with chronic diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, hypertension, and diabetes."

Leveraging US government support for their efforts, the Pittsburgh partners sought donations of medical equipment and supplies, arranging for two 40-foot containers of materials valued at nearly \$85,000 to be shipped to Beira in November 2008. For the UCM partners, the twinning partnership – and the donated equipment and supplies – have translated into improved capacity to meet the underserved needs of people in their community, both now and in the future as more clinicians and allied caregivers are trained.

"The support we are getting from the American people, the Twinning Center, and our partners in Pittsburgh is greatly enhancing our capacity to deliver quality health services," said UCM Vice Chancellor Fr. P. Francisco Ponsi. "The clinic is an excellent contribution to Mozambique's health system. Not only will it help us to assist people in the neighboring community, it will also serve as a training ground and enable us to launch an internship program for graduate-level medical students."

Funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center mobilizes and coordinates the resources of US healthcare providers to effectively build capacity to reduce HIV infection rates and provide care to those infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS in countries targeted for PEPFAR assistance.

For more information on the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center, visit www.TwinningAgainstAIDS.org.
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