

Tanzania Nursing Partnership Conducts First Master Trainer Course in Dar es Salaam

The first group of nurse tutors trained through the Tanzania HIV/AIDS Nursing Education (THANE) Program completed a two-week HIV/AIDS master trainer program on May 11.



Thecla Kohi and Joyce Safe of Muhimbili's School of Nursing join TACAIDS Chair Fatma Hafidhi Mrisho after the awards ceremony.

Dr. Fatma Hafidhi Mrisho, executive chairman of the Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS), presented the group with certificates during a ceremony at the Tanzania Episcopal Centre in Kurasini, Dar es Salaam.

Through a Twinning Center partnership supported by PEPFAR, nursing faculty at Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences (MUCHS) have been collaborating with counterparts at the University of California in San Francisco on the THANE Program. The partnership's dual objectives are designing new HIV/AIDS teaching materials for use in all 58 of Tanzania's

nursing schools and training a core group of master trainers capable of implementing the expanded curriculum.

These 18 nurse tutors were the first to be trained using the curriculum and materials. Partners have developed 12 modules on HIV/AIDS covering topics such as the role of nurses in HIV prevention, care, and treatment services; stigma and discrimination; occupational safety; and life skills for healthcare providers.

As the primary care providers for most of the population, nurses must play a leading role in scaling up health services for the more than 2.2 million people in Tanzania who are living with HIV or AIDS. While HIV/AIDS in-service training courses are increasingly being held for practicing nurses, care for people living with the virus has not yet been fully integrated into the pre-service curriculum for nursing students. Partners are working to change this through the THANE Program.



Nurse tutors familiarize themselves with the new curriculum.

Addressing participants on the opening day of the training, Tanzania's Minister of Health and Social Welfare Prof. David Mwakyusa stressed the fact that education is

critical to efforts to combat the stigma and discrimination that shrouds HIV/AIDS. As nurses, he said, they carried a moral and ethical responsibility to care for people, including those living with HIV or AIDS.

Stressing the importance of personal and professional safety, Mwakyusa told the group they should always remember that their own lifestyle choices and behaviors can put them at risk of contracting HIV or other infectious diseases.



Participants learn about proper condom use during the life skills module.

US partners Prof. Carmen Portillo and Jennifer Okonsky served as faculty for the training along with the experts from MUCHS.

It is anticipated that modules and training materials developed by partners will eventually be integrated into the curricula of nursing programs throughout the country and that all nursing students in Tanzania will acquire improved skills to support people living with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS.

Sharing her thoughts on the project, Dr. Thecla Kohi, dean of the nursing faculty at MUCHS and principle investigator of the THANE project, "This collaboration between the United States and Tanzania provides nurse tutors with a vital opportunity to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills they need to better support and prepare nursing students to care for people affected by HIV/AIDS in their future workplaces."