

## Pharmacy Training Helps Improve Pediatric Treatment and Care in Zambia

Providing high quality treatment and care for people living with HIV (PLWH) is complex and requires a multidisciplinary team that includes not only physicians and nurses, but also a host of allied healthcare professionals such as psychologists, medical technologists, and pharmacists.

In Zambia—as in many countries around the world—this care team approach is a relatively new concept. Ensuring that allied professionals are well-versed in the most up-to-date information related to their discipline's respective role in the provision of ART and other care for PLWH is critical to their integration into the teams that provide these services.



Twinning Center partners with the group of healthcare professionals who completed the June clinical pharmacy training in Livingstone.

With support from PEPFAR through CDC/Zambia, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center has linked Milwaukee's Center for International Health (CIH) with Livingstone General Hospital and the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka. Partners are improving pediatric HIV care in Zambia by strengthening clinical pharmacy training and better integrating pharmacy services into the continuum of care for children living with HIV.

Since the partnership was launched in 2006, the US and Zambian partners have been working to develop the clinical skills and teaching capabilities of a team of pharmacists in Livingstone and Lusaka. Through a series of professional exchanges conducted in the United States and Zambia, team members have gained the knowledge and expertise they need to train peers at their own institutions, as well as other healthcare facilities throughout the country.

In June 2008, the Zambian partners led a three-day clinical pharmacy training at Livingstone General Hospital. More than 25 pharmacists, physicians, and related personnel working in HIV/AIDS participated. Supported by two US partners who attended the event, the Zambian trainers conducted sessions on pediatric HIV care topics such as determining ARV dosages for children, medication safety, adherence and pharmacokinetics, pharmacy organization and structure, and the multidisciplinary team approach to care.

"The workshop gave me hope that things are going to change and that our children will get proper medical care and good pharmaceutical care," says Alex Chizyuka, principal pharmacist at University Teaching Hospital.

"The partnership has put time, effort, and good money toward improving child welfare in Zambia," he concludes, noting, "During the process, I have come to a greater understanding of what pediatric antiretroviral treatment is all about."