

Technical Assistance and Mentoring Help Build Capacity, Improve Care at Ethiopian Hospital

Twinning Center partners at Ambo Hospital in Ethiopia's Oromiya Region have been partnering with Jersey Shore University Medical Center in New Jersey since 2007 to bolster Ambo's capacity to provide HIV/AIDS treatment and expand professional development opportunities for staff.

Ambo Hospital serves a population of more than 2 million people and receives an average of 300 patients each day, including some 2,500 ART patients and another 4,000 PLWH who are not yet sick enough for antiretrovirals. Most people seeking treatment have HIV or AIDS.

According to Ambo Medical Director Dr. Challa Dugo, there were significant gaps in knowledge among hospital staff prior to the partnership, particularly in the area of infection prevention.

"During exchanges, our Jersey Shore partners conducted infection prevention trainings for the entire staff and onsite mentoring for our specialists," Dugo says. "We've all learned so much, which has helped us implement better standards and practices," he points out.

Trainings on adult and pediatric ART, counseling and testing, PMTCT, and other topics have also been conducted.

"We've done surveys of PLWH in the area and determined that adherence to treatment is low, especially for those who live in rural areas and lack money for transportation," Dugo explains.

"Together with our partners and Columbia University, which operates US-funded treatment programs in our region, we're working to minimize the number of people who drop out of treatment."

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