



American International Health Alliance
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AIHA Country Snapshot: Ethiopia

FALL 2011

AIHA PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS IN ETHIOPIA

- AIDS Resource Center / National Clinician's Consultation Center at the University of California-San Francisco
(Clinical Warmline)
- Addis Ababa University School of Pharmacy / Howard University School of Pharmacy
(Clinical Pharmacy Education)
- Debre Berhan Hospital / Elmhurst Hospital Center
(Hospital Capacity Building)
- Ethiopia Ministry of Health, National Counseling and Testing Sites / Liverpool VCT
(HIV Counseling & Testing)
- Ethiopia Social Work and Vulnerable Populations Support Initiative
(OVC, Vulnerable Individuals)
- Ethiopia HIV/AIDS Emergency Medicine Initiative
(Adult & Pediatric Emergency Medicine)
- Ethiopia Diaspora Volunteer Program
(Direct Technical Assistance through Volunteer Placement)

CONTACT US

For more information about our projects in Ethiopia, contact KIDEST HAILU, AIHA Country Director, at khailu@aiha-et.com.

HIV/AIDS Twinning Center Partnerships in Ethiopia

Ethiopia's HIV epidemic varies substantially among populations and geographic locations with just under 1 million adults estimated to be living with the virus and many more men, women, and children affected by it. HIV, coupled with the other communicable diseases, has led to a seven year decrease in life expectancy among Ethiopians and has also led to substantial decrease in the workforce. Consequently, providing access to quality healthcare services is hindered by a dearth of trained human resources. Other challenges include inadequate and overburdened infrastructure, logistics systems, and supply chains. With support from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in country, AIHA has been working to build sustainable institutional capacity and human resources for health in Ethiopia since 2006. AIHA currently manages seven partnerships in Ethiopia, along with a very successful Volunteer Healthcare Corps program. These programs are supported by staff at our country office in Addis Ababa, as well as our team in Washington, DC.

Building Hospital Capacity to Improve Care

Because Ethiopia has been so heavily affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the Federal Government, along with international donors, have increased resources to strengthen human and organizational capacity to support the implementation of prevention, care, and treatment programs. Partners at Debre Berhan Hospital and Elmhurst Hospital Center have been working together since 2007 to strengthen Debre Berhan's capacity to provide medical and psychosocial care for PLWH. On-site mentoring and training for Debre Berhan healthcare workers has played a crucial role in the success of this partnership. Key focus areas have been strengthening hospital services related to HIV care through improved infection prevention training and policies, increasing patient involvement to improve quality of care, and improving professional knowledge and training opportunities through professional exchanges. Through these, Debre Berhan staff have received targeted training on topics ranging from case management and adherence to integrated care and the role of nurses in patient assessment and care. US Partners trained their Debre Berhan counterparts on other topics as well, including palliative care, mental health screening, ophthalmological care for PLWH, post-partum hemorrhage, and hypertension in pregnancy. They developed an Infection Prevention and Control Policy and Procedure Manual and are working on continuous quality improvement and patient safety standards. Partners also established a pen pal project between patients at both hospitals, who share information about their experiences living with HIV, as well as strategies for coping and staying adherent to treatment; this project has strengthened the patient advisory panels at both hospitals. As a result of the partnership, Debre Berhan created the position of nursing supervisors to oversee nursing education and act as a liaison between the nurses and the administration and introduced 8-hour shift schedules to improve efficiency and quality of care. Partners also opened a Learning Resource Center to facilitate the practice of evidence-based medicine. AIHA also managed a similar partnership linking Ambo Hospital with Jersey Shore Medical Center, which graduated in 2011.



Improving Adult and Pediatric Emergency Medical Services

The majority of patients who seek treatment at Black Lion Hospital's emergency room present with internal conditions related to HIV, including respiratory distress related to TB, pneumocystis pneumonia, and other opportunistic infections. Because of this, improved organization of emergency medical services and related training opportunities at Addis Ababa University School of Medicine is an important component of the provision of quality care and services for PLWH. In response, AIHA launched a partnership linking the School of Medicine with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Kentucky-based NGO People to People with the goal of strengthening local urgent care capacity and expanding pre- and in-service education and training opportunities.

In February 2010, partners opened Ethiopia's first Emergency Medicine Training Center. Since then, they have trained more than 1,075 healthcare workers, medical and nursing students, and other individuals in basic life support and CPR; pre-hospital service; advanced life support obstetrics; emergency triage assessment and treatment (ETAT); advanced life support in infectious diseases (ALSID); and a broad range of quality improvement topics. To date, some key accomplishments of this alliance include the graduation of four Ethiopian physicians and a like number of nurses from a Wisconsin-hosted fellowship in Emergency Medicine and the development of a database for tracking adult urgent care patients, as well as the launch of an Emergency Medicine Department at Addis Ababa University, which has recently accepted five residents into this new program.

In keeping with the Ministry of Health's priority to improve the health status of children, AIHA supported the formation of a second partnership between these two institutions. With the addition of Tikur Anbessa Specialized Hospital, this partnership focuses on improving pediatric urgent care through targeted training and education, as well as organizational development and capacity building. The results of their collaboration include the development of a pediatric emergency medicine fellows curriculum based on guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and a wide range of clinical trainings on pediatric urgent care topics including respiratory emergencies, acute respiratory failure assessment and management, ETAT, and pediatric advance life support (PALS), as well as an in-service training course on basic life skills and intensive care unit management in pediatrics for nurses from Tikur Anbessa and AIHA hospital partners from Ambo and Debre Berhan.

In addition, the Wisconsin partners conducted a six-week condensed competency-based emergency medicine fellowship curriculum for two pediatricians and a similar four-week course for two nurses. They also conducted a distance course on advances clinical and translational research for five pediatric physicians and developed a number of quality improvement projects to improve pediatric emergency medical care and services at Tikur Anbessa.



Answering Clinicians' Questions on HIV/AIDS Care



Increased access to ARVs in Ethiopia has generated a need for members of the health sector workforce to rapidly increase their knowledge on HIV/AIDS care. In support of the CDC's implementation of national IT systems, partners at the National AIDS Resource Center (NARC) and the National Clinician's Consultation Center at the University of California-San Francisco established FITUN Warmline, a call-in service that allows physicians all over the country to record questions on clinical care, which will then be researched and promptly answered by NARC specialists.

The goal of this partnership is to improve access to quality HIV care in Ethiopia by providing expert consultation for health workers caring for PLWHIV. US partners have trained FITUN staff on Warmline methodologies and HIV-related topics.

Partners jointly developed training manuals on a broad range of topics, including ART, perinatal care, PMTCT, post-exposure prophylaxis, clinical pharmacy, pediatric HIV, techniques of effective clinical consultation, opportunistic infections, and TB/HIV, which are used to train FITUN staff. They have also developed and implemented a continuous quality improvement program to ensure the Warmline is providing relevant and up to date information to health care providers. To date, FITUN Warmline has provided more than 1,800 clinical consultations both via telephone and email.

Building Health System Capacity through Long-term Volunteers

AIHA launched the Ethiopia Diaspora Volunteer Program in September 2006, working with the Network of Ethiopian Professionals in the Diaspora (NEPID), which is managed by the nonprofit group Visions for Development, Inc.

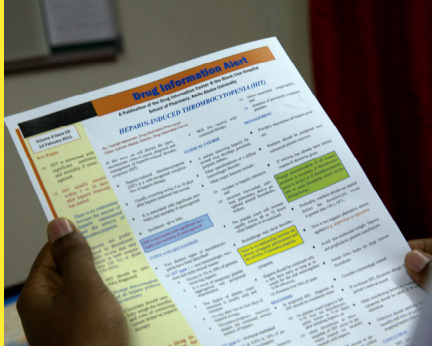
This program identifies, recruits, and places Ethiopians in the Diaspora in volunteer assignments designed to build health system capacity in Ethiopia. Through its Volunteer Healthcare Corps (VHC), AIHA taps into the Diaspora's shared culture, language, and motivation to meaningfully contribute to development efforts in their country of origin. Because of this, there is a strong potential for repatriation, which helps mitigate some of the negative effects of "brain drain."

With 47 volunteers placed as of October 2011, the program clearly demonstrates that skilled members of a Diaspora community can make substantial contributions to development efforts in their countries of origin. To date, 47 volunteers have been placed at 30 sites throughout the country, including 14 placed in various high-level positions at the Ministry of Health. With an average assignment length of 14.5 months, these dedicated professionals have collectively contributed more than 663 months — the equivalent of more than 55 years — of service in Ethiopia.

By far the most robust country initiative of the VHC, the Ethiopia program harnesses the knowledge and expertise of health and allied professionals ranging from physicians, nurses, social workers, and clinical pharmacists to IT, Web development, and database management experts. Other professionals who have volunteered their time and effort to building Ethiopia's health system capacity include epidemiologists, psychologists, HIV nutritionists, and specialists in HIV and TB co-infection, quality improvement, health communications, youth prevention, program management, and palliative care.



Strengthening Clinical Pharmacy Education & Practical Learning



As Ethiopia works to rapidly scale up ARV treatment to hospitals and health centers throughout the country, the need for trained clinical pharmacists has become increasingly important. Pharmacists need to be properly trained on ARV dispensing, procurement, administration, distribution, and storage. Additionally, they need to understand how to monitor drug effectiveness and side effects and be able to counsel patients on ARVs.

AIHA established a partnership linking the Addis Ababa University School of Pharmacy and Howard University School of Pharmacy. Since 2007, partners have been working to strengthen pharmacy services within Ethiopia's healthcare system by training current and future pharmacists to support the expansion and provision of quality ART. They conducted a baseline assessment of existing levels of education, training, work experience, and attitudes of pharmacists in Ethiopia, which informed their subsequent efforts. Key accomplishments include the delivery of five 7-day training-of-trainers workshops on selected topics in pharmacotherapeutics and drug informatics for local pharmacists, as well as the opening of a replicable Drug Information Center of Excellence at Black Lion Hospital and five satellite centers at regional universities, with three more regional satellites slated to open in the coming year. Partners also completed preceptor training for 40 pharmacists and physicians from 10 institutions to support the initiation of clinical rotation sites for pharmacy students and have conducted a curriculum harmonization workshop involving representatives from all six schools of pharmacy in Ethiopia. In addition, Six Ethiopian physicians completed a two-week training at US teaching hospitals to better understand the role of clinical pharmacy to support the healthcare system. The training prepared them to serve as clinical preceptors for Ethiopian Pharmacy BS students.



A group of six Ethiopian pharmacists and students enrolled in the Clinical Pharmacy Practice Program at Addis Ababa University (AAU) School of Pharmacy traveled to Zambia in August 2011, where they spent four weeks gaining much-needed practical skills through a clinical attachment program at University Teaching Hospital (UTH) in Lusaka and Livingstone General Hospital (LGH) in Livingstone. The clinical attachment represents an excellent example of the synergies that exist — and are capitalized on — within AIHA's HRSA-supported HIV/AIDS Twinning Center program. Because clinical pharmacy is a nascent field in Ethiopia, the Zambian partners at UTH and LGH are able to share their own experience through the attachment program. Following an orientation at UTH, each Ethiopian team member rotated through assignments in the surgical, internal medicine, gynecology and obstetrics, and neonatology wards. These week-long rotations provided them with a clear picture of how pharmacists can play an integral role in the day-to-day care of patients as part of the clinical care team. They also gained insight into many organizational and pharmacy management operations that can be readily applied to pharmacy practice in Ethiopia.

Strengthening Social Support for Vulnerable Populations

Many of the current community workers addressing the needs of OVC and other vulnerable individuals have not been trained to handle the complex needs these populations.

Since 2007, the Addis Ababa University School of Social Work has been partnering with Jane Addams College of Social Work and the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center at the University of Illinois, Chicago, as well as the Tanzania Institute of Social Work in Dar es Salaam to implement a training program to arm these community-based caregivers with key social work and case management skills they need to support their clients by linking them to advocacy and legal support, psychosocial support, education, health services, food and nutritional support, housing, child rearing, life skills, and vocational training services.

Through this program, partners have trained more than 250 people using the psycho-social care worker training package they developed. They have also provided field supervision training to more than 60 individuals, conducted three trainings on psycho-social care and field supervision skills in healthcare settings, and developed a mental health and HIV/AIDS training manual. In addition, the partners organized a professional symposium on social work education and practice in Ethiopia and made several presentations on various aspects of their program at the 1st OVC in Africa Conference in Johannesburg in October 2010.

Plans for the coming year include conducting three regional trainings for Para Social Workers on psycho-social care work, along with three regional trainings on proper supervision skills for supervisors of Para Social Workers. They also plan to organize a national symposium to share the best practices in care and support services and research for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS to pertinent organizations and implement monitoring and evaluation activities related to partnership training courses and how the training is being used by trainees to improve the care and support services they are providing.



Improving National VCT Services

Ethiopia's Ministry of Health recognizes the need to increase capacity and improve quality of services at its VCT sites throughout the country. To support their effort, AIHA has linked the Ministry with Nairobi-based Liverpool VCT in a partnership designed to increase capacity to deliver effective VCT training activities on a national level, with a particular focus on improving access for disadvantaged populations. To this end, partners have conducted four professional exchanges to share best practices and have also conducted a workshop on quality assurance for key VCT stakeholders in Ethiopia.

They have jointly developed a concept paper outlining key objectives and plans for the partnership and two members of the Ethiopian HIV/AIDS Counselors Association (EHACA) visited the Kenya Association of Professional Counselors (KAPC) to explore a potential partnership between EHACA and KAPC and acquire knowledge on quality HIV counseling service. Two EHACA members and two Ministry VCT staff also participated in KAPC's 11th International Conference on Counseling, where they were able to gain knowledge and skills on various topics related to counseling based on experiences from other African countries; partners presented AIHA's HTC Quality Assurance project at this meeting in 2011. Other key accomplishments include making significant contributions to the HTV Home-based Implementation Manual and Guidelines for Urban Health Extension Professionals and Urban Health Extension Workers, as well as various other guidance documents including the Stress and Burnout Management Manual and the Ministry of Health's HTC Curriculum, HTC Trainers Manual, and HTC Participant Manual.

AIHA/Ethiopia

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