



PRESS RELEASE

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For more information please contact:

John Capati
HIV/AIDS Twinning Center South Africa
Tel. +27.82.882.2498
jbcapati@yahoo.com

New Twinning Center Partnership Will Help Strengthen Health System Capacity in South Africa's Eastern Cape

PEPFAR-funded program will support training of mid-level medical professionals at Walter Sisulu University

WASHINGTON, DC, February 4, 2010 — The American International Health Alliance (AIHA) announced today the formation of a new partnership in South Africa that will support the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) by building the capacity of faculty and clinical supervisors at Walter Sisulu University to train students in its Clinical Associates Program.

In 2008, the National Department of Health in South Africa launched a new Clinical Associates Program to increase the number of mid-level medical professionals in the workforce. This 3-year degree program produces qualified professionals who have the ability to assess patients, make diagnoses, prescribe appropriate treatments, and undertake minor surgical procedures under the supervision of medical officers. The introduction of this new cadre of mid-level workers will serve to strengthen primary healthcare services in the country by bolstering the number of trained healthcare providers working at community health centers and district hospitals.

With support from CDC/South Africa and in close cooperation with the South Africa National Department of Health, the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center has linked Walter Sisulu University in Eastern Cape Province with the University of Colorado - Denver. Together, partners will work to strengthen Walter Sisulu's Clinical Associates Program to ensure students are effectively prepared to provide high quality medical care to people living in rural areas of the country, in particular individuals with HIV or AIDS who are in need of ART and treatment for opportunistic infections.

The University of Colorado - Denver's Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant Program at the Anschutz Medical Campus has long demonstrated a commitment to building global partnerships that advance healthcare service provision to patients, families, and communities. The Physician Assistant Program brings more than 40 years of experience successfully addressing the challenges related to establishing an innovative curriculum for mid-level professionals to the partnership. This wealth of knowledge and experience will play a critical role in strengthening the Clinical Associates Program at the Walter Sisulu University.

"For UC-Denver, this partnership represents a wonderful opportunity to share our experience as one of the first physician assistant programs in the United States," says Dr. Anita Duhl Glick, Associate Dean of Physician Assistant Studies and Director of the Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant Program at the University of Colorado - Denver. "This is such an exciting opportunity for us to work with our partners in South Africa ... to learn from one another and turn existing challenges into new opportunities for growth."

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.
For more information about AIHA, visit our Web site at www.aiha.com.