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New Emergency Medicine Training Center Opens at Addis Ababa University Black Lion Hospital

PEPFAR-funded Partnership is Strengthening Ethiopia's Capacity to Train Medical Professionals and First-responders, Provide Quality Urgent Care

ADDIS ABABA, February 15, 2010 — HIV/AIDS Twinning Center partners at Addis Ababa University (AAU) Faculty of Medicine and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW) celebrated the opening of Ethiopia's first Emergency Medicine Training Center at Black Lion Hospital today following an emergency medicine symposium, which was attended by some 120 people.

"Emergency services, both pre-hospital and within a hospital setting, are practically non-existent in Ethiopia today. This center — the first of its kind in our country — is an important step in the process of changing that," Minister of Health Dr. Tewodros Adhanom told symposium participants, which included AAU President Andreas Eshete and a number of AAU officials, deans, and department heads. "I want to thank our partners for this pioneering center, which offers graduate-level training and continuing education, as well as courses for paramedics and other first-responders. Really, this is an important gift, perhaps it is the best gift, for Ethiopia," Adhanom continued.

With support from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through CDC/Ethiopia, the partners established the Emergency Medicine Training Center at Black Lion Hospital to equip practicing healthcare professionals, paramedics and other first-responders, and medical and health sciences students with the knowledge and hands-on skills they need to provide high quality care to patients suffering from injuries or acute conditions.

Referencing the earthquake that devastated Haiti on Jan. 12, CDC/Ethiopia Director Tom Kenyon told the audience, "We have only to look at the scenes of devastation from this catastrophe to understand the importance of a strong emergency medicine system. PEPFAR is trying to build the capacity of other health services as part of our HIV programs and we're very pleased that the Twinning Center is doing such unique work [within that framework]." Kenyon went on to commend the leadership of the AAU/UW partnership for their efforts to save lives and improve the quality of care available to the people of Ethiopia. "Ripples quickly turn into waves and we hope to see a wave of improved emergency services in Addis Ababa and elsewhere in the country," he said.

Courses conducted at the state-of-the-art Training Center emphasize the acquisition of practical skills and are composed of learning modules accompanied by computer presentations, slides, overheads, handouts, and a variety of didactic tools, as well as hands-on experience through the use of mannequins. The highly skilled instructors teach healthcare professionals and first-responders a broad range of emergency techniques including CPR, emergency obstetrics, intubation, spinal immobilization, disaster response, and triaging practices that can be performed at the accident site, en route to, and in the hospital setting.

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