

Nursing Tutors and Students Highlight Transformations to Nursing Education during HHS Secretary's Visit to Tanzania

PEPFAR-supported partners at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences discuss the efforts of AIHA's Tanzania Nursing Initiative at health systems strengthening roundtable

US Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius visited Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) in Dar es Salaam July 22, 2011, taking part in a roundtable discussion conducted by partners whose health systems strengthening projects have been supported by the US Government. The high-level delegation included Dr. Mary Wakefield, Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Professor Kisalli Palangyo, Deputy Vice Chancellor of MUHAS, opened the roundtable, which was facilitated by Angela Makota, Human Capacity Development Program Officer and Site Officer for CDC/Tanzania.

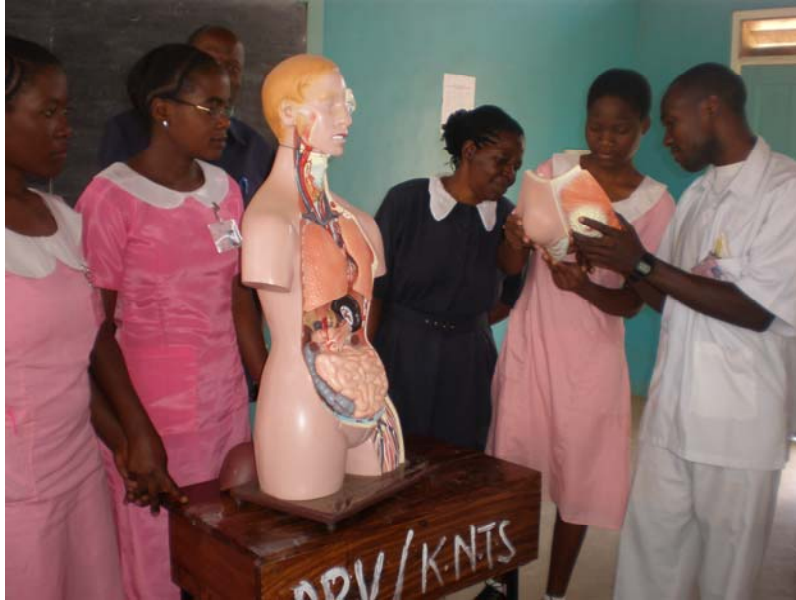
Nursing tutors and students who have benefitted from the Tanzania Nursing Initiative — a partnership project led by the MUHAS School of Nursing and managed by the American International Health Alliance (AIHA) through its HRSA-supported HIV/AIDS Twinning Center program — participated in the roundtable, sharing how the initiative has improved nursing education in the country.



Nurse tutors and students who have benefitted from the Mobile Libraries and skills labs provided to their schools through the Tanzania Nursing Initiative participated in a high-level roundtable during Sec. Kathleen Sebelius's visit to MUHAS on July 22.

Thanks to the support of the American people through PEPFAR and CDC/Tanzania, the Tanzania Nursing Initiative has, among other things, focused on improving access to up-to-date educational resources and helping schools transition from theoretical learning to more hands on, skills-based training. Key elements of these efforts have included the distribution of International Council of Nurses mobile libraries, as well as skills labs that contain mannequins and other resources for practicing clinical procedures in a safe environment.

“Before we got the Mobile Library, the only books I had access to were from the 1980s. These were so outdated and there was no material on HIV/AIDS at all,” said Jacqueline Mgasa, a student at Mirembe School of Nursing in Dodoma. “HIV is a huge problem in my community and



Nursing students gain much-needed practical skills thanks to interactive skills labs provided with PEPFAR support through the Tanzania Nursing Initiative.

the new resources have really helped me gain a better understanding of prevention and treatment options. This makes me feel more confident in my ability to provide care to people once I finish my studies and begin my nursing practice," she explained.

According to Mgasa, the skills lab Mirembe received was another welcome addition. "When I first saw all the mannequins and models, I was so excited! I was really nervous about being able to perform certain procedures, like giving injections," she admitted, noting that she and the other students used to practice on oranges.

"That always seemed so artificial, but the mannequins are so lifelike. Now, when I am not comfortable with my skills, I can go to the lab and practice over and over until the procedure becomes second nature. It is a really great opportunity and I know it will make me a better nurse," she said.

Juliet Chugulu, a Nurse Tutor at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical College, also gave her perspective on the learning tools provided to her school through the Tanzania Nursing Initiative. "As a teacher, I have been able to update my own knowledge by accessing the resources of the Mobile Library, particularly on HIV/AIDS. Of course, that is a big help and boosts my confidence because I know I am providing accurate, up-to-date information to my students," she says. "The training tools in the skills lab really bring training to life for the students and it is so great to see them so excited about the practical training. Also, I am able to easily see when students are doing something wrong and correct them accordingly. I can also encourage additional practice when needed, so students can really hone their skills."