

## Palliative Care Training Empowers Healthcare Workers in Tanzania's Pare Diocese



Drs. Amini Mshighua and Rebecca Wiese conduct a lesson on pain management.

A team of Iowa palliative care specialists joined forces with counterparts from Tanzania to launch a palliative care training program in the East African country's Kilimanjaro Region.

Some 38 healthcare workers from Same District attended the 6-day event, which was conducted Nov. 19-23, 2007 by Twinning Center partners at the Pare Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) and the Southeast Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

"This course will help you as medical workers to care for those dying from AIDS," ELCT Bishop Stefano Msangi told participants on the opening day.

"We welcome all medical workers from government, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran facilities to this program and we know that you will provide this care to any person who is in need, regardless of his or her religion. God bless your efforts."

Faculty included Dr. Rebecca Wiese, of Davenport, Iowa; Joe Sample, MSW, of Iowa Methodist Medical Center; Peggy Stecklein, MSW, executive director of the AIDS Project of Central Iowa; Dr. Amini Mshighwa, medical secretary for Pare Diocese; and Pastor Joas Mpinda, a recent graduate of a program in pastoral care for HIV/AIDS patients. Logistics and local support were coordinated by Todd and Lori Byerly, ELCA missionaries from Davenport.

Educational content was based on materials developed by the African Palliative Care Association and currently used by ELCT's Dr. Kristopher Hartwig in his program for staff at Lutheran hospitals throughout Tanzania.

According to US project coordinator Phil Latessa the intensive program was well received by the participants, who represented facilities in both medical districts in the Pare Diocese. "The trainees



US partner Peggy Stecklein shares a moment with a group of Masai women in Pangaru village.

insisted on covering every item in the course outline and stated that much of this material was new to them,” Latessa says, noting, “They promised to work with others at their institutions to begin using what they had learned about palliative care as soon as possible.”

This partnership builds on an existing “Companion Synod” relationship developed more than 15 years ago by Bishop Msangi in Tanzania and Bishop Philip Hougen in Iowa.

The partners have conducted a variety of projects together, including this Twinning Center partnership designed to improve palliative care services by training health and allied professionals in support of PEPFAR objectives in Tanzania. The partnership is funded by CDC.



Participants included 38 healthcare workers from institutions throughout Same.