

Institutionalizing Pharmacy Training to Improve Pediatric ART Services in Zambia

Management of treatment and care for people receiving ART is a complex process that becomes even more challenging with pediatric cases. As part of a multidisciplinary HIV/AIDS care team, pharmacists play a critical role in improving the quality of ART and related services yet, in countries like Zambia, they often lack the clinical skills and training they need to effectively manage drug regimens.

Since 2006, a Twinning Center partnership funded by PEPFAR and CDC/Zambia has been training Zambian pharmacists and pharmacy technicians thereby strengthening local capacity to provide quality treatment and care to children living with HIV or AIDS. The Milwaukee-based Center for International Health (CIH) is working with pediatric HIV care and treatment centers of excellence established by the CDC and Columbia University at the University Teaching Hospitals in Livingstone and Lusaka.

The CIH partners provide much-needed technical expertise, training, and mentoring to develop the knowledge and skills of Zambian pharmacy staff, while at the same time working closely with their partners to develop and implement effective management systems at each facility.

With the overall goal of improving the quality of HIV/AIDS care to mothers, infants, and children, partners have been conducting a series of targeted trainings in Zambia to teach pharmacy staff how to better organize and manage pharmacy services. The latest workshop — conducted in Livingstone April 29-30, 2009 — brought together 20 Zambian pharmacy professionals, who learned about a broad range of topics, including hospital pharmacy management, patient safety, drug resistance, supply chain management, and a host of clinical topics related to the provision of care for pediatric HIV patients.

A key focus of the partnership has been building sustainable local training capacity through ongoing faculty development for professionals at both hospitals. Partners are now in the process of expanding the scope of future trainings and further institutionalizing training capabilities to ensure educational opportunities remain available for future generations of pharmacy professionals.



Participants at the pharmacy training workshop conducted in Livingstone April 29-30, 2009.