



PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ORGANIZATIONS AWARDED FUNDING FROM DDCF FOR IMPROVEMENT OF HEALTH CARE QUALITY IN ZAMBIA

[Friday, August – 07 - 2009] The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's [DDCF] African Health Initiative announced today that it has selected three Zambian organizations, Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia [CIDRZ], Zambia AIDS Related TB [ZAMBART] Project, and the Catholic Medical Missions Board (CMMB), to participate in a partnership to implement and evaluate an integrated primary healthcare program in the country. The group is one of four projects DDCF's African Health Initiative is supporting in sub-Saharan Africa.

"Ideally this initiative seeks to strengthen health systems by supporting partnerships that link research and workforce training directly to the large-scale delivery of primary healthcare in country," said Team Leader Dr. Jeffrey Stringer, who also serves as the Director for CIDRZ.

CIDRZ, which has collaborated with the Government of Zambia for more than 10 years, will lead the Zambia team. CIDRZ, ZAMBART, and CMMB worked with Ministry of Health officials at the national, provincial, and district levels to design their strategy, which is based on the simple premise that the key to better patient outcomes is high quality clinical care.

On the ground

The partnership will work to improve district health services in all public and mission hospitals and health centres in the Chongwe, Kafue and Luangwa districts of Lusaka Province.

"We will begin working with the 105 community health workers already in place in the three districts," said Core Team Member Dr. Helen Ayles, who also serves as Project Coordinator of ZAMBART Project. "Our support will come primarily in the form of training these teams and by ensuring providers have the clinical skills, equipment and supplies they need. The close collaboration between the research teams and government health systems is a unique feature of these partnerships."

Community mobilization will play a key role in the project. For it is the community health workers who will assure patients remain in care and return for follow-ups where necessary. In addition, because of their nature, communicable diseases like HIV and tuberculosis require a community answer to help halt their spread.

In addition, an electronic medical record will help measure how well service delivery meets standards of care and identify areas that need improvement.

Moving forward

In the fall of 2009, the research team will begin establishing baseline measures to determine the impact of these interventions on reducing child mortality and other health outcomes, and they will also analyse health sector performance.

“We are proud to have been selected, out of the hundreds of applicants, to conduct this challenging but critical work,” said Core Team Member Dr. Moses Sinkala, and Country Director of the Catholic Medical Missions Board. “We hope the foundation’s grant will ensure the funding and flexibility we need to address some of the delivery gaps and ultimately improve the healthcare systems in Zambia.”

About ZAMBART Project:

Zambia AIDS Related Tuberculosis (ZAMBART) Project, a Zambian NGO, conducts inter-disciplinary research to help patients and health care providers fight TB and HIV together.

About CIDRZ:

The Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia (CIDRZ) is a Zambian NGO founded in 1999 to improve lives and communities through research and service.

Contact:

Justin O’Brien,
Policy, Advocacy and Communications Manager
ZAMBART Project
Lusaka, Zambia
+260-211 254710
info@zambart.org.zm; www.zambart.org

Harmony Chi
Grants and Reports Manager
CIDRZ
Lusaka, Zambia
+260-966-740825
harmony@uab.edu; www.cidrz.org