



## News

### **ABBOTT FUND, BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AND THE FIRST LADY OF MALAWI OPEN THE FIRST CLINIC FOR HIV-INFECTED CHILDREN IN MALAWI**

LILONGWE, MALAWI, Nov. 2, 2006 – Bringing hope to hundreds of children in one of the countries hardest hit by HIV/AIDS, the Abbott Fund, Baylor College of Medicine and the Government of Malawi have joined forces to build the country's first pediatric HIV clinic. The First Lady of Malawi, Madame Ethel Zvauya Mutharika and other dignitaries at Kamuzu Central Hospital officially opened the new clinic today in the city of Lilongwe.

"As a mother, the health concerns of the children of Malawi are particularly close to my heart," said Madame Mutharika. "I am grateful for the support of the Abbott Fund and Baylor for building this new clinic which will provide mothers with hope that their children can be effectively treated for HIV and live normal, healthy lives."

Although Malawi initiated a national antiretroviral treatment program in 2003, until today this program has largely focused on adults due to constrained resources and lack of professionals trained in the unique medical needs of children with HIV. It is estimated that more than 83,000 children in Malawi are living with HIV/AIDS today.

"Until now, we have not had the capacity to help address the complex needs of the thousands of children with HIV in Malawi," said the Honorable Marjorie Ngaunje, Minister of Health and Population for Malawi. "I am particularly pleased that this clinic will provide training for our physicians and other health care workers so we can expand our capability to treat our youngest and most vulnerable citizens."

There is an urgent need to increase and improve pediatric HIV care and treatment in Malawi. Children represent only six percent of the people in Malawi who are currently receiving antiretroviral therapy through the country's national treatment program. The goal of the new clinic is to have 1,300 children on treatment by the end of 2006.

"We are committed to helping the Government of Malawi ensure that treating children with HIV is a critical part of the national treatment program," said Mark W. Kline, M.D., President, Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative, Baylor College of Medicine. "The center in Lilongwe will not be a stand-alone island, but will be the focal point of a national plan to scale up pediatric and family HIV/AIDS care and treatment throughout the country."

The construction of the Malawi pediatric center and support for clinic operational costs were made possible by a \$2.2 million grant from the Abbott Fund's Global AIDS Care program. The Abbott Fund will provide additional support for the ongoing operations of the clinic.

"Increasing access to care and treatment for children with HIV in Africa and other resource-constrained parts of the world is an important goal that is shared by the Abbott Fund and our partners," said Reeta Roy, Divisional Vice President of Global Citizenship and Policy at Abbott. "By supporting this clinic and others, and by training pediatric HIV specialists through the Baylor Network, we are making a measurable impact on improving the lives of thousands of children throughout the world."

The Malawi center will be staffed by a combination of local health care professionals and select Baylor staff. The director of the new clinic, Peter Kazembe, M.D., is a Malawian pediatrician. Baylor will also be assisting the Malawi Ministry of Health in coordinating the national scale-up of the government's pediatric treatment program through outreach and training at district hospitals.

"This new clinic is a dream come true for me and the other health care workers who care for children with HIV in Malawi," said Dr. Kazembe. "For the first time, we can properly treat our young patients and offer hope to them and their families."

The Malawi center is modeled after the pioneering work conducted by Baylor and the Abbott Fund at the Romanian-American Children's Center, which opened in April of 2001 in Constanta. In this model, children are not only provided antiretroviral medicine and other medical treatment, but are supported by a comprehensive program to address the other daily needs of themselves and their families. This program has reduced pediatric AIDS mortality by more than 90 percent in Constanta, Romania — the epicenter of pediatric HIV in Europe. To date, the Abbott Fund has provided a total of more than \$16 million in grants and donated products to support the treatment of children in the developing world.

#### About the Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative

The Baylor College of Medicine International Pediatric AIDS Initiative (BIPAI) was established in 1996 and is the largest university-based program worldwide dedicated to improving the health and lives of HIV-infected children. The mission of BIPAI is to conduct a program of high quality, high impact, highly ethical pediatric and family HIV/AIDS care and treatment, health professional training and clinical research.

Directed by Dr. Mark Kline, the first BIPAI center was established in Romania in 2001, rapidly expanding into Botswana, Uganda, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Burkina Faso and Libya. It is anticipated that 12,000 children will be treated by the end of the year at these centers.

The Baylor Children's Clinical Centers of Excellence Network was established in 2004 by a grant from the Abbott Fund to link the individual Baylor centers together, with the goal of sharing training, knowledge and best practices between the clinics. For more information about the Baylor programs, please visit [www.bayloraids.org](http://www.bayloraids.org).

About Abbott and the Abbott Fund

Abbott and the Abbott Fund have made a \$100 million commitment over five years to address critical HIV/AIDS issues throughout Africa and the developing world. Abbott Fund programs focus on expanding access to testing and treatment; preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV; modernizing health care systems and infrastructure; and care and support for children affected by HIV/AIDS.

For more information, visit [www.abbottglobalcare.org](http://www.abbottglobalcare.org). The Abbott Fund is a philanthropic foundation established by Abbott in 1951.

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