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SERVICES

NEWS

EDUCATION

ABOUT US

Institute of Human Virology (IHV) Awarded \$24.5M to Fight Botswana's AIDS Epidemic

Baltimore-based Institute serves as global model for public health initiatives

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BALTIMORE--(BUSINESS WIRE)--The [Institute of Human Virology \(IHV\)](#) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine has received a five-year \$24.5 million grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to partner with the Government of Botswana and impact the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Botswana, and to demonstrate that comprehensive HIV/AIDS treatment programs can stop the epidemic. PEPFAR is a \$48 billion initiative launched in 2004 by former President George W. Bush, and continued by President Barack Obama, to combat major infectious diseases around the world, including HIV. The announcement was made on the heels of two recent IHV milestones including [surpassing more than 1 million in patients in overseas care and treatment](#) and a [\\$50 million grant to combat HIV/AIDS in Zambia](#).

"This new partnership between our Institute and the Government of Botswana is a credit to the work IHV's Clinical Division carries out internationally under the leadership of my colleague and fellow IHV co-founder, Dr. Robert Redfield," said [Robert Gallo, MD](#), Homer & Martha Gudelsky Distinguished Professor of Medicine and Director, Institute of Human Virology, University of Maryland School of Medicine. Dr. Gallo is most widely known for his co-discovery of HIV as the cause of AIDS and development of the HIV blood test. He continued, "We look forward to partnering with Botswana, as we have done in nine other nations through PEPFAR funding, to continue putting the first real dent in the global AIDS pandemic."

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The five-year program known as the Botswana-University of Maryland School of Medicine Health Initiative (BUMMHI) will achieve the following objectives: 1) ensure universal access to comprehensive HIV/AIDS services, measured by at least 90% of HIV infected individuals receiving treatment and maintenance of care, and achieving viral suppression; 2) improve the quality of HIV services through strengthening community to facility care; 3) implement the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission initiative to achieve PEPFAR's goal of an HIV/AIDS free generation; and, 4) develop and institutionalize a system for ongoing training of healthcare workers to strengthen and sustain Botswana's successful HIV/AIDS response.

[Robert Redfield, Jr. MD](#), Professor of Medicine and Division Head, Clinical Care and Research, Institute of Human Virology, University of Maryland School of Medicine, is the Principal Investigator of this new five year grant. He said, "If any country can reach HIV epidemic control goals, it is Botswana. The country's leadership is heavily invested in improving the health of its citizens and was one of the first countries to provide HIV antiretroviral treatment for its citizens, even before PEPFAR and Global Fund initiatives helped increase treatment in several other countries."

Of note, Botswana currently funds more than 95% of its HIV treatment program, signifying its commitment for operationalizing a sustained and effective response. The Institute will work with Botswana's Ministry of Health staff and local healthcare and management professionals to strategically place multi-disciplinary expert teams across the country and to implement key interventions and plans. The IHV, as the prime grant recipient, will collaborate with the U.S. non-profit Education Development Center (EDC) to implement education programs to ensure long-term learning outcomes through innovative teaching methods.

"We hope this new collaboration will lead to Botswana becoming the first country to reach HIV epidemic control status," said [Deus Bazira Mubangizi, DrPH, MBA, MPH](#), Assistant Professor of Medicine and Director for Global Health in the Division of Clinical Care and Research, Institute of Human Virology, University of Maryland School of Medicine, and co-principal investigator for this grant. "As the main partner to the Government of Botswana in the field of HIV/AIDS, the Institute of Human Virology/University of Maryland has the opportunity to showcase a successful and sustainable model for HIV epidemic control, achieved through cooperation between an American academic institution and a foreign government."

About the Institute of Human Virology

Formed in 1996 as a partnership between the State of Maryland, the City of Baltimore, the University System of Maryland and the University of Maryland Medical System, IHV is an institute of the University of Maryland School of Medicine and is home to some of the most globally-recognized and world-renowned experts in all of virology. The IHV combines the disciplines of basic research, epidemiology and clinical research in a concerted effort to speed the discovery of diagnostics and therapeutics for a wide variety of chronic and deadly viral and immune disorders - most notably, HIV the virus that causes AIDS. For more information, visit www.ihv.org and follow us on Twitter @IHVmaryland.

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