For the past 14 years, more than 500 Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM) students, residents, and faculty have participated in the IU–Moi Exchange Program by teaching at the Moi University Faculty of Health Sciences (MUFHS) and serving at the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret in western Kenya. In return, more than 60 MUFHS students and faculty have come to IUSM in Indianapolis to attend classes, teach, and conduct research.

Although the IU–Moi Exchange Program began as a general medicine program, co-founded by IUSM professor of medicine Joseph Mamlin, the program has since attracted residents and faculty from a number of disciplines including pediatrics, anesthesia, surgery, and radiology. Faculty and students from the IU statewide medical education centers; the IU Schools of Nursing, Dentistry, and Allied Sciences; as well as participants from Purdue University, Brown University, and University of Utah have participated in what IUSM calls its “flagship international program.”

When IU and Moi began their partnership, approximately 10 percent of the patients seen at Moi hospital carried HIV. Today, faculty members estimate that number is more than 50 percent. Recognizing the enormous need to develop a more substantive program for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment in both adults and children in Kenya, the IU–Moi leadership began planning an ambitious program to address the disease that was ravaging Kenya and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa.

According to Robert M. Einterz, IUSM’s assistant dean for international programs and director of the IU–Moi program, a $1 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation last year was important in establishing the prevention component of the IU–Moi program. “They were the first major foundation to really invest in the concept of a model HIV control program that hosted care, research, and training and that could be expanded and replicated,” says Einterz.

Since that grant, other individuals and private foundations have contributed to the program. This February, the program received a one-year, $1.6 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and in March, the program received $15 million through a $125 million, five-year award from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health. The new USAID grant will allow IU and Moi physicians to increase the number of HIV-infected people they treat in Kenya from 2,000 to 15,000 and to establish HIV treatment and prevention programs in two additional rural communities over the next five years. In addition to this grant, the program will receive $500,000 in drugs to treat AIDS patients. The grant from the CDC will establish HIV treatment and prevention programs in four more rural communities and allow the IU-Moi program to treat another 12,000 to 15,000 people at those sites.

The Academic Model for the Prevention and Treatment of HIV/AIDS (AMPATH) program was created by IUSM, the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, and MUFHS in Kenya. The AMPATH concept attracted USAID funding after successfully enrolling and treating more than 1,500 patients using modern...
HIV/AIDS therapy. It also instituted a successful mother-to-child-transmission prevention program in which more than 90 traditional birth attendants have been trained to care for HIV-infected women using prevention interventions. The program has educated community support groups about HIV, the importance of prevention, and the need for testing.

AMPATH is opening a new facility in May 2004 in urban Kenya for teaching, research, and patient care. A second new building will be opened in the rural community of Mosoriot for treatment, counseling, teaching, and research. This year, IU–Moi is starting clinics in two other rural centers and the CDC grant will fund clinics in another four rural centers. These and other treatment facilities will feature an electronic medical record system to help physicians track patients and provide better care. Faculty and students also have established a practical, low-cost, high-production 10-acre farm in Kenya to provide high quality macronutrition to HIV-infected families.

In addition to the increase in patients treated and the two new rural programs, the new USAID and CDC funding will accomplish the following: replicate the farm model in two rural sites; foster microenterprises to ensure sustainable economic security for affected Kenyan families; make the AMPATH electronic medical record system capable of replication in and outside Kenya to support patient care and the uniform reporting of results, teaching, and research; and fund the additional laboratory services needed to serve a wide region of western Kenya. The grants will support a full range of educational programs for medical students, postgraduate physicians, and providers of HIV care in Kenya to ensure continuation of quality care. The CDC funding will extend treatment and prevention services to an additional 12,000–15,000 people at four new sites in western Kenya.

“We could not have made it to this point without the years of support of many private donors in Indiana,” says Einterz, who directs the AMPATH programs. “The tireless efforts of IU faculty physicians like John Siddle, William Tierney, and Joe Mamlin have inspired us to keep at this for the past 14 years.”

Mamlin, who retired from IUSM in 2000, has moved to Kenya to work as team leader and professor of medicine at MUFHS. He is working with his Kenyan colleagues, co-directors Haroun N. K. Mengech, director of the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, and B. O. Khwa-Otsyula, dean of MUFHS.

IU officials realize that the program is a revolutionary effort in the fight against AIDS in Africa. “If successful, we will realize the dream of a true academic response to Africa’s pandemic,” says Mamlin, “outstanding patient care, teaching, and research.”

Mamlin has been awarded the 2004 John W. Ryan Award for Distinguished Contributions to International Programs and Studies (see accompanying story, p. 7).

—Pamela Perry
Director, Public and Media Relations
Indiana University School of Medicine

For a photo essay: newground.iufoundation.iu.edu/issue3/iumoiflashpage.shtml

For a general overview: medicine.iupui.edu/kenya/introduction.html