



Press Release

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Collaborative Partnership Formed to Improve the Health of Health Care Workers

\$1.25 Million, Three-Year Public-Private Partnership between PEPFAR, BD and ICN

Kampala, Uganda (October 22, 2008) – The U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company) and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) today announced a three-year, public-private partnership valued at \$1.25 million to establish a new Wellness Center for Health Care Workers®. The Wellness Center located in Kampala, Uganda will be managed by the Uganda National Association of Nurses and Midwives (UNANM), offering health and support services for health care workers and their families. The goals of this collaboration are to strengthen the health care system and address health worker shortages.

Uganda has just 29,000 health care professionals to serve a population of 30 million people. Doctors, nurses and other skilled health care workers in sub-Saharan Africa are particularly vulnerable to the impact of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. According to Ugandan Commissioner for Health Services/Nursing Margaret Chota, they are at risk for being exposed to illness in the workplace, yet they may experience difficulties in accessing the same services that they routinely provide for others.

“The nature of the work done by health workers especially those who are in touch with patients 24 hours a day exposes them to stress, depression and various infections that, if not attended to immediately, affects their health grossly,” said Chota. “Many health workers are sick but cannot access healthcare easily. The Wellness Center is timely, and the Ministry of Health is very grateful for the initiative.”

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Health care workers bear a significant burden in providing care and treatment to the sick. In Swaziland, research found that 80 percent of health care workers who left their jobs did not leave because of low salaries, but rather they felt undervalued in the workplace.

“PEPFAR is proud to be collaborating with BD and ICN to support the Government and the people of Uganda in addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS and other diseases on health care workers,” said Ambassador Mark Dybul, PEPFAR Coordinator. “Quality and sustainability in HIV/AIDS programs require skilled health services and strong health systems to support them. The new Wellness Center is one way of supporting Uganda’s dedicated and hard-working health care professionals.”

At the launch of the Wellness Center for Health Care Workers in Swaziland in April 2008, Ugandan Health Minister Dr. Stephen Mallinga called for the establishment of a Wellness Center in Uganda to serve nurses and doctors.

"Health care workers are the foundation of a health system," said Gary Cohen, BD Executive Vice President. "By addressing the fundamental needs of healthcare workers, such as protecting them from occupational hazards and providing medical treatment when needed, Wellness Centers strengthen a country's capacity to serve patients. We are pleased to work with PEPFAR and the ICN to establish a Wellness Centre in Uganda, building on the experience gained in Swaziland and three other countries in sub-Saharan Africa."

“The Wellness Centre for Health Care Workers® is an essential resource. It will tackle the many barriers to health and wellness services which health workers face, allowing for a strengthened health care workforce, better able to meet Uganda’s serious health needs”, declared Hiroko Minami, President of the International Council of Nurses. “ICN commends the nurses of Uganda for taking on this challenge and for including all levels of health workers in this comprehensive initiative; we acknowledge the Ministry of Health for its visionary support; and, we thank our committed and caring partners BD and PEPFAR.”

The collaborators will renovate a building next to the Mulago Hospital in Kampala and will support UNANM to staff the facility. UNANM has made the land and building available for use as the Wellness Center. PEPFAR and BD will support the operation of the Wellness Center for its first three years. In addition, BD, ICN and PEPFAR will work in collaboration with the Ugandan Ministry of Health to ensure sustainability of the Center and future efforts to support health care workers.

BD and ICN have worked together in four other African countries to build Wellness Centers. This expanded collaboration also will strengthen existing BD/ICN Wellness Centers in additional countries. To increase the number of people reached, Wellness Centers in Swaziland, Lesotho and Zambia will receive mobile clinics to help provide reliable services to health workers at their place of work and in their communities.

About PEPFAR

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was launched in 2003 by President George W. Bush to combat global HIV/AIDS, and is the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in history. Through PEPFAR, the U.S. Government has already provided \$18.8 billion in HIV/AIDS funding, with a reauthorization of up to \$48 billion for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria over the next five years. Visit www.PEPFAR.gov for more information.

About BD

BD is a leading global medical technology company that develops, manufactures and sells medical devices, instrument systems and reagents. The Company is dedicated to improving people's health throughout the world. BD is focused on improving drug delivery, enhancing the quality and speed of diagnosing infectious diseases and cancers, and advancing research, discovery and production of new drugs and vaccines. BD's capabilities are instrumental in combating many of the world's most pressing diseases. Founded in 1897 and headquartered in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, BD employs approximately 28,000 people in approximately 50 countries throughout the world. The Company serves healthcare institutions, life science researchers, clinical laboratories, the pharmaceutical industry and the general public. For more information, please visit www.bd.com.

About ICN

ICN is a federation of national nurses associations in 131 countries and represents the more than 13 million nurses working worldwide. Founded in 1899, ICN is the world's first and widest reaching international organization for health professionals. Operated by nurses for nurses, ICN works to ensure quality nursing care for all, sound health policies globally, the advancement of nursing knowledge, and the presence worldwide of a respected nursing profession and a competent and satisfied nursing workforce. In sub-Saharan Africa, ICN has worked with local national nursing associations and other bilateral partners on capacity building and joint initiatives, including the Wellness Centers for Health Care Workers[®]. For more information, please visit www.icn.ch.

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