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PRESS RELEASE

Twinning Center Partners in Tanzania Introduce Recovery Oriented System of Care in Dar es Salaam

PEPFAR-supported Substance Abuse and HIV Prevention Partnership Conducts Sensitization Workshop for Addicts, Families in Kinondoni District

WASHINGTON, DC, and DAR es SALAAM, TANZANIA, August 17, 2010 — The American International Health Alliance (AIHA) and its partners from the Tanzania Drug Control Commission (DCC), Ministry of Health and Social Development Department of Substance Abuse Prevention and Rehabilitation (DSAPR) in Zanzibar, and the Great Lakes Addiction Technologies Transfer Center (GLATTC) concluded today a two-day sensitization workshop designed to introduce the recovery oriented system of care (ROSC) to some 50 drug addicts and their families in the Kinondoni District of Dar es Salaam.

“Mainland Tanzania does not have these types of programs, so this ROSC workshop was very much needed,” says Alois M. Ngonyani, a chemist with the Drug Control Commission. “Introducing this program in our country will help many addicts and their families ... we want them to know that addiction is a disease just like diabetes or any other condition and, therefore, it can be treated. It is a big step toward helping to solve substance abuse problems and associated negative outcomes — particularly as we plan to start a methadone assisted treatment program here in October,” he explains.

Although there are no official reports on the number of drug addicts in Dar es Salaam, unofficial estimates indicate that more than 2,000 individuals are battling substance abuse issues. Four Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous (AA/NA) meetings are held in the city each week, but they are poorly attended, and more comprehensive recovery services are not available.

With support from the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through CDC/Tanzania, Twinning Center partners at the DCC, DSAPR, and GLATTC joined with recovering peer educators from Drug Free Zanzibar and experts from the Muslim Education and Welfare Association (MEWA) in Mombasa, Kenya, to conduct the sensitization workshop. Three local NGOs — Changamoto ni Matumaini, AA/NA, and the Tandika Youth Handcraft Group — also helped organize the event.

Partners have been highly successful at introducing the ROSC model in Zanzibar, conducting their first training for peers in recovery in January 2009. Their programming focuses on the “12 Steps Recovery Model” and the “Islamic Milati” — both of which reflect their commitment to ongoing inter-faith dialogue as a path to better understanding and addressing substance abuse and HIV/AIDS within the local community. In March 2010, partners conducted a mapping assessment to ascertain the availability and scope of available substance abuse services in Dar es Salaam. They anticipate that this first sensitization workshop will help pave the way to the establishment of recovery services on the mainland similar to those currently available in Zanzibar.

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