Indiana University President visits AMPATH program in Kenya

This month AMPATH was privileged to host the first Indiana University President to visit the program in person since inception. President Michael McRobbie led a university delegation on a two-week trip to Africa that included Ghana, Kenya and South Africa. During their stay in Eldoret, Dr. Joe Mamlin, Dr. Sylvester Kimayo and colleagues at Moi University and Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital expressed gratitude to McRobbie for everything Indiana University has done for the program. The AMPATH program directors led McRobbie and the delegation on a tour that was described as “equal parts stunning and sobering.”

The tour included visits to the registration center, pharmacy, labs, legal aid center, data center, medical and pediatric wards, comprehensive care clinics, Imani workshops, and the new cardiac care unit. The stories the delegation heard about each of these areas were impactful—but even more astonishing was witnessing it firsthand. No doubt the delegation left Eldoret with a sense of pride in what the AMPATH program is accomplishing, but also with a sense of how much more there is to be done. Read more about the trip on the AMPATHKenya Facebook or Twitter page.

(below) President McRobbie, first lady Laurie Burns McRobbie and Vice President for International Affairs David Zaret touring site of the Chronic Care Center, currently under construction.

Improving Maternal, Newborn and Infant Health with Smartphones and SmartCHVs

To address high rates of maternal and infant mortality in western Kenya, AMPATH is collaborating with the Kenya Ministry of Health to support innovative approaches to improve maternal, newborn and child health. At present, the AMPATH Health Care program at AMPATH has developed state-of-the-art information technology that fosters rapid communication and feedback between mothers, their communities, and their healthcare providers: the Mother-Baby Health Network.

This article will highlight the mHealth project in Kosirai District, Kenya, funded by Grand Challenges Rising Stars. In order to improve communication, 89 government Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) have been equipped with tools to implement home-based assessments of mothers and newborns using Android phones. Louis Fazen, an MD/PhD student from Yale University, in partnership with Regenstrief Institute in Indianapolis, Indiana, spearheaded the software development. Designed to be open source and link with OpenMRS, this software has multiple applications to assist CHVs with their work.

National and international guidelines were adapted into clinical decision-support algorithms that include the danger signs of pregnancy, infancy and the immediate postpartum. By asking algorithmic questions through the phone, the CHVs are guided to assess whether a mother or child might be at risk. The data from these visits are immediately transmitted to the AMPATH medical record system and are available for viewing by health providers in the health facilities. Furthermore, all Ministry of Health community reports are electronically generated on a monthly basis in order to ensure quality monitoring and evaluation. CHVs are now equipped to triage women and infants for referral, ensuring that the decision to seek care is not left to the woman alone but advocated by her CHV and peers.

The goal is to strengthen dialogue between communities and facilities to create a sustainable, community-driven demand for accountable maternal and newborn care at all levels of service. Recognizing that ‘it takes a village,’ the Mother-Baby Health Network will provide communities in western Kenya with the information and communication tools they need to ensure that every mother and child has access to essential care in pregnancy and infancy.

To use smartphones.

(below) AccessMRS dashboard with dynamic lists to complete tasks such as:

- AccessMRS and AccessForms: Allow viewing and syncing of patient data into OpenMRS, completion of patient-specific forms, and organization of data about the individual patient.
- AccessAdmin: Allow for complex device administration such as changing preferences, passwords, device locks, and patient data in AccessMRS through simple SMS codes.
- AccessMaps: Permit viewing of large databases of maps and geographic overlays without internet access.
- AccessInfo: Serve as a central platform for organizing and launching information, education and communication materials such as videos or webpages.

(above) Louis Fazen training Community Health Extension Workers to use smartphones.
New Cardiac Care Unit Represents ‘Can-do’ Culture

June 21, 2013, marked a momentous occasion as delegates and leaders from the Kenyan Ministry of Health gathered with colleagues from Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital and AMPATH Consortium partners, Duke and Indiana Universities, to celebrate the opening of a ten bed cardiac care unit in Western Kenya. Replete with Kenyan dancers and singers, the opening ceremony for the cardiac care unit was the culmination of a four year effort, funded primarily by the Hock Family Foundation and the Duke Hubert-Yeargan Center for Global Health, to bring better cardiac care to under-served populations in western Kenya.

Throughout sub-Saharan Africa there has been an epidemic of non-communicable diseases, including heart disease. The hope for the new unit is to improve the treatment and prevention of cardiovascular disease by following the AMPATH model for treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Duke’s Dr. Eric Velazquez said that the cardiac care unit will not only allow for advances in prevention for all, but will also improve care for those with chronic cardiac disease.

The cardiac care unit at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital represents much more than just a physical space. It is a center of excellence and education where physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, and students can get a non-interest loan of KES 10,000 ($118) and later KES 20,000 ($235). He has managed to repay these loans in less than three months.

The AMPATH Family Preservation Initiative linked Maina to KIVA (htts://zip.kiva.org/) where he was able to access a total of 12,500 Kenyan Shillings (KES) or $147 (US Dollars) which earned him an interest of 8,500 KES ($100) during the group share at the end of the cycle. Due to his remarkable loan repayment history in the GISE program and commitment to expand his business, the AMPATH Family Preservation Initiative linked Maina to KIVA (htts://zip.kiva.org/) where he was able to get a non-interest loan of KES 10,000 ($118) and later KES 20,000 ($235). He has been able to repay these loans in less than three months.

As a result of the loans, Maina was able to increase stock supplies and in turn gain more customers, which enabled him to sell more and reap profits. The main challenges he faces now are delayed payments from customers, customers giving short deadlines to make shoes and lack of finances for additional stock increases.

Maina said, “My stock has improved and I was able to make shoes in bulk, additional stock increases. The main challenges he faces now are delayed payments from customers, customers giving short deadlines to make shoes and lack of finances for additional stock increases. I am also taking care of five orphans who are also my grandchildren,” said Maina.

Maina is a member of the Jinine Guardians’ GISE program. He borrowed GISE loans which enabled him to purchase supplies for his cobbler business. He repaid the loans comfortably with proceeds from his business. Within 12 months (one GISE cycle), he was able to save a total of 12,500 Kenyan Shillings (KES) or $147 (US Dollars) which earned him an interest of 8,500 KES ($100) during the group share at the end of the cycle.

Meet Joseph Maina. A guardian to orphaned children whose parents were AMPATH clients.

Joseph Maina is a cobbler who decided to start his own business because, while he was employed, the wage was too little to enable him to take care of his family.

“I am 66-years-old and married with 7 children. I went to primary school up to Standard 8. I lacked farmers. I am also school fees to continue beyond that. My parents were farmers. I am also taking care of five orphans who are also my grandchildren,” said Maina.

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Maina said, “My stock has improved and I was able to make shoes in bulk, which I sold to school-going children. My life has changed tremendously as I have been able to repair my house and support my family. My goal is to grow my business so that I can open a shop for selling shoes.”

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The cardiac care unit at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital represents much more than just a physical space in a separate room. It will be a place where familiarity with cardiopulmonary disease conditions and human physiology and medicine in action can save lives. It will be a place where prompt, appropriate and careful monitoring, where physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, and students can experience human physiology and medicine in action and enhance their fundamental medical knowledge and experience human physiology and medicine in action and enhance their fundamental medical knowledge and experience human physiology and medicine in action and enhance their fundamental medical knowledge and experience human physiology and medicine in action and enhance their fundamental medical knowledge and experience human physiology and medicine in action. It will be a place where researchers and caregivers can prepare themselves to treat ten critically ill patients. It represents a clinical center of excellence and education where physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, and students can experience human physiology and medicine in action and enhance their fundamental medical knowledge and experience human physiology and medicine in action and enhance their fundamental medical knowledge and experience human physiology and medicine in action and enhance their fundamental medical knowledge and experience human physiology and medicine in action.

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To climb, contact Liz Nolan-Greven at liznogreven@gmail.com or to donate, visit www.iumfoundation.fundly.com/mt-kenya-climb.
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Community Health Volunteer using Android on site.

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