



For Immediate Release

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**THE DORIS DUKE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE PUBLICATION OF
EARLY LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FOUNDATION'S AFRICAN HEALTH INITIATIVE**

**African Health Initiative Grantees Working to Strengthen Health Systems in Sub-Saharan
Africa Publish Findings from the First Three and a Half Years of Project Implementation**

NEW YORK, NY, May 31, 2013 — The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation announced today that the grantee partnerships that make up the foundation's African Health Initiative have published a series of articles offering overarching lessons from their first three and a half years of work to strengthen health systems in sub-Saharan Africa. The articles, which appear in a special journal supplement titled "[Improving primary health care to achieve population impact: the African Health Initiative](#)," are freely available online in *BMC Health Services Research* and detail five distinct projects in Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Ghana and Zambia all designed with a common goal: to produce significant measurable health improvements in a defined geographic area over a five- to seven-year grant period.

"These papers should be of interest to anyone engaged in improving the delivery of district primary health—including policymakers, service providers, funders and health system researchers, among others," stated Mary Bassett, Program Director for the African Health Initiative at the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. "With partnerships in their fourth year of funding, it is now possible to capture lessons learned in project design and implementation. We look forward to the evaluation at the conclusion of the grant period when it should also be possible to see the African Health Initiative's impact on population health, including mortality."

When viewed as a group, the results of these early evaluations provide a rich understanding of the commonalities and complex differences in health system strengthening approaches tested across the partnerships. Some of the collective lessons learned include:

- the need for a multipronged and iterative approach to strengthening health systems;
- the importance of strong interest and support from government at all levels of the health system;
- and the many challenges staff turnover has presented to successful project implementation.

With these projects, teams of African Health Initiative grantees—referred to by the foundation as Population Health Implementation and Training (PHIT) partnerships—link implementation research and training directly to healthcare delivery. In 2009, the foundation awarded four grants ranging from \$8 million to \$15 million to support the five PHIT partnerships. Over a period of five to seven years, each PHIT partnership will have provided integrated primary healthcare and achieved measurable health improvements for underserved communities of 250,000 to 1.8 million people; strengthened health systems in a manner that enables local and national governments to sustain improvements beyond the grant period; and increased the knowledge available for evidence-based health systems planning through operations and implementation research.

About the African Health Initiative's PHIT Partnerships

Ghana PHIT Partnership

The Ghana PHIT Partnership is a collaboration between the Ghana Health Service, Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health and the University of Ghana School of Public Health. The six-year project aims to strengthen community-based health services and the emergency referral chain between community and health facilities in three districts in Northern Ghana: Builsa, Bongo and Garu-Tempene. The project is conducting a rigorous evaluation that will measure the impact of the intervention on decreasing mortality.

Mozambique PHIT Partnership

The Mozambique PHIT Partnership is a collaboration between the Mozambique Ministry of Health, Health Alliance International (HAI) at the University of Washington and the Eduardo Mondlane University School of Medicine. This seven-year project aims to improve healthcare service delivery in Sofala Province by providing ongoing technical assistance to district health teams. Additionally, the project is investing in improvements to the health sector supply chain and is building research and management capacity among district managers and policymakers to inform health service delivery practices. The project contains a robust evaluation approach that will determine the impact of the intervention on health system performance and the health of the population of Sofala Province.

Tanzania PHIT Partnership

Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, Ifakara Health Institute, the Tanzanian Training Center for International Health and the Tanzania Ministry of Health and Social Welfare together make up the Tanzania PHIT Partnership. The project tests the added value of a new cadre of salaried community health workers, known as Community Health Agents (CHA), alongside a strengthened emergency referral chain to improve population health. This six-year project targets three districts in Tanzania: Rufiji, Kilombero and Ulanga, and will evaluate the overall impact on population health.

Rwanda PHIT Partnership

The Rwanda PHIT Partnership, formed by Brigham and Women's Hospital, Partners In Health, the Rwanda Ministry of Health, the National University of Rwanda School of Public Health, the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda and Harvard Medical School, aims to provide targeted support to improve health facility infrastructure and resources, enhance the quality of service delivery, and strengthen a network of community health workers in two rural districts. Through a rigorous evaluation and ongoing operations research, the five-year project will evaluate improvements in health outcomes at the district and local levels, as well as the costs and cost-effectiveness of the model.

Zambia PHIT Partnership

Together with the University of North Carolina, the Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia (CIDRZ), ZAMBART and the Zambian Ministry of Health, the Zambia PHIT Partnership aims to improve the quality and utilization of clinical care through a targeted quality improvement (QI) intervention delivered at the facility and community levels. The intervention is being rolled out in more than 40 health facilities in three districts in Zambia over a five year period and will measure the effect of the intervention on population health.

About the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and the prevention of child abuse, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke's properties. The foundation's African Health Initiative seeks to spark significant advances in strengthening health systems by supporting partnerships that will design, execute and evaluate large-scale models of care that link implementation research and workforce training directly to the delivery of integrated primary healthcare in sub-Saharan Africa. For more information, please visit www.ddcf.org.