

MALAWI HEALTH NEWS BRIEFS

Grant to prevent malaria outbreaks

A US\$1.5 million Malaria Communities Program grant from USAID to Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) will expand malaria prevention. CRWRC has earned the grant for their 20 years of work in Malawi. CRWRC's will help communities prevent malaria. Over the course of five years they will partner with Nkhoma Relief and Development to reach more than 50,400 homes.

Malawi makes progress in child survival care, says UNICEF

The 2008 UN Children's Education Fund's (UNICEF) State of the World's Children indicates that Malawi was one of the countries that has made significant progress in child survival care, registering 29 percent decline in child mortality between 2000 and 2004. The report said the 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) showed a decline in the mortality of children under the age of five from 189 to 122 per 1000 live births between 2000 and 2006. The infant mortality rate declined from 104 to 72 per 1000 live births during the period.

HIV/AIDS Reduces Malawi Army by 40%

HIV/AIDS is ravaging our military personnel as well as throughout the African continent posing a very serious threat to peace and security, the United States government has revealed. "HIV-related deaths have reduced the size of Malawi's armed forces by 40%, 70% of all military deaths in South Africa are due to HIV/AIDS, in Uganda more soldiers have died of AIDS than

in the 20-year insurgency. In the recent effort to field peace keepers, South Africa could not field a single HIV negative battalion," said Mark Dybul, global Aids co-ordinator of the Bush Administration.

Bill to Prevent Mother to Child Transmission

Government may soon table a bill requiring mandatory HIV testing for expectant mothers. This was announced by Nutrition and HIV AIDS Principal Secretary in the Office of President and Cabinet. Mary Shawa. This has sparked debate amongst HIV and AIDS programme managers and gender activists. The program is aimed at identifying women in need of ARVs which can reduce transmission to infants as well as early diagnosis of infants who may be at risk of getting the disease.

One Doctor For Every 50,000 People

A radical overhaul of health care in Africa's poorest nations is part of the "emergency action" needed to "eradicate the great evils of our time", Gordon Brown has said. In a speech to the United Nations in New York, the Prime Minister warned that weak health systems and insufficient doctors were denying people "lives free from the burden of preventable disease". He took Malawi as an example. For a population of 12m there are just 250 doctors - one for every 50,000 people. Hospitals are struggling under the strain - prompting thousands of nurses and doctors to leave Africa in the hope of finding better pay and conditions overseas.

Malawi to get Clinton, Hunter medical aid

Malawi hospitals is to benefit from medical aid package from former US President Bill Clinton and Scotland's renowned entrepreneur Sir Tom Hunter, who have aligned to rescue lives in the southern African poor country. Clinton and Hunter under their charitable foundation; Clinton Hunter Development Initiative in conjunction with National Health Service Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC), plan to offer Malawi the much needed medical equipment.

New Malaria Drug Launched

In September 2007, Malawi received the first consignment of the new life-saving malaria drug, Artemisinin Combination Therapy (ACTs), provided by the US government as part of President George W. Bush's Malaria Initiative. The consignment contained 2.6 million doses of the drug worth about K375 million (US\$2.7 million). A total of US\$1.2 billion has been pledged for up to 15 sub-Saharan African countries over the next five years, with Malawi being among the first seven countries selected. The development is likely to bring hope to Malawians after the disease killed 7,000 people in 2006 and hospitals recorded an average of 300,000 malaria patients per month which translates to 4.5 million cases per year. The new drug is replacing Fansidar SP, which has been used as the first line treatment for malaria since 1993 but recently there has been increasing resistance to this drug. In 2004 the resistance levels were as high as 25 to 31%.