



**For Immediate Release**

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**ABBOTT FUND, BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AND THE  
GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI BREAK GROUND ON FIRST CLINIC  
FOR HIV-INFECTED CHILDREN**

**LILONGWE, Malawi, June 13, 2005** – The Abbott Fund, Baylor College of Medicine and the Government of Malawi broke ground today in a ceremony marking the beginning of construction on Malawi's first facility dedicated to providing care and treatment for children with HIV/AIDS. The Malawi clinic is the latest addition to the rapidly growing Baylor College of Medicine International Children's Clinical Centers of Excellence Network, which forms the largest group of clinics devoted to treating children with HIV/AIDS in the developing world. Construction of the new clinic on the Kamuzu Central Hospital campus in Lilongwe is expected to be complete and operational by April 2006.

Attending the ceremony was the Honorable Heatherwick Ntaba, Malawi's Minister of Health, along with Dr. Wesley Sangala, principal secretary, Ministry of Health; Dr. Damson Kathyola, director, Kamuzu Central Hospital; Mark W. Kline, M.D., president, Baylor College of Medicine International Pediatric AIDS Initiative (BIPAI); Michael Mizwa, vice president, Special Projects, BIPAI; Nancy Calles, vice president, Education and Research, BIPAI; Reeta Roy, divisional vice president, Global Citizenship and Policy, Abbott; and Jeff Richardson, executive director, Abbott Fund's Step Forward program (a list of attendees is attached at the end).

The clinic is being funded by a three-year, \$1.5 million grant for construction and ongoing operations from the Abbott Fund's Step Forward program, which to date has provided more than \$12 million in grants to Baylor initiatives aimed at advancing programs, knowledge and health professional training to address pediatric HIV/AIDS in the developing world. The new treatment and care center will be built and operated by the Baylor College of Medicine, based in Houston, Texas, in association with the Malawi Ministry of Health and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, as an operations partner.

Due to the overwhelming impact of the AIDS pandemic, the complexity of treating HIV-infected children, and a lack of resources and specialized training, there has been little focus on pediatric HIV treatment in developing countries like Malawi. The new pediatric center, which will be staffed collaboratively by Baylor and local health professionals, is designed to help address this unmet need through a comprehensive approach to pediatric treatment and care.

The Malawi center will be modeled after the Romanian-American Children's Center, the first stand-alone pediatric AIDS clinic in the developing world. Through an innovative approach to treatment at this pediatric center, children are provided with state-of-the-art medical treatment, including antiretroviral therapy. A comprehensive program of support also is provided for children and their families, including psychosocial counseling, support groups, and awareness and prevention education. This model program has reduced pediatric AIDS mortality by more than 90 percent in four years in Constanta, Romania, the epicenter of pediatric HIV in Eastern Europe.

"The Abbott Fund and Baylor have pioneered a model in Romania that is now being successfully replicated throughout the developing world and will be instrumental to scaling up treatment and care for children with HIV," said Dr. Mark W. Kline. "With the commitment of the Government of Malawi, we're hoping to achieve similar results, and transform the delivery of care for children with HIV in Malawi."

According to UNAIDS, Malawi has an HIV prevalence rate of more than 14 percent, and it is estimated that almost 1 million people in Malawi are living with HIV/AIDS. One in four children dies before the age of five – one of the highest death rates in the world. With more than 65 percent of the population living in poverty, the country has very limited resources to fight HIV/AIDS.

"Malawi currently does not have the capabilities to manage the growing number of HIV-infected children in our existing pediatric clinic in Lilongwe," said Peter N. Kazembe, M.D., chief of pediatrics, Kamuzu Central Hospital in Malawi. "We look forward to a successful working relationship with Baylor and the Abbott Fund to help us more fully address the needs of this vulnerable population."

In addition to the centers in Malawi and Romania supported by the Abbott Fund, Baylor operates centers in Botswana and Uganda with other donors. New clinics in Lesotho and Swaziland will be opened by December 2005. Baylor also is working with health professionals in Libya to enhance the care and treatment of HIV-infected children in Benghazi.

"Pediatric HIV treatment in the developing world is a relatively new field, and Baylor's approach has proven to be successful," said Richardson. "The Abbott Fund continues to support the Baylor programs to help make an enduring impact in advancing the care of children with HIV/AIDS."

#### **About the BIPAI Children's Clinical Centers of Excellence Network**

The Children's Clinical Centers of Excellence Network is an extension of the Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative (BIPAI). BIPAI was established in 1996, and is the largest university-based program worldwide dedicated to improving the health and lives of HIV-infected children. The centers, which are developed and staffed collaboratively by U.S. and local health professionals, are transforming pediatric HIV/AIDS care and treatment in the developing world. Approximately 12,000 HIV-infected children and families will receive care and treatment in the established centers by 2006. For more information, please visit [www.bayloraids.org](http://www.bayloraids.org).

### **About the Abbott Fund**

Abbott and the Abbott Fund have made a \$100 million commitment over five years to address critical HIV/AIDS issues in Africa and throughout the developing world, including expanding access to testing and treatment; preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV; modernizing health care systems and infrastructure; and providing care and support for children affected by HIV/AIDS through the Step Forward program. Step Forward addresses specific community needs in four interrelated areas: health care services and infrastructure; voluntary HIV counseling and testing; education; and basic community needs, such as clean water. For more information, please visit [www.stepforwardforchildren.org](http://www.stepforwardforchildren.org).

The Abbott Fund is a not-for-profit, philanthropic foundation established by Abbott, a global, broad-based health care company devoted to the discovery, development, manufacture and marketing of pharmaceuticals and medical products, including devices and diagnostics.

### **Attendees at the groundbreaking of the Malawi clinic included:**

The Honorable Heatherwick Ntaba, Malawi Minister of Health  
Wesley Sangala, M.D., principal secretary, Minister of Health  
Damson Kathyola, M.D., director, Kamuzu Central Hospital  
Peter Kazembe, MD, chief of pediatrics, Kamuzu Central Hospital  
Charles Mwansambo, M.D, pediatrician, Kamuzu Central Hospital  
Mark Kline, M.D., president, BIPAI  
Michael Mizwa, vice president, Special Projects, BIPAI  
Nancy Calles, RN, vice president, Education and Research, BIPAI  
Reeta Roy, divisional vice president, Global Citizenship and Policy, Abbott  
Jeff Richardson, executive director, Abbott Fund's Step Forward program  
Francis Martinson, M.D., country director, UNC Project  
David Jones, manager, Administration & Development, UNC Project  
David Gilmour, charges d'affaires, U.S. Embassy  
Joyce Meme, M.D., UNICEF Malawi  
Eliam Some, M.D., UNICEF Malawi  
Aida Grima, country director, UNICEF Malawi  
Lilongwe representatives of the National Association of People with HIV/AIDS  
Malawi (NAPHAM)

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