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BIPAI opens new children's AIDS center in Uganda

HOUSTON – (Oct. 2, 2008) – The Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative today opened a state-of-the-art HIV/AIDS Children's Center of Excellence on the campus of Mulago Hospital in Kampala, Uganda.

Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Children's Hospital, the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, Mulago Hospital and the Republic of Uganda all joined forces to support BIPAI in making the center a reality.

President Yoweri Museveni of the Republic of Uganda officially opened the center, joined by officials from the Ugandan government, U.S. government, BIPAI and the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation.

The new center immediately will provide care to more than 4,000 children. The center will be staffed by Ugandan health professionals.

"In partnership with Mulago Hospital and the Government of Uganda, and with support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, our program for HIV-infected children and families in Uganda has flourished," said Dr. Mark Kline, president of BIPAI, professor of pediatrics at BCM and chief of retrovirology at Texas Children's. "The new facility we are dedicating this week will further expand our ability to provide Ugandan children and families with lifesaving HIV/AIDS care and treatment."

Funding for the building was provided by the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation. Operational support will come from PEPFAR and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

"Collaboration and community engagement are central to Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation's efforts to fight HIV/AIDS in Africa. This new Children's Center of Excellence in Uganda – the fourth in which we have partnered with the Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative and country governments – is a testament to the power of public-private collaboration," said John Damonti, president, Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation. "This center will not only make a difference in the lives of individual children in Uganda but will also strengthen the network of state-of-the-art care and treatment for children and their families across Africa."

BIPAI began caring for children and their families in Uganda in 2002 with funding from the CDC Global AIDS Program. The care has been provided at the

Mulago Hospital/Makerere University in Kampala. In addition, extensive professional training programs have been conducted.

“The new Children’s Center of Excellence on the Mulago Hospital campus is the largest in our entire Network,” said Nancy Calles, vice president of international program development for BIPAI. “The program in Uganda has become a model for Africa, and this beautiful new facility will help to enhance already excellent clinical and health professional educational programs.”

BIPAI’s pediatric HIV/AIDS network in Africa includes programs in Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Malawi, Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho.