



Newlands Clinic in Harare opens new Women's Health Centre

Zurich/Harare, 4 March 2015 – Thanks to a significant bequest, Newlands Clinic in Harare/Zimbabwe has been able to expand yet further, setting up a Women's Health Centre in a building adjacent to the HIV clinic in recent months. The centre was officially opened yesterday, 3 March 2015, in a ceremony attended by Swiss Ambassador Luciano Lavizzari. In addition to diagnosis and treatment of cervical cancer and sexually transmitted infections, the centre will offer family planning services and advice to victims of sexual abuse and gender based violence. Meanwhile, the Training Centre will provide ongoing training in the area of women's health.

Women with HIV have a much higher risk of dying from cervical cancer since many also carry the human papillomavirus (HPV) and their immune systems are weakened. Newlands Clinic has therefore been offering its female patients cervical cancer diagnosis and treatment since 2011. An initial screening showed that a third of the women had precancerous lesions and required treatment. Thanks to regular check-up examinations, the figures are now declining.

Dedicated department with six treatment rooms

Thanks to an earmarked bequest, these services can now be significantly expanded. Swiss Aids Care International has been able to buy and redevelop the building adjacent to the clinic. The new Women's Health Centre was opened yesterday in a ceremony attended by Swiss guests and the famous Zimbabwean musician Oliver Mtukudzi. The centre has six treatment rooms, and its own reception area to ensure privacy. The medical team comprises Dr. Margie Pascoe, who heads the centre, a gynaecologist and four specially trained nurses.

Matthias Widmaier, Country Director at Newlands Clinic: "The opening of the Women's Health Centre is a key step for our clinic. This will enable us to provide comprehensive care to even more patients, and we are expecting to treat some 3,000 girls and women this year."

Prof. Ruedi Lüthy, Medical Director: "Cervical cancer poses a major threat to women with HIV in developing countries. I'm delighted that we will now be able to train more specialists and treat more patients. After all, the better we can support these women, the better it will be for their whole families."

Considerable demand for specialists

There is massive demand for healthcare workers who are competent in the area of cervical cancer screening in Zimbabwe. Newlands Clinic was recognised as a reference centre for training in this area in 2013, and offers a cervical cancer screening course for doctors and nurses from across the

country. After completing the course, they are then able to diagnose and treat cervical cancer independently.



Clockwise from top left:

Country Director Matthias Widmaier during his opening speech.

Matthias Widmaier, Dr. Margie Pascoe (Head of the new Women's Health Centre) and Prof. Ruedi Lüthy (Medical Director).

Swiss Ambassador Luciano Lavizzari during the opening ceremony.

One of the new treatment rooms of Women's Health Centre.

Matthias Widmaier with Sabine Lüthy (CEO Swiss Aids Care International) and Prof. Lüthy.

Advisory services for women and girls

In addition to medical treatment, the new Women's Health Centre offers family planning services as well as the diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections. The new centre will also provide advice to girls and women who are victims of sexual abuse and gender based violence. As an additional preventative measure, it is planned to offer an HPV vaccination for girls between the ages of 10 and 16 from June 2015.

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Swiss Aids Care International

The foundation Swiss Aids Care International was set up by Prof. Ruedi Lüthy in 2003. It operates the Newlands Clinic in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, providing HIV and AIDS patients with medical treatment and psychosocial support. The Clinic also has an ongoing training programme for local doctors and nurses. Zimbabwe is one of the poorest countries in Africa. Around 1.4 million people there are HIV-positive or have already developed AIDS, many of them children. Through Newlands Clinic and its mobile clinics, Swiss Aids Care International now treats more than 5,300 patients and trains around 500 specialists from across Zimbabwe every year. It also distributes food, carries out gynaecological screening tests, and provides self-help groups for young people.

The foundation, which has its registered office in Zurich, is mainly funded by donations and by contributions from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Sabine Lüthy, Prof. Ruedi Lüthy's daughter, has been CEO of the foundation since 2012.

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