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MCW FACILITATES PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN DENTAL SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES AND TANZANIA

University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC) College of Dentistry Launches First Dental Service Program to Africa

New York, NEW YORK, June 7, 2013 – In support of cooperation between American and Tanzanian dental schools, MCW, a New York-based non-profit organization dedicated to empowering youth to become positive agents of change, presented three fourth-year dental students from the University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC) Dental School with partial funding to participate in UIC’s first-ever service rotation program to Africa. The rotation, which took place in March and April, involved clinical experience at the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) dental clinic in Dar es Salaam, visiting primary schools in the region, and service-learning experiences at a rural location.

The international rotation builds on an introduction by MCW between Dr. Caswell Evans, Associate Dean for Prevention and Public Health Sciences at UIC College of Dentistry and Dr. E.G.S. Mumghamba, former Dean of the MUHAS College of Dentistry by MCW. Together with Dr. Marion Bergman, MCW Director of Healthcare Projects, and other MCW oral healthcare stakeholders. Evans traveled to Tanzania in February 2011 to assist with setting up a new dental laboratory at MUHAS that was made possible by donations from MCW’s Industry Partners.

“The role of MCW in creating opportunities for partnerships is both important and unique,” said, Dr. Bergman. “While most of the partnerships created out of our oral healthcare project at MUHAS over the last four years have been public-private, we also recognize the importance of building partnerships between MUHAS and dental schools in US. This is a critical part of ensuring long-term sustainability and impact.”

The UIC-MUHAS partnership was formalized in May 2012 with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the American and Tanzanian universities. As part of identifying different areas for future collaboration, the MoU recommended sending fourth-year UIC dental students to Tanzania for international rotations. It also recommended extending cooperation beyond the dental schools to other health science colleges, such as medical, public health and nursing.

“Beyond the complexities of provision of clinical care to individuals, the issues of oral health as an integral component of general health and welfare pose challenges for all populations and countries,” said Dr. Evans. “Students who experience first-hand how these problems and opportunities are addressed in a country such as Tanzania results in life and career alterations. The

lessons the students learn at MUHAS will serve them well as oral health professionals. We hope that this was only the first of many future collaborative initiatives between our institutions.”

The students left with important insights into the challenges facing oral healthcare in Tanzania. In a collective statement, the students said, “Just like the United States, care seems more accessible in major cities, and less accessible in rural areas. Rural areas, however are not limited to just 'far away' villages. Entire countries in Central Africa seem to have inadequate access to care.”

About MCW

MCW is a non-profit organization founded in 1999 with the vision of “Local Change through Global Exchange®” and mission is to empower youth to become positive agents of change in their communities. Based in New York with affiliates in Africa, MCW offers Leadership Training, Community Centers and Oral Healthcare programs, as well as Partner Initiatives (MCW Jacqueline’s Human Rights Corner). For more information visit www.mcwglobal.org.

About MCW’s Oral Healthcare Program

The goal of MCW’s Oral Healthcare program is to achieve lasting oral health improvement in Tanzania by bringing public and private sector partners together to leverage their collective resources and expertise to improve quality of life. MCW works toward this goal by supporting dental outreaches in underserved urban and rural communities; and upgrading equipment and supplies at Tanzania's public hospitals. Current projects include the Kipera Dental Clinic in Songea, the School of Dentistry at the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) in Dar es Salaam, and the clinic at Mmazi Mmoja National Hospital in Zanzibar.

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