

HEALTH

Africa, With U.S. Help, Graduates More Doctors

Global Health

By CATHERINE SAINT LOUIS AUG. 11, 2014

An ambitious United States government project to strengthen medical education in sub-Saharan Africa is reporting broad progress in addressing the continent's critical shortages of physicians and health care workers.

The four-year-old, \$130 million program, the Medical Education Partnership Initiative, has given grants to 13 academic institutions in 12 countries. In the journal *Academic Medicine*, more than 200 participants detail their progress in increasing student enrollment, developing research capacity and broadening curriculums.

This fall, for example, Botswana's new school of medicine will achieve a milestone, graduating its first class — 36 doctors. The school still struggles to retain teaching staff, but by 2015, it expects to graduate 50 a year.

In Mozambique, Eduardo Mondlane University has joined forces with the University of California, San Diego, to revamp its internal medicine program with improvements including higher salaries, curriculum changes and bedside Internet access to research databases like PubMed; as a result, the number of internist residents has more than doubled, to 75 in 2012.

After concerns were raised about the quality of health education at the University of Zimbabwe, its College of Health Sciences instituted reforms like

mentored research programs for postgraduates. By 2013 the college had nearly doubled its enrollment, to 513 medical students and postgraduates from 260 in 2010.

Three medical students from Uganda, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia reported that community-based rotations to learn rural medicine were now available to students who could otherwise not afford to pay. More classroom supplies, including textbooks and cadavers for anatomy coursework, have been secured.

The MEPI program is funded through 2015. Its second phase is being discussed.

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