

Dignity, Hope and Technology Make A Difference for Women with Breast Cancer

A welcome decrease in mortality due to infectious disease and longer life expectancies for women in low and middle income countries (LMIC) requires an increased focus on diagnosis and treatment of non-communicable diseases including breast cancer. Health data for LMIC is scarce; but reliable statistical models suggest that the incidence and death due to breast cancer is rising dramatically in Sub-Saharan Africa (Pace and Shulman, 2016).

The poignant intersection of two stories, one from Liberia and the other from Ghana, highlight the responsibility and the opportunity available to Mission Outreach donors. A young woman in Liberia, presented at the Partners in Health hospital, with advanced, metastatic breast cancer. Surgery to remove the tumor and surrounding necrotic tissue was provided, but her wounds would not heal. PIH contacted Mission Outreach to request a donation of wound vac technology—a very effective treatment that is rarely available in LMIC. Mission Outreach, through contacts with HSHS and Kenetic Concepts, Inc., was able to secure the donation and have it shipped directly to the hospital in Liberia. The lack of early detection prevented this young woman from living a long life, but the wound vac technology provided dignity and comfort. ■

WE CAN DO MORE

Advances in early detection technology in the U.S. provide opportunities to share reliable technology with hospitals in LMIC. Upgrades to the Cancer Care Center at HSHS St. Francis in Litchfield, Illinois; a generous donation from



Hologic; a dedicated oncologist from the Springfield area and Mission Outreach will make early detection of breast cancer a possibility in Ghana. Edem Agamah, M.D. Associate Professor of Hematology and Oncology at SIU School of Medicine and Founder of the International Health and Development Network (IHDN)-Ghana has gratefully accepted and will supervise the installation and use of a Hologic Selenia Mammogram Unit. Mission Outreach expects to ship the unit, along with additional donations of supplies and equipment, in the next few months. Young women screened with this technology will have the hope of early detection. ■

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EQUIPMENT NEEDED (the most requested items by priority):

- Anesthesia machine
- Ultrasound for OB & G
- Portable ultrasound
- Portable digital x-ray
- Patient monitor
- Fetal monitor
- EKG unit
- Electrosurgical unit
- Defibrillator
- Phototherapy light
- Microscope
- Defibrillator
- Infant incubator
- Infant warmer
- Phototherapy light

ADVANCING THE MISSION

- As we learned the need for equipment and support in low-resource countries is huge and we would greatly appreciate if MSROs are included during trade-ins with manufacturers which will benefit the hospital, manufacturers and recipients in low-resource countries.
- Make sure equipment is complete with cords, manuals, cables and accessories
- Communicate with the Mission Outreach Biomedical Engineer on equipment donation(s) to reduce time gaps
- Inclusion of the Mission Outreach Biomedical Engineer in manufacturer offered service training ■