



Parents and their children in the crowded Pediatric Ward of the Mbarara Hospital.

Bulamu Signs Joint Venture with Mbarara University, Hospital, and Medical School

After four months of discussion, evaluation, and analysis, Bulamu Healthcare International believes it has an outstanding opportunity to improve the quality of the medical care it delivers to patients in rural Uganda, and takes another step forward in its campaign to detect and treat cervical cancer. Our part of the bargain is to provide much needed medical equipment for the screening and treatment of cervical cancer, and paying to rehabilitate the space the Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital (MRRH) is providing for an expanded Cervical Cancer Clinic that will be named in Bulamu's honor. Finally, a major donor came forth who agreed to finance the first two years of equipment and operating expense increases to allow Bulamu time to generate additional funding to support future increases in expenditures.



The roofs of the original Mbarara University, constructed in 1989.

Starting in February 2017, all Bulamu 6-days Medical Camps will be conducted 1 1/2 hour by car from Mbarara. Bulamu will contract with MRRH doctors and specialists, and nurses and technicians, 3-4 US volunteer doctors and 3-5 nurses, along with 15-18 Peace Corps volunteers. We will continue this staffing model for the next two--three years, which will improve medical skills and experience when compared to past camps.

Also, beginning in 2Q2017, Mbarara will conduct short 1-day camps each month, focusing on both primary medical care and encouraging all women present to be screened for cervical cancer, and treated, if found to be positive. We believe this will make a dramatic impact on cervical cancer deaths, and prolong life for those we are able to treat.

Maybe most important, we will be able to link our Patient Information System to MRRH's to schedule and track follow-up appointments and treatment, and eventual outcomes more accurately than our current system allows.

Who is Mbarara: University, Medical School, Hospital?



Two of the new buildings on the new campus of Mbarara University, soon to be in operation.

Mbarara University of Science & Technology (MUST) or just Mbarara University is a public institution opened in 1989, and one of eight degree-awarding Universities in Uganda. It supports just over 3,000 students. The Vice Chancellor of the University is the highest ranking management officer, and is currently Professor Celestino Obua. Professor Obua played an instrumental role in molding the Memo of Understanding and Contract signing that launched the joint venture.

The medical school at Mbarara is one of four in Uganda. A brand new campus is near completion but the College of Health Sciences (basically the Medical School, Referral Hospital, clinics, and several research facilities will remain on the current campus. Bachelors of Medicine, Surgery and Nursing, and Masters in Anesthesiology, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Gynecology, Nursing, and several other medical specialties are granted.



Patients and their family members awaiting treatment on the grounds of the Mbarara Hospital.

Associate Professor Samuel Maling is the current Dean of the Medical School, and was directly involved in setting the priorities of the joint venture. He will play an important role in making the joint venture work to the benefit of all parties.

Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital (MRRH) serves the six districts surrounding Mbarara, and is the teaching hospital for MUST's Medical School. Public hospital care is free but it lacks the resources to adequately deal with patient demand and the seriousness of the diseases it faces. There are seven other regional referral hospitals in Uganda.

MRRH is one of 15 internship Hospitals in Uganda where medical school graduates can serve 1 year internships under the supervision of qualified specialists and consultants, and, in turn develop knowledge, exposure, and training in a specialty. Dr. Celestine Barigye, Hospital Director, has been instrumental in the design and layout of the Cervical Cancer Clinic, and will oversee its staffing, programs, and medical equipment upgrades.



A mid-wife performing cervical cancer screening in the hospital's current Cervical Cancer Clinic which will be upgraded with new equipment and additional medical staff, as part of the joint venture with Bulamu Healthcare International.

The hospital has a 600-bed capacity but many more patients are admitted with the excess sleeping on bedding on the floor. There is an acute shortage of functioning medical equipment, the primary driver for Bulamu sharing the use of screening equipment, and covering the cost of additional treatment equipment for the new cervical cancer clinic the joint venture will launch.

Several people played a major role in making this joint venture a reality, and Bulamu wishes to thank them all. We'd like to recognize the efforts of Dr. Joseph Bottino in particular. He played "go-between" among all of the parties, and was tireless in his effort to get a deal "done". Joe was born, raised, and educated in New York City, was a successful oncologist for many years, and is now a volunteer with the Seed Global Health Partnership with the Peace Corps in Uganda.

"Dr. Joe" as he is known at Mbarara by his colleagues and students was asked to participate in the execution of the Contract to set up the joint venture, and he will be an important party to its successful implementation. Dr. Joe will work closely with Gerald Atwine, Bulamu's Board Chair, Chief Clinician and Medical Camp Director to ensure the successful and timely implementation of all aspects of our relationships with Mbarara—our three 6-day medical camps scheduled in 2017, and the nine one-day camps and Cervical Cancer Clinic that will run year-round using Bulamu and Mbarara medical personnel and supplies.

Please email Jim Balassone at jbalassone01@gmail.com with any questions or comments. Contributions to support this effort would also be appreciated.



Mothers and their newly born babies in the Maternity Ward of the Mbarara Hospital.

Our Bulamu Team again wants to thank all of its donors for the support they have given us. We couldn't have done it without you! We are striving to become more effective and efficient, and provide incrementally better medical care and service. We are fast learners, but we have found we have a lot to learn.

With your continued support, we will succeed in providing more poor, rural Ugandans with quality medical care!

We all can make a difference!

Thank you!

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