

ARC East, Central, and Southern Africa Summative Congress

Improving the performance of nurses and midwives providing PMTCT, Option B+ and pediatric ART

Lusaka, Zambia
6-8 July 2017

Organized by: Emory University School of Nursing, the Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation, the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC), and the ARC Secretariat based in Nairobi, Kenya, with support from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CONCEPT NOTE

The African Health Professions Regional Collaborative for Nurses and Midwives (ARC) is an innovative, cross-country initiative, in which national nursing and midwifery leadership teams in the East, Central, and Southern Africa regions work together to improve access to HIV prevention, care and treatment.

ARC operates with the objective of improving the performance of nurses and midwives providing ART services at high volume sites in 15 countries. ARC facilitates two regional collaboratives, which are designed to equip national nursing leaders to identify and address critical programmatic gaps and areas for quality improvement in HIV treatment for pregnant women, and children:

- **ARC EAST:** A 15 country nursing collaborative in East, Central and Southern Africa
- **ARC West:** A 3 country nursing collaborative in (Francophone) West and Central Africa

Each country is represented by a national leadership team comprised of representatives from the pillars of nursing and midwifery in their countries, including:

- The Chief Nursing Officer of the Ministry of Health,
- The Registrar of the Nursing and Midwifery Council,
- The President of the National Nursing and Midwifery Professional Association, and
- A senior representative of the nursing and midwifery academic sector.

The approach is adapted from the evidence-based Institute for Healthcare Improvement ‘Breakthrough Series’ model of quality improvement collaboratives. The quality improvement collaborative model utilizes:

- Annual summative congress of all eligible countries;
- Grants of \$5,000 to conduct assessments of the capacity of 1-3 high volume clinical facilities to provide high quality HIV care;
- Grants of \$15,000 for year-long projects that are targeted to improve nurse and/or midwife delivered HIV services at the assessed facilities;
- Two regional multi-country learning sessions during the project year;
- Impact evaluation; and
- Assistance in the dissemination of project results.

The learning sessions provide a platform for technical presentations by experts, for sharing clinical tools, and presenting updates on the progress of the funded improvement projects, experiences, and challenges between country teams. The ARC faculty of health and development professionals provides mentorship and support throughout the course of the countries’ year-long projects.

ARC launched its quality improvement focus in February 2016 at the ARC Summative Congress in Johannesburg, South Africa. In September 2016, ARC East countries completed facility assessments to inform project proposals. ARC then awarded project grants to 11 countries to undertake quality improvement projects, ranging from establishing quality assurance protocols to formalizing clinical mentorship programs, and improving provider interactions for pregnant women and adolescents.

The ARC EAST Summative Congress will be held in Lusaka, Zambia, July 6-8, 2017.

The specific objectives for the Congress are:

- Provide a regional learning forum to build expertise to sustainably strengthen health system support structures for quality nursing practice in HIV care.
- Strengthen the ability of nursing and midwifery leaders to successfully implement, monitor and evaluate national quality improvement projects.
- Convene country teams to strengthen leadership capacity in leveraging and scaling up projects.
- Foster collaboration, promote networking, and disseminate tools between nursing and midwifery leaders within each country and across the region.
- Provide a forum for nursing and midwifery leaders to engage meaningfully with technical advisors in health policy and clinical practice to improve the performance of HIV service delivery.

The Congress will include presentations on: 1) key results and lessons learned from grantee projects; 2) regional and global HIV and nursing policy updates and new developments; 3) preparations for the ARC end-line facility assessments and 4) a site visit to the nursing association and Council in Zambia. The Congress will also allow time for brainstorming on project sustainability.

The Summative Congress is intended to be interactive and allow for ample exchange and group work. Since 2011, the ARC model has resulted in tangible regulatory improvements that license nurses to provide HIV care; the development of cohesive in-country and regional nursing and midwifery leadership networks; and purposeful expansion of practice for nurses and midwives, leading to the more effective provision of HIV care and treatment.

For more information on the July 2017 Summative Congress, please contact Muadi Mukenge, ARC Project Director, Emory University, at muadi.mukenge@emory.edu. You can also read summaries of ARC East funded projects on the ARC website: <http://africanregulatorycollaborative.com/>.