

## ARC West and Central Africa Summative Congress

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

Yaoundé, Cameroun  
11-12 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 West and Central 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 the countries of Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, and Democratic Republic of Congo. The ARC Initiative is part of a larger effort by PEPFAR to support quality improvement in HIV service delivery at priority, high volume sites.

In this regional collaborative, a national leadership team comprised of representatives from the pillars of nursing and midwifery in their countries, represents each country, 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 ARC 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.

The ARC initiative has been implemented successfully in East and Southern Africa since 2011, where 17 countries participate. The 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.

The ARC initiative in West Africa was launched in Yaoundé, Cameroon 21-23 July 2015 at a Summative Congress. Representatives from Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo were invited to submit funding proposals for projects that would improve the capacity of nurses and midwives to provide Option B+ and pediatric HIV prevention, care and treatment. Two learning sessions followed the Summative to give support to the countries as they implemented their proposals, in October 2015, and in April 2016.

The second ARC West Summative Congress was held in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire July 25-26, 2016. The specific objectives for the Summative Congress were:

- To provide a regional forum for learning and building expertise related to the latest guidelines and emerging models of care in Option B+ and pediatric HIV care and treatment.
- To review instruments and methods for facility assessments and to prepare country teams to conduct site-level assessments.
- To prepare ARC QUADS to develop quality improvement proposals for year II of ARC West activities.

The Summative Congress included a site visit to a health facility; sessions from CDC country team leads on projects pertinent to the aim of the Collaborative; and discussions on operationalizing task sharing, and Continuing Professional Development.

ARC awarded its end year of project grants in November 2016. Since then, we have offered technical assistance online and in person in order to support the country teams to attain the goals of their

projects, and in order to help them to overcome their challenges. We contracted in-country consultants to offer continuous technical support

ARC invites you to attend the last ARC West Summative Congress, which will take place July 11-12, 2017 in Yaoundé, Cameroun, in order to appreciate the results of the quality improvement projects that each team has conducted in their country. Each team will present their results as well as the lessons learned of their experience. ARC invites stakeholders and health organizations at the national and regional levels to join us at this meeting. In addition to closing out quality improvement projects, ARC will orient the teams on how to implement the endline facility assessments of the high-volume health facilities that were involved in their projects.

For more information on the Summative Congress, please contact Muadi Mukenge, ARC Project Director, Emory University, at [muadi.mukenge@emory.edu](mailto:muadi.mukenge@emory.edu). You can also read summaries of ARC workshops and regional meetings on the ARC website: <http://africanregulatorycollaborative.com/>.