



EMORY ETHIOPIA NETWORK NEWSLETTER FEATURE STORY

AUGUST 2015

ETHIOPIA PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE SHAPES THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN ETHIOPIA

Formally established as an independent institution in 2013, the Ethiopia Public Health Institute (EPHI) is making major strides in improving health in Ethiopia and is engaging in significant capacity building projects. EPHI, Ethiopia’s national organization for public health policy, focuses on improving the major public health problems affecting the country.

Working closely with the Federal Ministry of Health and other stakeholders within Ethiopia, EPHI provides evidence-based information for public health policy formation and resource allocation through its key functions – including disease surveillance, detection, and monitoring; outbreak investigation and control; health information analysis for policy development; research; training; health

promotion and health education; and laboratory science.

The establishment of EPHI as a dedicated



EPHI's new national Public Health Training Center (above), slated to open in September 2015, aims to train public health researchers to respond to emerging threats to the country's health.

national public health institute (NPHI) has greatly benefited the field of public health in the country. The organization has clearly defined public health mandates, leadership, and lines of authority, enabling decision making and

targeted research.

The establishment of EPHI means Ethiopia can better coordinate and harmonize both local and foreign public health researchers. Through aligning work on the national priority health problems with governmental policies, EPHI strives to optimize its productivity and subsequently increase its focus on the needs of the population.

One such need in Ethiopia is for practical training and human resource development in the health sector. To meet these demands, EPHI has constructed a new \$26 million Public Health Training Center to strengthen the epidemic preparedness for emerging and reemerging diseases, as well as provide practical, hands-on training for public health emergency management, quality laboratory systems, and



EPHI staff conducts multidrug-resistant (MDR) TB test using GeneXpert Machine

public health research. Slated to open in

September 2015, the new national Public Health Training Center will aim to produce skilled public health researchers to meet the emerging threats to the country's health.

EPHI works closely with Emory on a number of projects, including collaborating on a grant with Professor Henry Blumberg in the School of Medicine, and initiating an NIH grant entitled "Ethiopia-Emory TB Research," which trains PhD students.

Additionally, EPHI is a member organization of the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI). Based at the Emory Global Health Institute, IANPHI links and strengthens the government agencies responsible for public health, and thus improves the world's health by leveraging the experience and expertise of its member

institutes to build robust public health systems. With close to 100 members from 85 countries, IANPHI is the only organization that strengthens NPHIs using an evidence-based international framework for NPHI development. Its unique peer-to-peer model, supported by targeted investments, leads to long-term national self-sufficiency.

Dr. Amha Kebede, the Director General of EPHI, believes that working with Emory's IANPHI program has greatly affected his organization's success. Dr. Kebede explains: "Working with IANPHI since 2010 has been critical in EPHI's development of its first strategic plan, and getting buy-in for the future direction of its new mandate in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. IANPHI has supported us in developing critical capacities needed to identify and respond to public health emergencies through partnerships, training, and information technology. This strategic investment was also instrumental in laying the ground work for capacity to assess emergency operations."

"EPHI's strong capacity in disease detection, outbreak investigation, and research is a model for other countries," said Courtenay Dusenbury, Director of IANPHI's U.S. Office. "When we ask people in the region which NPHI they want to emulate, EPHI is at the top of the list."

Through its position as a key public health policy maker in Ethiopia, including its strong ties with Emory University, the Ethiopia Public Health Institute is shaping the future of health in Ethiopia.