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IHI's Developing Countries Program and Its Partners Are Honored for Work on HIV/AIDS in South Africa

Cambridge, MA – June 9, 2010 – The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) announced today that two initiatives in which its Developing Countries program is playing a crucial role have received top honors from the prestigious Impumelelo Innovations Award Trust in South Africa.

The Impumelelo Innovations Award Trust – based in Cape Town, South Africa – identifies, rewards, and promotes good governance and service delivery through an annual awards program, case study research, policy analysis, training workshops, and encouragement of the replication of innovations in the public sector and civil society. The Trust is funded by the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Foundation for South Africa, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency).

The two programs, both of which combat HIV/AIDS, are: “Prevent Mother-to-Child Transmission – Performance: Ugu District” and “HIV/AIDS – Closing the Gap in Care.” Each has been honored with a Platinum Award in the 2010 Sustainability Awards.

- **Prevent Mother-to-Child Transmission – Performance: Ugu District**

IHI supports the “20,000+ Project” which has an ambitious aim: to reduce transmission of HIV from pregnant mothers to their unborn infants to less than 5% (from 21%) in one of South Africa’s most impoverished health districts. In a partnership with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Broadreach, and the KZN Department of Health, IHI introduced quality-improvement methods and a scale-up design that had previously been successfully deployed in the United States to provide lifesaving treatment to pregnant women with AIDS. The aim of the campaign was to start 95% of women onto treatment during their pregnancy. Within six months of the start of the campaign, health workers in clinics and hospitals across the region increased HIV treatment rates for this group of women from 24% to 84%. Hundreds of HIV infections in newborns have been averted as a result of this initiative.

- **HIV/AIDS – Closing the Gap in Care**

This project targeted groups of clinics in two of Cape Town’s eight sub-districts. The two sub-districts, which serve a combined population of 850,000, have high rates of HIV infection but were not putting enough patients onto life-saving treatment. The project used state-of-the-art quality-improvement (QI) methods to rapidly increase access to

antiretroviral therapy and to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV. The project tested novel ideas for improvement developed by frontline health workers in a prototype phase and then rapidly spread both the QI approach and best innovations. Within five months of the spread phase of the project, the clinics were providing AIDS treatment for all of the HIV-infected population who needed these lifesaving drugs. The rate of HIV infection from pregnant mothers to their unborn infants dropped significantly to meet the target of < 5% HIV transmission. This project was a partnership between IHI, the Western Cape Department of Health and Cape Town City Health Department. Other nongovernmental organizations that contributed included Absolute Return for Kids (ARK), Phillippi Trust, Helderberg Hospice, and Mothers2Mothers.

“These awards are an important recognition of the groundbreaking work that IHI and our partners are doing in South Africa, and we are grateful to the Impumelelo Trust for this distinction,” said Maureen Bisognano, IHI's Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. “We hope that they will inspire further replication of these innovative programs and lead to maximizing their potential for addressing pressing health care needs on a broader scale.”

IHI's Developing Countries program supports health care improvement initiatives in Ghana, Malawi, and South Africa. In addition to the South African campaign focusing on HIV/AIDs, the Ghana program focuses on reducing mortality in children under five years of age by 66%, and the Malawi program is working to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality by 30 percent.

Additional information on IHI's Developing Countries program is available at <http://www.ihl.org/IHI/Programs/StrategicInitiatives/DevelopingCountries.htm>.

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) is an independent not-for-profit organization helping to lead the improvement of health care throughout the world. Founded in 1991 and based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, IHI works to accelerate improvement by building the will for change, cultivating promising concepts for improving patient care, and helping health care systems put those ideas into action.

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