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AFRICA

Boston groups get Rwanda grant

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FROM AFRICA

TO BOSTON

Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard University and Boston-based Partners in Health have been awarded an \$8 million grant to assess and refine a new approach to community healthcare in Rwanda.

The grant is from the [Doris Duke Charitable Foundation](#), which has steadily increased its support for African health programs, particularly those aimed at keeping mothers and children alive and healthy. The grant to the Boston group is part of a package of four African project grants from Doris Duke announced last Friday, worth a total of \$44 million and supporting health care programs that benefit 3.5 million people.

[Partners in Health](#) was cofounded by Dr. Paul Farmer, the Harvard Medical School professor who has developed community-based health systems in Haiti and elsewhere in the Third World. Farmer, who is under consideration for a senior Obama Administration position in global health and development, is currently in Rwanda working on the new initiative.

The Rwandan program is led by Dr. Michael Rich, Partners in Health's country director, and Dr. Agnes Binagawo, permanent secretary in the Ministry of Health. The Doris Duke-funded project will evaluate what works and what doesn't in the two rural districts where the integrated system is being built. Partners in Health has been working in Rwanda since 2005 to support local health officials as they improve and expand community health systems.

Rwanda is building integrated primary healthcare systems in two rural districts, involving community health workers, strengthened local health centers and district hospitals. If it works, the program will be used as a model for implementation nationally in rural areas that are home to nine million people.

Farmer says in a statement describing the new project: "The emphasis of this unique grant is on evaluating large-scale models of care delivered within the public

sector while simultaneously building clinical and research capacity at the local level. This represents a new paradigm in research in the developing world setting ... which simultaneously invests in research while attending to the professional development of a well-trained cadre of health workers and strengthening the public sector's ability to deliver care.”