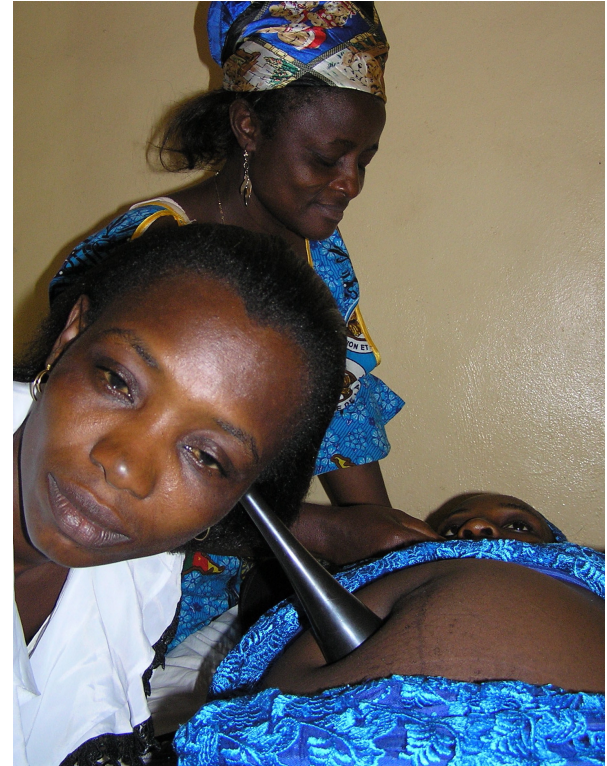


November 1, 2018

Dear friends of the Cameroon Health and Education Fund,

My husband and I were recently in Ndu, Cameroon, helping to teach a Community Mother Child Health Aid (CoMCHA) basic training course. During that time I was asked to consult on a 3 day old newborn who had just been admitted to the local health center. After I greeted the parents, my eyes quickly focused on their tiny newborn, bundled up in blankets, lying on top of a twin bed that was located between them. As I gently unwrapped the layers covering the little baby, I was immediately struck by the newborn's unresponsive state. This, combined with a high fever, rapid breathing and red swollen skin around the umbilicus quickly pointed to a life threatening infection. Looking at the baby's chart, I read that the parents had five other children. The mother had delivered this baby at home, on her own. Satisfied that the diagnosis and treatment plan of the admitting doctor agreed with my own, I returned to the parents and prayed with them. At the end of the day, I revisited the health center and when the father saw me, he was smiling as he told me his little girl was doing better. On exam, I cautiously agreed. Though still unresponsive, the newborn's fever was gone and her breathing was much improved. That evening my thoughts and prayers were for this little girl and her family. The next morning I was looking forward to seeing her again. However as I approached the health centers children's ward, the sound of intense crying pierced my heart and tears flooded my eyes as I knew another angel had just been called home.



(A CoMCHA listening to a baby's heartbeat)

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 830 women die every day from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, and 99% of these maternal deaths occur in developing countries. There are 15,000 deaths every day in children under 5 years of age, and one-half of these happen in the first week of life. **Most of these maternal and childhood deaths can be prevented with simple, affordable interventions.** CHEF has several projects involved in improving the state of maternal-child healthcare. This includes the **Life Abundant Primary Health Care (LAP)/CoMCHA** program, **Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO)**, and the **Cameroon Health Initiative of the University of Alabama at Birmingham (CHI UAB)**.

The **LAP/CoMCHA** basic training program, which is a part of the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services (CBCHS), teaches village women/men the skills needed to do antenatal care and risk assessment, low-risk deliveries and postpartum care so that they can provide for low-risk pregnant women living within their community. Since most villages are far from larger health centers or hospitals and the roads are bad, high-risk women are referred to appropriate facilities for delivery. My mother-in-law, Laura Edwards, MD, a perinatologist, was one of the people who started this program in the mid-1980's. She strongly believed that, *"no woman should deliver alone"*. Dr. Laura died in a road accident in Cameroon in 2000. In 2002, my physician husband and I began to provide assistance with the training of these month long CoMCHA courses.

The **ALSO** course, developed by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), teaches hospital providers (doctors, nurses and midwives) how they can better manage these obstetric emergencies. The **BLSO** (Basic Life Support in Obstetrics) course (also developed by the AAFP) teaches CoMCHAs and other non-hospital providers how to recognize and treat obstetric emergencies. Since 2012, this course has trained 396 ALSO providers and 216 BLSO providers throughout Cameroon.

The **(CHI UAB)** partnered with the CBCHS as well as other Cameroon organizations, has several research projects that are working to improve the health of both mothers and their unborn children. One of these projects is prevention of maternal and newborn infection (sepsis) in laboring high-risk women.

CHEF is run entirely by volunteers. This means 100% of your donations that are sent directly to the CHEF address (below) will go to the program you designate. Donations made through the CHEF website have a 2.7% transaction fee that is paid directly to PayPal. The CHEF board of directors meets periodically by teleconference to assess the progress of CHEF-supported projects and identify and prioritize funding needs. Our main in-country partner continues to be the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services (CBCHS) (www.cbchealthservices.org). Over 60 years old, this Christian, nonprofit healthcare organization is quite comprehensive with 6 hospitals, 29 Integrated Health Centers (IHCs) and over 50 Primary Health Centers (PHCs). The CBCHS strives to provide exemplary health care to all who need it, regardless of ethnicity or religion; improve public health and train hundreds of health care workers to provide care not only in CBCHS facilities, but also in governmental and non-governmental facilities within Cameroon and other African countries. This training includes surgical and internal medicine residencies at Mbingo Baptist Hospital for African physicians.

CHEF remains committed to increasing our efforts to obtain support for health and education programs in Cameroon. Though US government funding is available to support some HIV/AIDS services, there is a critical gap in funding for most other areas of healthcare delivery. CHEF (cameroonhealthandeducationfund.com/chef/) needs your help to support CBCHS projects that have no other source of funding income, a small list of which include:

1. Banso School for the Blind: The School for the Blind teaches students Braille and other important skills with the goal of learning independence, so that advancing to college and/or obtaining good jobs is achievable.
2. Dr. Brown Benevolent Fund at Mbingo Baptist Hospital: This fund provides needy families with vital medical care for significantly reduced medical cost.
3. Malnutrition Fund at Mbingo Baptist Hospital: This fund is used to lower the bills of those malnourished children who often have long and expensive hospital stays.
4. Mbingo Indigent Fund: This fund is used to take care of people adversely impacted by the current situation within their country.

Thank you for your past donations and for any future financial or volunteer support that you provide for CHEF. Please send your donation by check to CHEF, PO Box 330, Rapid City, SD 57709, or donate online by credit card. We appreciate your generosity and hope you have a joyous holiday season.

Sincerely,

Alison LaFrence, MD

President, Cameroon Health and Education Fund (CHEF) volunteer with CBCHS since 1994

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Did you know that every time you order from Amazon you can give a gift to the Cameroon Health and Education Fund? Go to www.smile.amazon.com and choose Cameroon Health and Education Fund from the list of charities. When you do, a small donation will be given to CHEF!

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