

Maternal Life International
326A S. Jackson St.
Butte, Montana, USA 59701



www.maternallifeintl.com
Phone/Fax: (406)-782-1719
usacares@in-tch.com

News From Maternal Life International

MLI News Contact:
Cort Freeman, Executive Director

May 14, 2005

Two Butte Doctors Train Nigerian Healthcare Workers in Safe-Birthing Techniques

Butte, MT – In what is becoming a key to life affirming healthcare development in Nigeria, two Butte doctors, Dr. George Mulcaire-Jones, president and medical director of Butte-based Maternal Life International (MLI) and Dr. Ken Graham, MLI's vice president, recently traveled to Africa and taught some 168 healthcare workers in ways to provide safe births for women and their children and to prevent mother-to-child transmission of AIDS. Nigeria with 135 million people has one of the highest maternal death rates in the world.

The training is the second phase of a Maternal Life program called "Safe Passages Plus" that began in Nigeria in August 2003 and was funded by MLI and the Catholic Medical Mission Board of New York. That initial life-saving training was followed up in 2004 with MLI's quarterly instructional newsletters that re-enforced the practical applications taught earlier. This year the two Butte doctors, plus one each from California and New York, reinforced the earlier curriculum and added new dimensions such as infant resuscitation and AIDS avoidance.

Safe Passages Plus was sponsored by the Nigerian Catholic Council of Bishops, operating some 280 health facilities in the country, and MLI.

According to the World Health Organization, approximately 542,000 women die from pregnancy related complications each year, with 99 percent of those deaths occurring in the developing world. Dr. Mulcaire-Jones said that the lifetime risk of a woman dying from complications of pregnancy and childbirth in Nigeria is 1 in 13 compared to 1 in 4,100 in the industrialized countries of North America and Europe.

“Far too many women die from treatable complications of pregnancy, labor and delivery,” he said. “This disparity represents one of the widest known gaps in comparative public health statistics and can be counteracted by good training, medications and facilities.”

According to Dr. Graham, in the industrialized world, women give birth in sanitary conditions with ready access to trained obstetrical providers and standard life-saving interventions such as a blood transfusion or Cesarean-section. “In this world, we expect a healthy outcome for both a mother and her baby,” he said.

In the developing world, women may give birth in conditions without electricity, running water, or the help of a trained birth attendant. “If a pregnant woman develops a life-threatening complication, such as bleeding or obstructed labor, then she and her baby could die for want of simple, life saving interventions that have been available for nearly 100 years. Maternal Life’s programs address these life saving interventions,” he said.

Mulcaire-Jones and Graham provide obstetrical and pediatric care in Butte. They left Montana for Nigeria February 17 and returned March 8.

Maternal Life International is a Butte-based nonprofit dedicated to providing safe, practical, life-affirming, and innovative programs in AIDS prevention and care and in maternal health services. The eight-year-old organization partners with government, private voluntary organizations, and community- and faith-based groups for maximum results. MLI predicates health care development upon respect for the life and dignity of the human person.