
NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Dan Weinbaum, Director of Communications
Mobile 816.585.8215
dan.weinbaum@hearttoheart.org

Heart to Heart International To Open Ebola Treatment Unit in Liberia *Responding to desperate need for more Ebola beds in hardest-hit country*

October 7, 2014 – Heart to Heart International (HHI) today announced plans to open and operate an Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) in Liberia, the country hardest hit by the West African epidemic of Ebola hemorrhagic fever. The 70-bed unit is under construction in Kakata, Liberia, and is expected to begin operating in November. Heart to Heart International is a non-governmental organization that responds to health crises and natural disasters, both in the United States and internationally, by supplying medical relief and mobilizing volunteers.

“Liberia, at the center of this epidemic, is in desperate need of additional Ebola beds and personnel to care for patients and help bring the outbreak under control. Heart to Heart International will join two other NGOs who are already operating ETUs in Liberia,” said Jim Mitchum, Chief Executive Officer of HHI. “We cannot stand on the sidelines and watch the deadly disease continue to spread, so in addition to shipping medical supplies, we are mobilizing – as we have in Haiti, the Philippines and other places suffering from disasters. Now we are calling on our volunteers and supporters to stand with us.”

Heart to Heart International, a humanitarian group dedicated to expanding global access to healthcare, already has shipped medical supplies such as protective equipment to Ebola caregivers in Liberia, and an advance team from HHI visited the country Sept. 21-29 to plan further aid. The fact-gathering trip involved a physician and two logistics experts from HHI, along with a nurse from Welch Allyn, a global manufacturer of medical diagnostic equipment and connected solutions, which has supported numerous crisis response initiatives of Heart to Heart International.

“What our advance team encountered in Liberia is unlike any health disaster we have ever seen, and we’ve seen many,” said Dr. Gary Morsch, founder and board chair of HHI, who led the advance team’s visit. “The medical system is overwhelmed by the Ebola epidemic, and every doctor and health official said the biggest need is more Ebola Treatment Units. The world must respond – and urgently – to get control of this outbreak. Heart to Heart International is stepping into that gap, as we hope many other organizations will, to help stop Ebola in West Africa.”

The new Ebola Treatment Unit is being constructed in Kakata, a city located in Margibi County about 70 km (44 miles) northeast of Monrovia, the capital of Liberia.

So far, Liberia has reported 3,834 Ebola cases, with 2,069 deaths through October 3, according to the latest update from the World Health Organization. Some 44% of those cases were reported in the past 21 days, so the rapid spread of the infectious disease continues.

(more)

Seed funds for Heart to Heart International's Ebola Treatment Unit have been provided through contributions from generous organizations, including:

- The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the world's leading Jewish humanitarian assistance organization, based in New York
- The *Building a World of Difference* Foundation, the charitable organization of Black & Veatch, a global engineering and construction company that focuses on infrastructure in Energy, Water, and Telecommunications markets, with headquarters based in Overland Park, Kansas

To donate for Heart to Heart International's Ebola control efforts, please visit hearttoheart.org and click on "Donate" or send contributions to Heart to Heart International, 13250 W. 98th Street, Lenexa, KS 66215. For corporate or institutional contributions, contact [Sherri Zerkel](#), HHI's Director of Corporate Relations.

In addition to recruiting staff in Liberia, HHI is seeking volunteer doctors and other healthcare personnel for 6- to 8-week stints to help manage the Ebola Treatment Unit. Volunteers will oversee the strict implementation of explicit protocols developed by Doctors Without Borders (*Médecins Sans Frontières*) for isolation and supportive care of Ebola patients, including extensive precautions for the staff. Liberia is hot, humid and tropical, and the challenges of the Ebola battle are great, so volunteers must be physically and mentally fit. If you are an interested healthcare professional interested in volunteering, please fill out this [contact form](#).

###

Heart to Heart International Inc. is a nonprofit international health organization. Since its founding in 1992, HHI has delivered medical aid and supplies worth more than \$1.2 billion to more than 150 countries, including the United States. HHI responds to crises and natural disasters both domestically and internationally by supplying medical relief and mobilizing volunteers. HHI broadens access to healthcare with medical education opportunities and lab standards training around the U.S. and in Haiti, and also works with U.S. safety-net clinics to increase their capacity by providing medical equipment, supplies and volunteers that are vital to operations. The organization is on the "Philanthropy 400", is a Charity Navigator 4-Star charity six years in a row, a BBB Accredited Charity, a founding member of the Partnership for Quality Medical Donations (PQMD), and recently became a full member of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).

For more information visit hearttoheart.org & find HHI on [Facebook](#).