

Project Description

Grace Yoon 2019

Since 2003, *Problem Solving for Better Health* (PSBH) has been an integral feature of the efforts of the Lesotho Family Medicine Specialty Training Program (FMSTP) to strengthen the healthcare system of Lesotho. Having established a national network of trained providers, we are now preparing to disseminate PSBH throughout the entire country. Included in the project will be PSBH workshops in each of 8 district hospitals. Participants will include doctors and nurses, administrative staff, other clinicians, as well as representatives of the District Health Authority and other health related community groups.

Health care workers are the un-sung heroes of Lesotho. These professionals have passed up opportunities to receive higher salaries and better benefits in neighboring countries in order to serve their families and communities. Working in a system that must contend with the third highest HIV prevalence rate and fifth highest tuberculosis incidence rate worldwide, they remain passionate and driven caretakers. Unsurprisingly, the severity of the burden they are asked to shoulder often results in burnout and attrition. Training and retaining of the health workforce is a high priority of the World Health Organization (WHO).[1] Unfortunately, with only 55% of established positions filled, Lesotho's health worker supply has seen few gains since the Ministry of Health released its 2005-2025 Human Resources Development and Strategic Plan in July 2004. Currently, Lesotho has about 6.2 nurses per 10,000 people and about 0.5 physicians per 10,000 people, both about one-third of the African average. Furthermore, of the 150 doctors serving Lesotho's two million people, less than one-quarter are Basotho, Lesotho's nationality, and more than half are based in Lesotho's capital.

Through PSBH, the Lesotho-Boston Health Alliance (LeBoHA) aims to strengthen management, policy, planning, and clinical capacity in the health sector of Lesotho. Our core programs focus on physician training, nurse training, and civil society strengthening. The infrastructure we have built provides a "clinical scaffolding" that allows us to implement and sustain a variety of programs. Our work has shown that providing high-quality clinical training, and building support networks among these professionals, boosts morale and significantly improves healthcare delivery.

The summer research intern will conduct qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the aftermath of the workshops, with a target of interviewing all 41 trainees who have taken the workshop via a semi-structured interview. I will attempt to assess their perceived change in productivity with a quantitative Likert-type scale. The overall goal of the internship is for the larger LeBoHA organization to be able to visualize their impact of the PSBH workshops to the

local healthcare workforce. This may lead to increased support for the program to be implemented more widely across the country and possibly impact policy. It may impact other low-resource settings to adapt similar approaches once the results are reported publicly.

[1] World Health Organization (WHO) (2009). Sixty-second World Health Assembly. Geneva: WHA62/2009/REC/1. Available at: http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA62-REC1/WHA62_REC1-en.pdf.