Haitian AIDS Group Wins $1 Million Gates Award for Global Health

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GHESKIO, a Haitian HIV/AIDS group, has been awarded the 2010 Gates Award for Global Health, according to the Global Health Council. The group will receive $1 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The award highlights the group's years of clinical service, research and training to treat and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and related illnesses in Haiti, as well as its response to the epidemic after the January 12 earthquake.

Before the earthquake, the GHESKIO network was providing palliative care to more than 50,000 HIV-positive people and antiretroviral therapy to about 55 percent of all people seeking AIDS treatment in Haiti. In 2009, the organization tested more than 500,000 people in Haiti for HIV and provided prevention and counseling on sexually transmitted infections. The organization also provides treatment, training and support to more than 20 public and private hospitals throughout Haiti.

Just one week after the earthquake, GHESKIO was able to serve as a first response trauma center and ensure that 95 percent of people receiving care for HIV and tuberculosis had access to medications and services.

GHESKIO becomes the 10th winner of the Gates Award for Global Health, which was established to recognize organizations that have made outstanding contributions to improving health in resource-poor environments.

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