Zimbabwe’s Health System Breakdown May Worsen HIV Crisis

February 20, 2009

Zimbabwe’s collapsed health care system and its cholera epidemic will soon worsen other epidemics and further the spread of HIV/AIDS in that country, predicts international humanitarian group Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) as reported in the *Los Angeles Times*.

According to the article, the country faces a shortage of goods and the collapse of sanitation and water services. Ordinary health services, such as prenatal treatment, are also affected by the crisis. As a result pregnant HIV-positive mothers are unable to prevent transmitting the virus to their newborn children. One in five adults in the African nation carries the virus, according to MSF, which urges foreign donors and the Zimbabwe government to do more to help.

Zimbabwe’s dire situation is being blamed on financial mismanagement and corruption under President Robert Mugabe and on high government fees that foreign health care specialist must pay for visas and work permits.

“The situation has become very critical,” says Manuel Lopez, head of MSF’s Zimbabwe operations. “We cannot continue with this nonsense.”

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