Advancing Health. Lasting Impact.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 – 2020
OUR VISION

We envision a world where all people have access to quality health care and realize their potential for a healthy and productive life.

OUR MISSION

We innovate sustainable solutions to global health challenges, build resilient health systems, and advance the right to health for marginalized people and underserved communities.

OUR VALUE PROPOSITION

We believe in the inherent dignity of every human being and that the right to health belongs to everyone.

We:

- work on the frontlines with patients and health workers to deliver medical care and treatment where it’s needed most.

- conduct high-impact research and foster innovation to strengthen health systems.

- advocate for equitable health policy using evidence generated from research and clinical practice.

We innovate solutions that transform how health care is delivered, both locally and globally.
OUR VALUES

At Dignitas, our values represent who we are and embody our efforts to uphold the dignity and right to health for all.

Our ability to achieve our mission is linked to a shared understanding and willingness to live out these values every day.

• Our actions are driven by integrity.
• We strive for excellence in all aspects of our work.
• Our approach is rooted in the principle of equity.
• We embrace innovation & learning.
• Collaboration & partnership are critical to achieving our mission.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The staff and Board of Directors at Dignitas International are pleased to present: Advancing Health. Lasting Impact, our strategic plan for 2017-2020. This plan comes after a period of exceptional growth for the organization. Our vision for the next four years captures lessons learned and our intentions to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

Since our beginning in 2004, Dignitas has worked relentlessly to save lives by improving access to treatment and care for marginalized people and underserved communities. Launched as a humanitarian response at the height of the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, Dignitas has developed innovative models of care, strengthened the capacity of health care providers and helped improve access to lifesaving health care for more than 3.6 million people in Malawi. More recently, we launched a program that applies our experience working in rural and remote communities to tackle the diabetes epidemic faced by Indigenous communities in Canada. We are proud of our achievements and our future success will be rooted in the lessons learned over the past 12 years.

But the world is changing and we must change with it. With new global health challenges emerging, we are dedicated to improving health care, both locally and globally. To chart our course, we have collaborated with our partners and reviewed contextual developments to better understand the opportunities and obstacles that lie ahead.

To achieve our mission, we have identified the following goals and strategic priorities. As we play an important role in the global effort to end the AIDS epidemic, we will employ our experience and expertise in HIV and health systems strengthening as an entry point for engaging in broader areas including non-communicable diseases and the impact of climate change on health.

We will harness research and foster innovation to help the hardest to reach and deliver greater impact in the communities we serve. Our new strategic plan will strengthen our capacity for making lasting and measurable change, at regional, national and international levels. Our long-term view is to engage with partners to scale up our success in Southern Africa. And as we strive for greater external collaboration, we will work in tandem to make our own internal operations more efficient and effective.

We will continue to advance health and create lasting impact through partnership and innovation. And in doing so, we will dare to imagine a healthy future for all people. We look forward to working with you as we take the next steps together on this journey.

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STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2017 - 2020

GROW
our impact by bringing unique model to new geographies and health challenges.

BUILD
on the foundation of our medical, research and KT achievements.

INNOVATE
solutions to emerging global health challenges.

STRENGTHEN
organizational capacity and resilience.

- Improve the Health of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.
- Respond to the Emerging Epidemic of NCDs in Malawi.
- Scale Up our Success in Southern Africa.
- Play a Leading Role to End the AIDS Epidemic in Malawi.
- Launch and Grow the Global Health Incubator.

Human Capital
Systems
Infrastructure
1. Play a Leading Role to End the AIDS Epidemic in Malawi: Reducing HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths.

Dignitas remains fully committed to the AIDS response and to ending the epidemic in the districts of southeast Malawi where we work. Since first opening our Tisungane Clinic in 2004, we've worked in partnership with the Malawi Ministry of Health to help a quarter of million people start lifesaving HIV treatment. Through accelerated global efforts to test and treat people living with HIV, we've reached a turning point in the AIDS response. With continued investment, an AIDS-free generation is within reach by 2030. In the next four years, Dignitas’ work will focus on removing the remaining barriers to HIV treatment and care in our four focus districts to care for the hardest to reach. In order to tackle these barriers effectively, we will build out new medical care, research and KT program components to expand our reach at the patient, community, health system and national policy levels. In doing so, we will help more people know their HIV status, access treatment and better manage their health.

Key Initiatives

- Remove barriers to treatment and care and build out new program components to expand reach:
  - Implement cost-effective testing services to reach high-risk groups so that people with HIV know their status.
  - Expand access to HIV treatment and care so that children and adults with diagnosed HIV receive sustained ART.
  - Improve treatment adherence to achieve viral suppression and halt the transmission of HIV.

- Reinforce our integrated model linking medical programs, research and knowledge translation activities:
  - Engage in operational and qualitative research that generates data and knowledge to improve access to quality testing, treatment and care.
  - Disseminate program experience and research evidence.
  - Advocate for evidence-based policy and programming in Malawi and beyond.
2. Improve the Health of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

In 2014, Dignitas launched a pilot program in partnership with the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority to improve community-based diabetes care in Northern Ontario, which is home to some of Canada’s most remote and underserved communities. In collaboration with community health teams, our program supports Community Health Workers (CHWs) to improve the quality of care delivered to patients in four pilot communities. Over the next four years, we aim to design a full-scale integrated CHW program, encompassing medical care, research and KT components, which will strengthen First Nations community ownership of health care across the Sioux Lookout Area. Beyond our current focus of diabetes, we intend to expand this model of care to include mental wellness and other diabetes-related chronic conditions. We will also investigate the potential to extend our impact by leveraging our experience in Malawi to address elevated HIV prevalence in Canadian Indigenous communities. We remain committed to upholding the right of Indigenous peoples to determine their own health needs and to have ownership of the health system that serves their communities.

Key Initiatives

- Expand Community Health Worker (CHW) program to more communities in Northern Ontario or beyond.
- Broaden the scope of our work to include mental wellness and other chronic conditions, including the possibility of supporting HIV-related care.
- Build the capacity of community-level systems to capture clinical and program data to inform decision-making.
- Engage in ongoing evaluation research to improve program effectiveness.
- Build customized knowledge translation and exchange strategies and tools for improved health care delivery.
3. Respond to the Emerging Epidemic of Non-Communicable Diseases in Malawi.

An unrelenting epidemic of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is taking place globally. NCDs including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer and chronic lung diseases are overtaking infectious diseases as the major causes of severe morbidity and mortality. In fact, projections from the World Health Organization indicate that NCDs will be the leading cause of mortality in Africa by the year 2030. To address very high NCD prevalence rates among people living with HIV in Malawi, Dignitas has successfully developed a model of integrated care for hypertension, diabetes and cervical cancer at our Tisungane Clinic. Going forward, Dignitas will scale up this model to district hospitals and smaller health centres. Our vision for the next four years is to expand the availability of NCD care beyond the HIV community to the general population. Our aim is to scale up our model in southeast Malawi, demonstrating that high quality NCD care can be provided at the primary care level.

Key Initiatives

- Scale up an integrated HIV-NCD model of care (hypertension, diabetes, cervical cancer) to health facilities in our four focus districts in Malawi.
- Develop and evaluate the effectiveness of a model of care for treating NCDs in the general population at all levels of the health system.
- Implement measures to modify lifestyle risk factors including m-Health interventions and media campaigns.
- Engage policymakers using KT strategies to advocate for effective NCD policy.
- Collaborate with partners to strengthen the NCD drug supply chain.
4. Scale Up our Success in Southern Africa.

Since our inception, we have significantly expanded testing, care and treatment for HIV and related conditions in Malawi’s southeast region. Through these efforts, we are making an important contribution to achieving an AIDS-free generation in Malawi. But our impact shouldn’t stop there. Our unique operating model, which encompasses medical care, research and knowledge translation, enables us to tackle challenges at a broader scale. With an established program and base in Malawi, we are excited by the possibility to extend our reach to other countries in Southern Africa and to advance health for millions more people. Over the next four years, we will explore a strategic expansion within Malawi and/or into neighbouring countries. We will scale up the most successful components of our Malawi program and target high-risk groups and key populations in order to reach people who struggle to overcome barriers to health care. Program expansion into new countries will strengthen our technical expertise, offer additional multi-country research collaborations and provide the potential to cross-fertilize between programs for greater impact.

Key Initiatives

- Explore a strategic expansion within Malawi and/or into neighbouring countries.
- Focus on replicating our unique operating model in other contexts and piloting key strategies that align with core competencies.
- Complete a rigorous analysis and stakeholder mapping for various countries to identify where we can add value to the national HIV response.
- Scale up the most successful components of the Malawi program, targeting key populations that struggle to overcome barriers to health care.
5. Launch and Grow the Global Health Incubator.

Dignitas will launch and grow a Global Health Incubator (GHI) to harness our ability to develop and share innovations that transform patient health and health systems on a broader scale. The GHI will be a space (physical and virtual) that brings together selected scientists, health care providers and international development professionals (known as global health innovators) to develop and test innovative programming ideas and explore research questions in response to current and emerging global health challenges. These innovators will benefit from Dignitas experience and mentorship and will be granted a basic level of financial support over a period of 6 to 18 months to research, develop and test their ideas. The GHI will generate the next wave of fundable programming for the organization.

Key Initiatives

- A feasibility study to explore program opportunities that empower communities to respond to the impact of climate change and health in Malawi and Northern Ontario.

- A Knowledge Translation Platform for Equity-focused Health Evidence and Research (KT-PEER) to enhance NCD health policy and practice in low-resource settings through collaborative research and knowledge exchange.
6. Invest in our Human Capital, Systems and Infrastructure.

To achieve our strategic priorities, we will need to strengthen our organizational capacity and resilience through key investments in human capital, systems and infrastructure. At Dignitas, we know that our greatest asset is our people. To realize our fullest potential, we must attract and retain a creative and talented workforce and empower our best people to lead and collaborate. To deliver on our mission we need robust operating systems – comprehensive and rigorous policies and procedures that support our finance, IT and logistics functions. To support our growth, we will invest technology and infrastructure to support our frontline medical, research and KT teams. These investments will be backed by a plan to build our capacity to secure institutional and private funds.

Key Initiatives

• Build an open and robust organizational architecture.

• Improve staff retention and cultivate the next generation of leaders.

• Build rigorous and transparent financial management systems.

• Enhance office/clinical infrastructure and adopt proven and cost-effective technologies.

• Strengthen capacity to secure/manage multi-year institutional grants and to raise private, unrestricted funds.
“My mother died from AIDS when I was 8. When I found out that I was HIV+, I didn’t want to live anymore. But then I joined Teen Club, which helps young people living with HIV access treatment and overcome stigma and discrimination. I have many friends at Teen Club who are facing the same challenges as me. Because of Dignitas’ Teen Club, I know I can make it. Now, I’m helping others regain hope for their life.”

– Innocencia Mpinda, Dignitas Teen Club Peer Mentor