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COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL

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PRESS RELEASE

College of Health Sciences Contributes Towards Eradicating Neglected Club Feet in Uganda

Makerere University College of Health Sciences, working with western partners has contributed to the establishment of 40 club foot clinics all over Uganda.

The magnitude of the club foot problem is big in Uganda, with over 1800 children born with club foot annually, while 10,000 are neglected. Club foot is a birth defect of one or both feet. It can range from mild to severe. In 1994, there were an estimated 10,000 neglected cases of club foot in Uganda.

However, Uganda is short of human resources to manage this condition; there are currently only 30 orthopaedic surgeons, making surgical correction of this birth defect, impossible.

The Department of Orthopaedics at Makerere University College of Health Sciences with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency, and working with other partners piloted the Ponseti non-surgical club foot treatment under the Uganda Sustainable Clubfoot Care Project.

"By March last year, 40 club foot clinics had been opened up in Uganda; treating over 3400 babies. In addition, 1081 health care professionals (orthopaedic officers, orthopaedic technologists, nurses, and orthopaedic surgeons) were trained in the management of club foot, while over 2700 health care students also benefitted from the

training”, said Dr. Tito Beyeza, the Chair of the Department of Orthopaedics Makerere University College of Health Sciences.

The project’s major purpose was to make treatment widely available in Uganda by building capacity within Uganda’s health care and higher education system to treat, and teach how to treat children with congenital club feet using the Ponseti method.

“Neglected club feet cause disability, and contribute to poverty. The Ponseti non-surgical club foot treatment, has 78% excellent outcome reported at 40 months and is socially and economically suitable for the Ugandan society”,

By the close of the project last year, a Ponseti Clubfoot Management Manual had been developed and widely distributed for further building of capacity, awareness raising materials had been produced and disseminated all over the country, while a comprehensive Ponseti Training Module had been produced and inserted into the curricula of 38 medical and paramedical schools in Uganda.

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