

This is a request to appropriate an estimated \$10 million US to rebuild the two psychiatric hospitals of Haiti-- Mars & Kline and Beudet. These facilities were essentially destroyed in the earthquake of January, 2010.

Substantial attention and resources have rightfully been directed to efforts to rebuild and substantially improve overall health services and hospitals. These efforts, however, have not included attention to mental health needs. This must change. WHO and leading global health experts have demonstrated the substantial contribution common mental disorders make, across widely different cultures and contexts, to the burden of disease in terms of impairment and disability. These conditions are emerging as the leading causes of DALY's in the world. Especially in the contexts of natural disaster and histories of violence, that impact can be marked, affecting the majority of the population, interfering with all phases of social and economic development, and worsening all other health outcomes.

MSPP identified mental health as an underdeveloped area that needed renewed attention and priority after the earthquake. As a result, we developed a coordinating group with NGO's and other government agencies to respond to needs generated by that disaster. That groundwork also generated a commitment to develop and implement a more comprehensive and long-term mental health strategy with appropriate national legislation, community based services, and strong institutions.

The rebuilding of the hospitals is central to these plans for two reasons. First, is the imperative to meet the needs of the most seriously mentally ill, such as those suffering from psychosis. These patients are among the most marginalized members of a society already challenged to meet basic needs. Many require longer term hospitalization to recover. They are abandoned, ostracized, and often left for dead. The deterioration of Mars & Kline and Beudet Hospitals are now unfit places for people to live, let alone be cared for. Haiti will not become one of those remaining countries that do not take effective action against such conditions for its severely mentally ill.

Second, these hospitals are also crucial to re-build and sustain overall mental health capacity in the country, not only for the seriously ill but for the needs of the population as a whole. These facilities need to be developed in parallel with an effective and sustainable community mental health strategy because they are a critical element in the success and design of such a strategy. Working with several partners, we are developing an approach to care that relies on health workers properly linked to primary care using proven task-shifting methods that allow non specialists to provide mental health care in other low-resourced settings, and consistent with WHO guidelines. MSPP is collaborating with a regional pilot of such a model, adapted to the Haitian context, within the Zanmi Lasante (ZL) system in Plateau Central that tests the ability to leverage and efficiently link healthcare worker (agent de santé) and other community health workers, primary care clinic staff, and general hospital resources effectively to provide care pathways for common disorders. This can provide a scalable model for care elsewhere in the country. ZL is preparing with MSPP a series of workshops to engage and enable the Ministry and other health providers to adopt and adapt this

model approach. But while such an approach appropriately decentralizes and integrates mental health care within overall health care, it will require referral capability for severely ill cases or those who require longer-term supported care. It will also require the psychiatric hospitals to fill the critical role of institutional anchors of psychiatric expertise, oversight, training, etc to such community based networks, in order to rebuild and sustain quality and revitalize a specialist workforce. Mars & Kline is in fact expected, if properly redesigned, to provide a large proportion of outpatient care as well as brief inpatient care for Port au Prince directly, and as a referral and support to these other community networks. Several opportunities are under discussion to develop the long term psychiatric training, supervision, and mentoring needed to develop these facilities into these anchors of expertise, referral, and support.

This request is an opportunity to fulfill an obligation to provide needed care and shelter to a highly marginalized, but also highly treatable, group of vulnerable, seriously ill individuals. It will also complete a critical step in a series of initiatives coming together to develop a more comprehensive system of mental health care, long needed, to address some of the greatest health burdens faced by our people.