

July 2009**Message from the President**

Dear Friends,

The Touch Foundation has come a long way since our inception five years ago. The 2008-2009 period marked a very special milestone – the graduation of the first class of medical doctors from Weill Bugando. This group of nine doctors is already having significant impact on medical care in the region. Moreover, they are symbolic of greater things to come. The intake of students is growing each year and will lead to more graduations of those desperately needed doctors, nurses and other health professionals. Weill Bugando is now the second largest medical school in Tanzania; there are 212 medical students with another 600 in other healthcare disciplines. As we look forward to the next five years, we are excited that Weill Bugando will graduate sufficient doctors to double the number currently working in the Lake Zone region serving 15 million people.

In March of 2009, I returned to Tanzania to meet with President Jakaya Kikwete and the Minister of Health, Professor David Mwakyusa. They were deeply appreciative of the work we have done to support healthcare in Tanzania and asked me to convey that gratitude to all our supporters. Reflecting the significance of the achievements made so far, President Kikwete provided the keynote address at Bugando's graduation.

2008 and 2009 have been significant in other ways. The economic crisis has not bypassed Tanzania or the Touch Foundation. Yet, we are grateful to have the capacity to sustain our core mission – supporting Weill Bugando and the training of health workers. We would not have been able to do this without a generous increase in the commitment from our Board of Directors and other steadfast donors. To help weather this financial storm, I have pledged an additional \$1 million towards our work in Tanzania.

We have been challenged to focus on our priorities while not losing sight of the broader impact we can have through knowledge creation and dissemination. Increasing awareness of the need for more health workers is reflected in the goal set by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to train 140,000 health workers in Africa, which underscores the importance of our mission.

We have made notable strides to support health worker training and healthcare delivery at Weill Bugando. In addition to funding students, we have improved the quality of students' education in the classroom and on the hospital wards. From 2008-2009, we supported three US faculty in residence to spend two-to-three years at Bugando, teaching students and modeling US teaching methods for the Bugando faculty. These faculty, who included specialists in internal medicine, OB/GYN and emergency care, developed deep professional relationships with their Tanzanian counterparts, which will provide ongoing value. We also sponsored exchange programs with Weill Cornell Medical College and the American Austrian Foundation to help talented Tanzanian doctors and students upgrade their skills and learn from peers.

With invaluable support from, and partnership with, the Abbott Fund, we are overseeing the construction of a new, expanded laboratory at Bugando's hospital – the largest hospital in the Lake Zone region – that will enable crucial diagnoses to happen in an accurate and fast manner.

Beyond Weill Bugando, we are excited to help shape the future of healthcare in Tanzania by disseminating our knowledge. In 2009, we published the findings of two studies we conducted in 2007

and 2008 with the support of the Tanzanian government, McKinsey & Company, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation and others. The reports, *Action Now on the Tanzanian health workforce crisis* and *Catalyzing Change: Molecular strengthening of the health system in the Tanzanian Lake Zone*, are freely available resources provided via our website.

The reports emphasize the need for local action and sound business planning to strengthen health worker training and support, primary care and healthcare management. In the reports, we make the case for greater private investment, as government and donor funds alone will be insufficient to provide for the healthcare needs in Tanzania. We propose several solutions for ensuring adequate healthcare to all Tanzanians. We are pursuing some of them and hope that the reports will provide ideas for other foundations, governments, corporations and individual entrepreneurs to mirror our targeted investment in the improvement of healthcare in Tanzania.

Of course none of this would have been possible without the continued financial support, commitment and encouragement of our donors, both institutional and private. We are very grateful to our institutional supporters including USAID, the Abbott Fund, McKinsey & Company, Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP, and Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation. Our numerous individual supporters are equally essential to our success and we thank you.

For the future, we have created a growing network of more than 1,000 young professionals in the US who are supporting Tanzanian health workers through various creative efforts. In order to broaden further our support base, we launched an awareness and fundraising campaign this past spring. The “Who Cares?” name describes twin aspirations for the Campaign. First, the Campaign aims to help train those *who care* for the sick in Tanzania. Second, the Campaign aims to raise an army of people worldwide *who care* about the desperate shortage of health workers in Africa and who are willing to join us in taking practical and prudent steps to tackle the problem. Volunteers are running the NYC Marathon, “tweeting” on Twitter, blogging, selling Who Cares? tote bags and T-shirts, and organizing their own cocktail parties - all in order to address the health worker shortage in Africa. Our new offices in London and Dar es Salaam will help to make these grassroots activities an international effort.

Last, but not least, I would be remiss not to mention a change in leadership at the Touch Foundation. Angus O’Shea, who was with Touch since 2005 and served as our Executive Director from 2007 to 2009. I thank Angus for his unrelenting commitment and for the growth and impact we have witnessed during his tenure. Lee Wells, previously our Director of External Affairs, came to us from Novartis in Switzerland, where he was Head of Access to Medicines. He is our new Executive Director.

In closing, I am extremely proud of how far we have come and hopeful that we will maintain our commitments, despite the serious fiscal challenges that all nonprofits face at this time. Our goal is to create the conditions for Tanzania to develop an effective, sustainable healthcare system that will deliver improved healthcare outcomes. Ultimately, our success is measured in the number of lives that are already being improved and saved.

Warmest regards,



Lowell Bryan
President