



Family Health Ministries

Supporting International Communities to Build and Sustain Healthy Families

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grant Enables Cervical Cancer Prevention

A generous grant from Goldman Sachs will allow Family Health Ministries to lower the cost of their CerviScope, an innovative diagnostic tool designed especially to prevent cervical cancer in low resource settings. The incidence of cervical cancer in the developing world is projected to double by 2030 because so many communities lack access to screening. Goldman Sachs' gift will support a significant increase in screening by providing funds for more CerviScopes, including the one-time development of an injection molding process that will significantly cut manufacturing costs.

Durham, NC – 16 December 2009

What if you wanted to bring a lifesaving test to women around the world to prevent cervical cancer? What if you knew that this cervical cancer diagnostic tool had to be delivered in settings where electricity is not available? And finally, what if you could manufacture these diagnostic tools inexpensively enough to deliver the tests to indigent women in developing countries? These were the problems that challenged Dr. David Walmer, Chief of Reproductive Endocrinology, Duke University School of Medicine, back in 1997.

This week, the last of these three problems was solved. A generous grant from Goldman Sachs will allow the Durham nonprofit that Walmer founded, Family Health Ministries, to lower the cost of manufacturing of their innovative diagnostic tool, the CerviScope. This cervical cancer detection instrument has been designed and developed over the past 12 years by Walmer and his colleagues and students from Duke. It has been evaluated in Haiti, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Pakistan, Singapore, India, Argentina and Malawi.

Family Health Ministries has been working on cervical cancer prevention in Haiti since 1993. Cervical cancer is already the leading cause of preventable cancer death in the world and the number of women with cervical cancer is projected to double by 2030 in communities without access to screening. It is estimated that fewer than 5% of women in developing countries have access to cervical exams. The gold standard for identifying precancerous lesions is the colposcope.

The CerviScope is a lightweight, battery operated, hands-free colposcope that healthcare providers can use in remote villages where there is no electricity. It is used in place of conventional colposcopes, which are heavy, require electricity, and are expensive. Walmer hopes, with the new grant, to get the price for his portable invention down to about \$500 per unit.

The Goldman Sachs contribution will also purchase 200 of Family Health Ministries' CerviScopes for use in India, a country that accounts for more than 25% of the global cervical cancer burden. With these units, doctors will be able to provide early diagnosis, detection and prevention of cervical cancer to over 1.1 million women in 2010 alone.

For more information about Family Health Ministries, visit <http://familyhm.org/>

Contact Info:

Katherine Walmer, Executive Director, Family Health Ministries

2344 Operations Drive, Suite 201, Durham, NC 27705

919-382-5500