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Telemedicine and experienced midwives in the Congo: Making a difference in the lives of many

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PROSAMI is a non-profit organization which focuses on the promotion of maternal and infant health in the rural areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The name PROSAMI is derived from the French acronym: Promotion de la sante maternelle et infantile. The mission of PROAMI is to provide the rural community with affordable quality health care in order to allow the infant a good start in life and the mother a healthy reproductive life that would benefit the community. Over the last 9 years, PROSAMI has been providing Telemidwifery by advocating for the education of nurses in the DRC to become advanced nurse midwives through sequential didactic and practical clinical training. 19 nurse midwives at the PROSAMI headquarters in Mbuji-Mayi have completed 70% of their didactic and clinical advanced nurse midwifery program, and ongoing teleconferences are held between the Mbuji-Mayi students and professors in Durban, South Africa, Ng'ya, Kenya, New Delhi, India, Staunton, VA, and Charlottesville, VA. PROSAMI has developed a classroom with a free standing electrical source and internet hardwiring, which can easily be converted into a maternal/infant health clinic, and has distributed 16 laptops. Students have assisted with the successful delivery of malpositioned babies, resuscitation of babies, and rescue of mothers who were bleeding from uncontrolled post-partum hemorrhage. In addition, PROSAMI has built a pilot center for the delivery of direct medical and nursing care to women and infants. Over 50 babies and mothers have been saved due to the expertise and presence of a PROSAMI student.

Biography

Charles Lewis has worked for the University of Virginia (UVA) Medical Center for Telehealth for the past decade, first as a video analyst and, most recently, as a senior video systems engineer. At work, he is meticulous in designing and implementing Tele-communications between our patients and providers to ensure access to quality healthcare that would not otherwise be available. This approach has driven Charles's work far from Madison County where he lives, to Lee County in the Coalfields and to the rural Mbuji-Mayi in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He has worked with faculty leading outreach efforts in Africa to create transformative programs. The Center for Telehealth, with Charles' dedicated work, has embraced the potential that this confluence unleashed and has worked tirelessly to harness the power of telecommunication to extend the latest medical care to those who live at the margins of the healthcare system.

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