

Cultivating hope for continued HIV success in Senegal

GILEAD | HIV & Dr. Moussa Seydi

A hospital in crisis

When Dr. Moussa Seydi began as a medical intern at Fann Hospital in Senegal, he knew that he was working someplace special.

Fann Hospital is a world-renowned center for HIV education, research, and treatment. The hospital's exceptional staff has contributed to Senegal's ongoing HIV success, stemmed from the nation's approach to treating the epidemic as a public health issue.

But one major issue impeded the continued success of the hospital: it was in desperate need of repair. Maintenance and resource issues caused by unforeseen natural disasters became a critical roadblock to providing care. Although doctors learned to work around the hospital's conditions, it was clear that patients' needs were outgrowing available resources and space.

After 15 years of firsthand experience working through these barriers to care, Dr. Seydi rose to become the Head of Infectious and Tropical Diseases. His first mission as a leader was to restore his hospital and expand it with the equipment, staff, and resources that could match Fann Hospital's exemplary standard of care.

"When I became the head, my first goal was to build a new clinic," says Dr. Seydi.

The catalyst of change

He launched a fundraising campaign, creating a video to show the hospital's disrepair.

"99% of the people thought that I was crazy, that I won't achieve my goal. But in my heart, in my mind, I knew very strongly that I will achieve it," he explains.

Gilead and Dr. Seydi had established a rapport over the last decade through their combined efforts on the African Society of Infectious Disease. Through this relationship, Dr. Seydi learned Gilead shared his mission to improve patient care.

Much like Dr. Seydi, Gilead is committed to supporting holistic HIV care. After speaking with Dr. Seydi about Fann Hospital, Gilead was inspired to learn more about this opportunity to help address this barrier to patient care.

The Gilead team traveled to Senegal to meet with Dr. Seydi and see the center firsthand. After touring the facility, they were certain that Dr. Seydi could make a real impact on patient care and research at Fann Hospital with his plans to rebuild, and they awarded the doctor a grant for renovations.

Breaking down barriers

The grant helped Dr. Seydi kickstart his project for a new and improved Fann Hospital. Soon, the campaign garnered the attention of the Senegalese government, including president Macky Sall himself.

President Sall offered to help him obtain funding from other financial and governmental institutions across the country. Dr. Seydi then received additional funding from the Islamic Bank and the Senegalese government, as well as donations from several other institutions.

With these funding resources and building momentum, Dr. Seydi was able to put his plan into motion, transforming Fann Hospital into a state-of-the-art building, filled with the space and equipment necessary to help provide a higher standard of care for more patients.

"We have everything we need for patients, and the patients are really very happy to be here. We are also following a lot of outpatients here and in the treatment center not far from the clinic."

Fann Hospital now boasts 72 rooms, three laboratories, and two negative-pressure chambers, with the space and equipment to meet the needs of more patients. "We have a real intensive care unit. It's the first kind of intensive care unit in Africa," he shares.

Sowing the seeds of hope

The new facility was designed to support quality patient care and long-term HIV success in Senegal. Patients can now find comfort in updated spaces designed to accommodate various needs. Doctors no longer have to adapt to worsening conditions of the previous hospital or a lack of equipment—instead, they can adapt to the needs of their patients and deliver personalized care at a larger scale. People who travel far and wide to receive HIV care at Fann Hospital will be met with a specialized team to help create an HIV treatment plan that works for their situation. The hospital itself is now equipped to sustain this level of expert care well into the future.

The growth has even expanded past the physical walls of the hospital; the facility continues their tradition of a holistic healthcare approach with a community garden growing over 40 types of fruits and vegetables to help patients improve and sustain their health and nutrition.

"We had this idea since long before me. The former head of the clinic began a garden in the former clinic. We wanted to do better. Sometimes we have more fruit and vegetables than the patients need, and in such a case, we ask the physicians to take some of them and give money to help the patients. This money is managed by the social workers."

The power of together

Today, Fann Hospital continues to provide world-class care—a place for doctors, students, and patients to thrive. By focusing on holistic health, from testing to treatment, and putting the proper healthcare providers in place to support patients every step of the way, Fann Hospital now offers a true 360-degree approach to care to an even wider network of people.

Dr. Seydi explains, "We were seeing at least 3,000 outpatients every year, but now we have more than 5,500 outpatients including around 1,500 HIV patients and 1,000 with hepatitis."

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Progress through partnership

Dr. Seydi shares Gilead's belief that it takes more than just medicine to help make a difference for those living with HIV. We hope the story of Fann Hospital inspires others around the world to look for similar opportunities to address barriers to HIV care in their own communities across the globe.

"Gilead's help was really crucial to this project, and I will never forget that," he says.

Gilead is committed to breaking down barriers to HIV treatment success for patients across the globe. By collaborating with fearless leaders like Dr. Seydi, we can work together to ignite change and help end the HIV epidemic for everyone, everywhere.

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