

## BHP Pays Courtesy Visit to Princess Marina Hospital



BHP Executive Management with Princess Marina Hospital Management

**E**xecutive Management from the Botswana Harvard Health Partnership (BHP), led by Executive Director Dr Gaerolwe Masheto, on 19 February 2026 paid a courtesy visit to the Management of Princess Marina Hospital (PMH), where BHP is headquartered.

The visit provided an opportunity for BHP to share its evolving mandate, which has expanded from a primary focus on HIV/AIDS research to addressing broader public health challenges over the years, including non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and malignancies.

Discussions explored areas of mutual benefit such as collaborative research, as well as capacity building and training initiatives. Dr Masheto reaffirmed BHP's readiness to support the hospital with research and data that can inform evidence-based policies to improve the healthcare system. He also highlighted that,

through its Clinical Capacity Building initiative, BHP supports residency training at PMH through its Obstetrics and Gynaecology (OBGYN) and Anaesthesia & Critical Care Programmes.

Hospital Superintendent, Dr Tshepo Machacha, expressed appreciation for the visit and acknowledged BHP's continued contribution to strengthening Botswana's health system. He noted that the institution's impact has become increasingly evident over the years.

Dr Machacha also shared some of the challenges currently facing the hospital, including a concerning trend in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) rates among young women and men in their 40s. Despite significant milestones achieved in HIV prevention and management, he emphasised that HIV/AIDS remains the leading cause of mortality in

the country, with some patients still presenting for care with CD4 counts below 200. He stressed the need to re-examine the HIV response and intensify strategies to address the situation.

He was accompanied by Chief Nursing Officer (Matron), Ms Cheneso Siku; Principal Nursing Officer, Ms Judy Baane; and Public Relations Officer, Mr Keemenao Sampisi.

Ms Siku added that as the two institutions continue to strengthen collaboration, there is a need to develop implementable prevention plans and policies aimed at enhancing primary healthcare delivery in Botswana. She also commended BHP for its contributions to the country's health research landscape, citing the discovery of the Omicron variant by BHP scientists led by Prof. Sikhulile Moyo as a significant milestone.

# French Ambassador Visits Botswana Harvard Health Partnership



BHP Management with the French Embassy Delegation

As part of her institutional engagements in Botswana, the French Ambassador to Botswana, Her Excellency Valérie Baraban, on 04 February 2026 paid a courtesy visit to the Botswana Harvard Health Partnership (BHP) to explore potential areas of collaboration. Her entourage included Dr. Thomas Mourez and Dr. Jérôme Pennec.

The meeting centred on strengthening cooperation between BHP and institutes of higher learning in France, with particular emphasis on facilitating student exchange programmes to French universities, as well as other mutually beneficial initiatives supported through the French Embassy.

Speaking on opportunities for academic exchange, Ambassador Baraban noted that the Université de Lyon is keen to receive students. She highlighted that the current positive momentum in bilateral relations should be leveraged.

BHP Director of Business Development and Sponsored Research, Cornelius Gaetsaloe, expressed appreciation for the Ambassador's visit and outreach towards potential partnerships. He welcomed the prospects for collaboration and commended the cordial working relationship between BHP and the French Embassy.

Mr Gaetsaloe highlighted the importance of fostering North to South collaborations, and appreciated the intent to cultivate a long-term partnership with the Université de Lyon, which serves as a hub of scientific health research, through the student exchange program which will enrich both institutions and ultimately lead to expanded areas of collaboration.

Mr Gaetsaloe shared BHP's strategic intent to expand and strengthen its ecosystem of strategic partners and stakeholders, both in the region and globally, along North to South and South to South lines, and noted opportunities for enhanced collaboration in response to global funding trends and common health burdens.

BHP Scientific Director, Prof Sikhulile Moyo, shared insights into the institution's work in genomic surveillance, noting that BHP is actively seeking potential funders to support surveillance projects. He highlighted that BHP has established surveillance systems capable of detecting emerging pathogen threats as part of broader pandemic preparedness efforts.

On leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI), Prof Moyo stated that BHP is implementing AI-driven approaches to analyse large datasets and understand new infection

characteristics through bioinformatics and machine learning. He added that the institution is also exploring the application of generative AI in biology and enhancing the use of AI in data analytics. "AI presents another opportunity for collaboration with institutions in France," he said, adding that BHP maintains a strong global network of mentors and mentees, including existing working relationships with several German organisations.

Prof Moyo further extended an invitation to Ambassador Baraban and her delegation to visit the BHP laboratory facilities to appreciate some of the cutting-edge work undertaken by BHP scientists, including the application of Artificial Intelligence in research and data analytics.



Professor Sikhulile Moyo

## BHP Presents RISE and Ponego Child Health Research to CSTL



Study Head Nurses Samuel Kgole and Gosego Masasa, and Principal Investigator Dr Kate Powis

On Wednesday, 12 February 2026, Dr. Kate Powis, one of the Principal Investigators for the *Researching Interventions and Implementation Strategies to Evaluate the Health and Development of Children Affected by HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa (RISE) Project* and the Ponego Study, presented child-focused research to the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education's Child Support, Teaching, and Learning (CSTL) team. Earlier, the RISE project was presented to the Ministry of Health on 26 January 2026. The Ponego

study was also presented to the Tlokweng District Council and the Gaborone City Council on 23 and 26 January 2026, respectively, and to the Mogoditshane-Thamaga District Council on 9 February 2026.

The presentation highlighted key studies under the RISE Project, including **BONDS**, a randomized controlled trial which will evaluate nurturing care interventions to improve early childhood development; **IMPLEMENT**, an implementation science project

which will evaluate the acceptability, feasibility and cost of integrating neurodevelopmental screening into routine child welfare visits; **IMAGE**, which compare brain development and school performance between children and adolescents born HIV-exposed uninfected and those born HIV-unexposed, ages 5 to 16; and a **Dissemination & Engagement (D&E)** project under the RISE umbrella, which will engage with partners and community collaborators at the RISE project outset to determine the type of reporting and frequency of data sharing that is desired by individuals who have the ability to impact maternal-child health policies and practices.

The Ponego study will also be looking at early brain development but will be using ultrasound at birth to identify early brain biomarkers of subsequent neurodevelopmental delay. Successful identification of newborns at risk for neurodevelopmental delay would allow for early interventions, a key to mitigating these type of delays.

The BONDS and IMPLEMENT studies will be conducted in Botswana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, while the IMAGE study will take place in Botswana and Kenya and Ponego will be completed in Botswana only. Dissemination and engagement activities will be carried out across all three countries.

Dr. Powis was accompanied by Head Nurses Samuel Kgole and Gosego Masasa; Community Engagement

and Stakeholder Relations Coordinator Ernest Moseki; and Communications Coordinator, Tapela Morapedi.

The CSTL team appreciated the engagement and the importance of the research involving children and learners. They reaffirmed that they value the collaboration with BHP and encouraged further work, including the development of cognitive assessment tools for children aged 0–5 years, as well as research focusing on children in schools, particularly those in hostels, to better understand issues of welfare, care, and medication adherence while living at school.



Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education's Child Support, Teaching, and Learning (CSTL) team

## Prof. Sikhulile Moyo Appointed to The Lancet International Advisory Board



Professor Sikhulile Moyo

Botswana Harvard Health Partnership (BHP) Scientific Director, Prof. Sikhulile Moyo, has been appointed to the International Advisory Board of The Lancet, one of the world's most prestigious and influential medical journals. His appointment marks a significant milestone for BHP and Botswana's growing contribution to global scientific leadership and health research governance.

The Lancet International Advisory Board provides strategic guidance on global health priorities, helping to shape discourse and research direction across critical areas of public health. Prof. Moyo joins a distinguished cohort of leading African scientists whose inclusion underscores an increasing commitment to advancing equity in science and ensuring that African perspectives meaningfully inform global health agendas and

research priorities. Prof. Moyo (MSc, MPH, PhD) serves as a Medical Virologist at the Clinical Trials and Research Laboratory at BHP. He also holds adjunct and associate academic appointments at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Stellenbosch University, University of Botswana, and University of Pretoria.

With over 25 years of experience and more than 245 peer-reviewed publications, his work has significantly advanced global understanding of viral evolution, drug resistance, molecular epidemiology, pathogen genomics, and pandemic preparedness.

Prof. Moyo's contributions to science and public health have earned him numerous honours, including the German Africa Foundation Award, the Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award, recognition in Time's Time100 as one of the world's most influential people, listing among New African Magazine's Top 100 Most

Influential Africans, and Botswana's inaugural Research Excellence Awards.

Passionate about scientific excellence, mentorship, and collaboration, Prof. Moyo continues to support the training of the next generation of scientists and public health leaders. His research spans pathogen genomics across multiple pathogens, bioinformatics and phylogenetics, characterization of acute and primary HIV-1 subtype C infection, HIV cure science, molecular epidemiology, antiretroviral drug resistance, viral evolutionary dynamics, and cross-sectional methods for estimating HIV incidence.

Through his work, he is expanding genomic surveillance, developing innovative treatment strategies, and strengthening international collaborations to address pressing global public health challenges.

## BHP donates medical supplies to Scottish Livingstone Hospital



Prof. Schwanke Khilji handing over supplies to Dr Rachaba-Kgaodi

The Botswana Harvard Health Partnership (BHP), through its Clinical Capacity Building Programme in Medicine, on February 10, 2026, donated vital medical supplies to Scottish Livingstone Hospital (SLH) in Molepolole to support diagnostic and clinical care in both the male and female medical wards. The donation was handed over by Prof. Sara Schwanke Khilji, a Research Associate with BHP's Clinical Capacity Building Programme based at SLH.

Hospital representatives, Internal Medicine Physician Dr. Boitshwarelo Rachaba-Kgaodi and Principal Registered Nurse (PRN) Ms. Rebecca Tabona received the supplies on behalf of the facility. Dr. Rachaba-Kgaodi and PRN Tabona expressed gratitude to BHP for the support, noting that the donated items will make a meaningful difference in patient care.

Prof. Khilji explained that the donation responds directly to clinical observations at the hospital. "Many key consumables are often unavailable or out of stock when we see patients in the wards, and this donation, funded through a USD 2,000 grant from Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) was used to procure these priority items to address those stockouts," she said.

The donation comprised a range of essential diagnostic supplies and medical equipment, including urinalysis and pregnancy test strips, glucose testing kits, and an ECG machine to support routine clinical assessments and patient monitoring.

The supplies are earmarked for use in the hospital's male and female medical wards, where they will support improved patient assessment, monitoring, and diagnostic capability. BHP's Clinical Capacity Building Programme in Medicine, based at SLH, is part of a

longstanding collaborative initiative launched in 2011 with partners including BHP, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC), Boston, and OHSU, Portland.

The programme aims to strengthen healthcare capacity through clinical education, quality improvement, and

research while providing clinical training for University of Botswana medical students, doctors, nurses, and other healthcare staff. It also fosters systems improvement and offers opportunities for visiting U.S. residents and fellows to participate in clinical and educational activities at the hospital.



Principal Registered Nurse Ms. Rebecca Tabona receiving supplies from the BHP Team.

## Baitshepi Mokaleng Defends MPhil Thesis at the University of Botswana



Baitshepi Mokaleng with her supervisors, Dr Simani Gaseitsiwe and Professor Sikhulile Moyo

**B**HP Laboratory Scientist Baitshepi Mokalleng successfully defended her Master of Philosophy (MPhil) thesis on Friday, 20 February 2026, at the School of Allied Health Professions, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Botswana, marking both a significant professional milestone and a deeply personal achievement. To date, she has published seven peer-reviewed papers, including one as first author.

Reflecting on the journey, she described the experience as transformative. "Successfully defending my MPhil thesis is both a professional milestone and a deeply personal achievement. This journey strengthened my scientific thinking, resilience, and commitment to generating locally relevant research to inform national health strategies. I am grateful to my mentors, collaborators, and family for their unwavering support."

Her thesis, titled "HIV-1 Subtype C Gag Adaptation in Botswana: Implications for Cytotoxic T Lymphocyte Escape Mutations and Lenacapavir Resistance-Associated Mutations," investigated HIV-1 subtype C gag adaptation in Botswana, with particular focus on cytotoxic T lymphocyte (CTL) escape mutations and resistance-associated mutations to the long-

acting capsid inhibitor, Lenacapavir. She noted that understanding the genomic makeup of locally circulating HIV strains is critical for both vaccine development and treatment strategies.

The study demonstrated that the HIV gag gene remains relatively conserved, reinforcing its promise as a target for T cell-based vaccine design. These findings contribute to ongoing scientific efforts aimed at developing vaccines that are effective against regionally circulating strains.

The research identified a very low prevalence of Lenacapavir resistance-associated mutations among circulating HIV strains in Botswana. "As the Ministry of Health has confirmed that Botswana will conduct its own due diligence before considering a national rollout of Lenacapavir, this work will provide an important baseline molecular data to support evidence-based decision-making," said Mokalleng.

The findings suggest that Lenacapavir can be considered a potential option for antiretroviral therapy (ART) in Botswana, subject to national regulatory review and policy processes.

## Publications

### [Immune correlates of HIV-1 rebound during broadly neutralizing antibody treatment in young children.](#)

Niesar A, Lancien M, Hong S, Naasz C, Ajibola G, Maswabi K, Sakoi-Mosetlhi M, Batlang O, Moyo S, Mohammed T, Maphorisa C, Carrere L, Roseto I, Hartana CA, Tan TS, Gao C, Parsons E, Hua R, Pretorius Holme M, Lockman S, Powis KM, Carrington M, Makhema J, Yu XG, Kuritzkes DR, Shapiro RL, Lichterfeld M. J Clin Invest. 2026 Feb 16;136(4):e193912. doi: 10.1172/JCI193912. eCollection 2026 Feb 16. PMID: 41697750 Free PMC article. Clinical Trial.

### [Adolescent views on participating in HIV biomedical research during pregnancy: a qualitative analysis of motivators and barriers.](#)

Baron HC, Masese RV, Mussa A, Thom A, Mmodzi P, Kasule M, Tshume O, Rajeshmohan R, Hagan-Bezgin A, Winner P, Bapabi M, Ramontshonyana K, Sullivan K, Morroni C, Bula A, Lyerly AD, Day S. AIDS Care. 2026 Feb 12:1-14. doi: 10.1080/09540121.2026.2628310. Online ahead of print. PMID: 41680990

### [Recurrence of HIV-associated cryptococcal meningitis in pregnancy and the post-partum period.](#)

Hull T, Quinn K, Hamlyn E, Poulton M, Nic Fhogartaigh C, Chandra J, Lawrence DS. Int J STD AIDS. 2026 Feb 11:9564624251415442. doi: 10.1177/09564624251415442. Online ahead of print. PMID: 41672084

### [High treatment success among individuals with rifampicin-resistant tuberculosis in Botswana: A retrospective cohort study.](#)

Mogashoa T, Ngom JT, Choga OT, Loubser J, Sabone P, Molefi T, Makhondo T, Stephen O, Makhema JM, Musonda RM, Fane K, Gaseitsiwe S, Warren RM, Moyo S, Dippenaar A, Streicher EM. J Infect Public Health. 2026 Feb 6;19(4):103169. doi: 10.1016/j.jiph.2026.103169. Online ahead of print. PMID: 41671595.

### [Self-reported early-onset menopause among women living with HIV and hypertension in Botswana: a cross-sectional study.](#)

Molefe-Baikai OJ, Kebotsamang K, Manyeagae GD, Moshomo T, Mawi M, Mogaetsho E, Gaolathe T, Molebatsi K, Kelepile M, Kgotlaetsile K, Leeme T, Gala P, Wang D, Hirschhorn LR, Mosepele M. Menopause. 2026 Feb 10. doi: 10.1097/GME.0000000000002760. Online ahead of print. PMID: 41665620

[Inpatient initiation of tuberculosis preventive therapy with 1 month of isoniazid and rifapentine for adults with advanced HIV disease and cryptococcal meningitis \(IMPROVE\): a non-inferiority, randomised controlled trial.](#) Ellis J, Hale G, Nsangi LJ, Wele A, Kigozi E, Gakuru J, Kagimu E, Mugabi T, Namombwe S, Kimuda S, Ssekindi F, Ndyetukira JF, Sadiq A, Tukundane A, Bakka W, Harrison TS, Mande E, Muzoora C, Moore DAJ, Meya DB, Fielding K, Boulware DR, Jarvis JN. *Lancet HIV*. 2026 Feb 6;S2352-3018(25)00246-2. doi: 10.1016/S2352-3018(25)00246-2. Online ahead of print. PMID: 41662846

[Safety, antiviral activity, and pharmacokinetics of long-acting injectable cabotegravir-rilpivirine in virologically suppressed adolescents living with HIV-1 \(IMPAACT 2017/MOCHA\): 48-week results of a multinational, phase 1/2, single-arm study.](#) Gaur AH, Baltrusaitis K, Capparelli EV, Moyer JH, Yin DE, Masheto G, Buisson S, Harrington CM, Marzinke MA, Lowenthal ED, Scheckter R, Ace A, Ward S, Milligan R, Whitson K, Huang J, Cheung SYA, Best BM, Townley E, Roberts G, Kakuda TN, Birmingham E, Mathiba SR, Aurpibul L, Korutaro V, Smith C, Patel F, Moodley E, Bolton-Moore C; IMPAACT 2017 Collaborators; IMPAACT 2017 Team. *Lancet HIV*. 2026 Feb;13(2):e85-e94. doi: 10.1016/S2352-3018(25)00242-5. Epub 2026 Jan 14. PMID: 41547359 Clinical Trial.

[HIV and menopause: current evidence, gaps, and future directions for integrated care.](#) Chakalisa UA, Cole-Haley S, Morroni C, Nwokolo N. *Curr Opin Infect Dis*. 2026 Feb 1;39(1):16-21. doi: 10.1097/QCO.0000000000001168. Epub 2025 Nov 27. PMID: 41311203

[Hepatotoxicity Among People With HIV and Receiving Isoniazid Preventive Therapy in Pregnancy and Postpartum: The Role of Antiretroviral Regimen and Pharmacogenetics.](#) Montepiedra G, Aaron L, Theron G, McCarthy K, Bradford S, Chipato T, Vhembo T, Stranix-Chibanda L, Wabwire D, Masheto G, Jean-Philippe P, Sterling TR, Weinberg A, Gupta A. *Clin Infect Dis*. 2026 Feb 9;82(1):e156-e164. doi: 10.1093/cid/ciaf198. PMID: 40237651 Clinical Trial.

## VISION

To Be a World-Renowned Public Health Institute.

## MISSION

To Fight HIV/AIDS and Emerging Public Health Challenges Through Innovative Research, Education, and Capacity Building That Impacts Policy and Practice.

## CORE VALUES

BENEFICENCE  
INNOVATION  
COLLABORATION  
EXCELLENCE  
BOTHO

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