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**Event Information:**

**Thurs. Dec 18th, 1 – 5 p.m.**

National Press Club

529 14th Street NW

Washington, D.C. 20045

**NURSES FIGHT 'FRONT LINE' IN BATTLE AGAINST AIDS IN AFRICA:**

*Marquette Nursing Faculty Participate in HIV/AIDS Town Hall Meeting to Address Key Issues*

MILWAUKEE – Earlier this month, the largest-ever delegation of leaders traveled to Africa with HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson to see first hand the impact that the spread of HIV/AIDS is having on the continent. Among those in the delegation was Karen Ivantic-Doucette, a clinical professor in Marquette University's College of Nursing, co-director of Marquette's international AIDS program, and member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS (PACHA). Ivantic-Doucette is one of the PACHA members advising the Bush Administration on AIDS treatment in third world countries.

**Experts from Marquette University will participate in an open forum at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. on Thursday, December 18, an event being hosted by PACHA.** Individuals, agencies, and organizations like Marquette with practical experience implementing international HIV/AIDS programs will have the opportunity to give their input about key issues surrounding the Congressionally-mandated, five-year strategy to combat global HIV/AIDS.

Ivantic-Doucette is intimately familiar with the devastation that AIDS is causing in Africa. She has spent considerable time in Africa serving as a health-care worker, instructor, and now co-director of Marquette's international AIDS program that has gained praise from the Bush administration as an example of how faith-based organizations will be instrumental in the fight against AIDS.

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### **About the Marquette Program: Sustaining a Health Care Workforce in Africa**

In 2002, Marquette University received \$1.8 million from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to fund a first-of-its-kind training program that launched in September of 2002 with the goal to improve the operational capacity of community focused efforts to prevent HIV/AIDS and to enhance the quality of health care delivery services to the most resource poor that are living with AIDS.

Earlier this year, a group of nurses from Africa were the first to participate in this groundbreaking initiative. The African nurses came to Milwaukee in March for a five-week training program in AIDS treatment and prevention at the Marquette College of Nursing. They went through an intense training course that gave them the tools to return to Africa and train other health care workers and nurses. Since returning from Milwaukee, the nurses have provided training to more than 1,200 nurses and health care workers in Africa.

Over the course of the four year program, Marquette will have been involved in the training of thousands of frontline AIDS nurses and counselors and will have helped improve the care of more than 20,000 people in Kenya alone. **Nurses make up 70% of the frontline AIDS workers in Kenya and have an extremely high risk of exposure.**

The program at Marquette was ignited by the passion of Sister Genovefa Maashao, a nurse from Africa. It was her appeal for the urgent need in Kenya to Madeline Wake, Marquette Provost and former Dean of the College of Nursing that launched Marquette's international effort. Sister Genovefa's letter to Dr. Wake about the conditions in Kenya strongly influenced the decision to launch the nurse training program at Marquette.

It is estimated that there are more than 50 million people living with the AIDS virus worldwide. Nearly 80% of those cases are in Africa, south of the Sahara. In Nairobi alone, there are 22,000 people under the care of Marquette's program partner, the Eastern Deanery Community Based AIDS Relief Program. If fully implemented, President Bush's five-year, \$15 billion AIDS plan seeks to prevent 7 million new infections, provide care for 10 million HIV-infected people and provide anti-retroviral therapy for 2 million. For more information, log on to <http://www.pacha.gov> .

*Marquette University is a Catholic, Jesuit university dedicated to serving God by serving our students and contributing to the advancement of knowledge. Through our mission of Faith, Excellence, Leadership and Service we strive to graduate students who are not only better educated, but better people. We provide them with the necessary training to actively "Be the Difference" in our world.*