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**Malawi to build clinic for HIV-infected children**

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by Olivia Kumwenda,

Malawi Government has embarked on a project to construct a clinic to provide health care to HIV/Aids children, Nation Online has learnt.

The clinic will be built in the Capital City Lilongwe and it will be under the Paediatric Department of the Kamuzu Central Hospital. The project is being implemented in partnership with Abbott Fund and Baylor College of Medicine.

The centre, according to a press statement from Abbott Fund, will be funded by a three-year grant of \$1.5 million (K171 million) from its programme called Step Forward.

“The Malawi centre will be modelled after the Romanian-American children’s centre, the first stand-alone paediatric Aids clinic in the developing world. Children are provided with state-of-the-art medical treatment including antiretrovial therapy,” reads part of the statement.

The release further claims the programme has reduced paediatric Aids mortality in Romania by more than 90 percent in four years.

In a separate statement, Baylor International Paediatric Aids Initiative director Mark Kline optimistic the project will succeed as was the case in Romania where it was pioneered. “With the commitment of the government of Malawi, we’re hoping to achieve similar results, and transform the delivery of care for children with HIV in Malawi,” says Kline.

Head of the paediatric department at the hospital Peter Kazembe said the construction of the clinic starts next month and is expected to be completed by the end of this year. “Right now, engineers and architects are doing preliminary work but the actual construction starts in May,” said Kazembe.

He also said the centre will reduce space problem the hospital is currently facing. With increasing HIV workload, it is clear that HIV infected children cannot be [treated] properly in a normal paediatric clinic,” he said.

Ministry of Health Principal Secretary Wesley Sangala said plans are on a drawing board to build similar clinics in other districts.

“This is just the beginning. The available funds are just for this clinic which we hope to be a centre of excellence,” said Sangala.