



PRESS RELEASE

African Mission Healthcare Awards Dr. Gregory Sund the \$500,000 L'Chaim Prize Which Will Improve Rural Healthcare for Women and Children in Africa

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

****Nairobi, Kenya–January 22, 2025****—African Mission Healthcare is privileged to announce Dr. Gregory Sund, MD, FCA, as the recipient of the Gerson L'Chaim Prize for Outstanding Christian Medical Service. This prestigious \$500,000 award, the largest annual award dedicated to direct medical care, is granted to Dr. Sund and his institution to implement a transformative proposal aimed at enhancing anesthesia care in East Africa. The project will focus on expanding women's access to healthcare and delivering life-saving services in under-resourced areas, ensuring a lasting and measurable impact on the region. Dr. Sund, an American board-certified anesthesiologist with subspecialty training in cardiothoracic anesthesiology, currently leads the anesthesia department at AIC Kijabe Hospital in Kenya, a partner hospital of African Mission Healthcare.

African Mission Healthcare, a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening healthcare systems across the continent, plays a pivotal role in supporting medical professionals like Dr. Sund. Through its initiatives, the organization empowers mission hospitals to deliver life-saving services to vulnerable populations throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.

Transforming Anesthesia Care in Sub-Saharan Africa

In Sub-Saharan Africa, a significant gap exists in the availability, quality, and safety of anesthesia care, particularly in rural settings. Many mission hospitals rely on non-physician anesthetists who often lack adequate support and equipment, resulting in alarmingly high rates of mortality—twice as high as in other regions, with pediatric and maternal mortality rates significantly elevated.

Utilizing the \$500,000 L'Chaim Prize, Dr. Sund plans to address this crisis by introducing a comprehensive intervention package in mission hospitals in Burundi, Malawi, Uganda, and Kenya. His project aims to improve anesthesia care by focusing on three key areas:

- **Training and Education:** Dr. Sund will expand the anesthesiology residency program at AIC Kijabe Hospital, which he helped establish. This program will train both nurse

anesthetists and physician anesthesiologists, creating a new generation of skilled professionals.

- **Equipment Upgrades:** He will invest in life-saving equipment such as pulse oximeters and capnography machines—essential tools that many African hospitals currently lack. A recent study revealed that only 16% of hospitals in Burundi have access to capnography, a critical tool for ensuring safe anesthesia delivery.
- **Quality Improvement Initiatives:** Dedicated personnel will be employed to conduct ongoing quality assessments of perioperative care, ensuring continuous improvements in patient outcomes.

A Lifesaving Vision

Dr. Sund expressed deep gratitude for the honor: “Receiving the L'Chaim Prize is an incredible privilege. This award enables us to address severe gaps in anesthesia care in Sub-Saharan Africa. By improving surgical safety, we can make a tangible difference in the lives of women and children, the most vulnerable populations in these underserved regions. Women undergoing cesarean deliveries and children in need of surgical intervention face disproportionately high risks, and our goal is to ensure that these patients receive safe, compassionate, and effective care.”

Projected Impact

The anticipated outcomes of Dr. Sund's initiative are significant, particularly for women and children. It is estimated that each nurse anesthetist trained through this initiative will provide anesthesia care for over 4,400 women undergoing cesarean deliveries throughout their careers. **By equipping hospitals with life-saving tools like pulse oximeters and capnography, maternal and pediatric surgical mortality rates could be reduced by up to 50%.**

This initiative will not only **increase surgical volume by 20-30%** but also address critical gaps in obstetric and pediatric emergency care. As two of the targeted hospitals introduce physician anesthesiologists, more complex surgeries will become possible, providing lifesaving interventions for mothers and infants. Additionally, this project will establish a framework for ongoing education and quality improvement, creating lasting benefits for families and communities across Sub-Saharan Africa.

By investing in anesthesia capacity, this initiative aims to break the cycle of preventable deaths, ensuring that women and children receive the care they deserve when they need it most.

About the L'Chaim Prize

The Gerson L'Chaim Prize was founded by African Mission Healthcare co-founder Mark Gerson and board member Rabbi Erica Gerson. It is awarded annually to support the lifesaving work of a Christian medical missionary who has made extraordinary contributions to healthcare in under resourced areas. The prize supports high-impact projects that deliver life-saving care to vulnerable populations across Africa. To learn more about the impact of the L'Chaim Initiative, visit <https://africanmissionhealthcare.org/program/lchaim-initiative/>.

About Dr. Gregory Sund

Dr. Gregory Sund is an accomplished anesthesiologist, currently serving as Head of Anesthesia at AIC Kijabe Hospital in Kenya. As a Serge missionary, he has dedicated over a decade to improving anesthesia care and training in some of Africa's most underserved regions. Dr. Sund lives in Kenya with his wife, Stephanie, and their three children, Ella, Piper, and Binyam.



Dr. Gregory Sund at AIC Kijabe Hospital in Kenya

For more information about the L'Chaim Prize and Dr. Sund's groundbreaking work, visit African Mission Healthcare at <https://africanmissionhealthcare.org/dr-gregory-sund/>

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