

Field Report: Critical Sanitation Services, Malawi

“He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

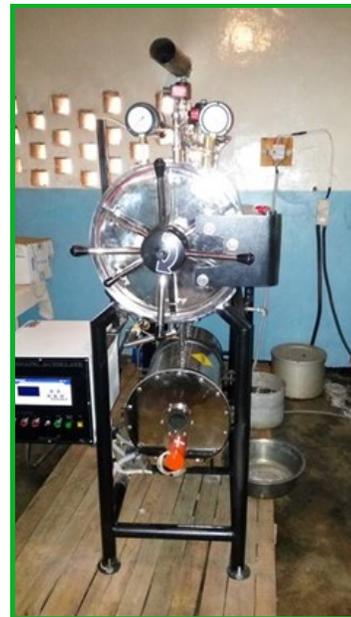
Partner: Embangweni Hospital

Embangweni Hospital serves a population of 100,000 people from over 250 villages in a 35-mile radius in Northern Malawi. With a population of ten million people, is one of the world’s poorest countries. Most of Embangweni’s patients are subsistence farmers, living in rural areas with extended, very poor families.

The 145-bed hospital provides a variety of services including maternity, pediatrics, HIV/AIDS treatment, general care, lab services, surgeries and dental care. In 2015 Embangweni cared for 14,952 outpatients, 5,406 inpatients and delivered 3,020 babies.

Autoclave—Critical Sanitation Services

A critical process for any hospital is the ability to properly sanitize medical equipment and instruments. Without this sanitation, the hospital can expose patients to cross contamination of illness and disease, which can often lead to death.



From Left to Right: Mr. Jere (Senior Administrative Officer); Mrs. Matewera (Hospital Accountant); Mr. Nkhoma (Patient Attendant, trained as Autoclave Operator); Mr. Swila (Principal Hospital Administrator)

In the summer of 2015, the aging autoclave at Embangweni failed and was unrepairable. When operating a hospital in the developing world, it’s not as easy as calling a medical equipment supplier and arranging financing. The cost of replacing the autoclave was \$20,000 and the hospital was already operating on a shoestring budget. Without the resources to replace the equipment, hospital leadership located a sister hospital in Mzimba—about an hour’s drive away—that was willing to sterilize their equipment. Not only did it cost \$40 for each trip, but the time needed to transport the equipment limited the number of procedures that could be done each day. Both the additional cost and the decrease in procedures severely impacted the hospital’s budget and its ability to provide much-needed patient care.

When two of Embangweni’s and MBF’s U.S. partners—Westminster Presbyterian in Greenville, SC and Myers Park Presbyterian in Charlotte, NC—recognized the need, they responded with significant support as well as setting the pace for other partners to participate in this critical project. In March, a new 196-liter autoclave was installed and is now in full operation. MBF is grateful for all who responded to this request. This new equipment will have a great impact on Embangweni’s efforts to demonstrate the Gospel and the love of Christ by providing quality health care to those most in need.