

## Local doctor helps in Rwanda

New Westminster - based physician Dr. Neil Pollock recently returned from a 10-day mission to sub-Saharan Africa where he taught Rwandan doctors proper infant circumcision technique to help them stem the spread of AIDS in the region.

Dr. Pollock travelled as part of a team assembled by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and their partner in the project, Family Health International (FHI).

An estimated 1.9 million people were newly infected with HIV in a sub-Saharan Africa in 2007, bringing to 22 million the number of people living there with HIV. A full two thirds of the global population living with HIV live in this region, and three quarters of all the world's AIDS deaths in 2007 occurred there.

*Dr. Neil Pollock holds a newly-circumcised baby boy at the King Faisal Hospital in Kigali, Rwanda. The child pictured now has a significantly reduced chance of contracting the AIDS virus as an adult, according to studies conducted in Africa.*

According to studies conducted in Africa, circumcised men are up to 60 per cent less likely than uncircumcised men to contract the AIDS virus from heterosexual sex with an infected partner, owing to the presence of immune cells in the foreskin which are vulnerable to infection.

Dr. Pollock, who has performed what is arguably the world's oldest surgical procedure over 30,000 times, spent four days in December at the King Faisal Hospital in Kigali, teaching the hospital's chief surgeons his "Mogen" infant circumcision technique. The technique, named after the specialized tool used in the procedure, is a virtually painless and bloodless method which takes less than a minute to perform.

