

Dr. Jean William "Bill" Pape is the founder and director of Les Centres GHESKIO in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and the Howard and Carol Holtzmann Professor of Clinical Medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York.

Born and raised in Haiti, Dr. Pape is a visionary leader whose seminal work has had a major impact on healthcare delivery in his native country and around the world. Despite man-made and natural disasters, he has persevered to save hundreds of thousands of lives in Haiti while improving many more globally. His story and that of GHESKIO, the organization he founded, exemplify resilience, innovation, and entrepreneurial leadership in one of the poorest countries in the world.

Bill Pape graduated from Columbia University with a BS in 1971 and from Cornell University with an MD in 1975. After completing his postdoctoral training in infectious diseases at the New York Hospital, he joined the Cornell faculty. He then returned to Haiti to establish the Cornell Infectious Diseases Research and Training Unit. Dr. Pape subsequently identified the cause of infantile diarrhea, which was the leading cause of infant mortality at the time. He introduced a comprehensive treatment, including oral rehydration therapy, which reduced the hospital infant mortality rate at the State University Hospital (HUEH) from over 40% to less than 1% within a year. The nationwide implementation of this program led to a 50% reduction in infant mortality across the country.

Dr. Pape is credited with recognizing and providing the first comprehensive description of AIDS in the developing world. In 1982, he established GHESKIO (a French acronym for the Haitian Study Group on Kaposi Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections), one of the first centers dedicated to the study of AIDS. Four decades later, GHESKIO remains one of the largest AIDS and TB treatment, training, and research centers in the Americas, providing free care to more than 300,000 patients with HIV, STIs, TB, diarrheal, and cardiovascular diseases annually. Dr. Pape's work in Haiti has had a global impact on HIV and TB prevention and treatment.

Under his leadership, the GHESKIO team has saved many people despite overwhelming odds. In 2010, after Haiti was devastated by an earthquake that killed an estimated 300,000 people, followed by the worst cholera outbreak in modern history, Dr. Pape transformed the GHESKIO campus into a trauma hospital and survivor camp, saving thousands of lives.

With cardiovascular disease now surpassing AIDS and TB as the leading cause of mortality in Haiti, Dr. Pape responded by opening a cardiovascular disease Center in 2018 in collaboration with Weill Cornell Medical College, introducing innovative services and treatments to address this critical issue.

In 2020, Dr. Pape was selected to co-lead Haiti's national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, he was named a member of the World Health Organization's Science Council.

Elected to the U.S. National Academy of Medicine in 2003, Dr. Pape's work has been recognized at medical conferences, in peer-reviewed medical journals, and in international media. He has received numerous awards, including the French Legion of Honor, Institut de France's Prix Christophe Merieux, the Gates Global Health Award, the Clinton Global Citizen Award, the WHO Stop TB Partnership Kochon Award, and the Joan and Sandy Weill Cornell Exemplary Faculty Award. In 2014, he received the highest honor from the government of Haiti, Honneur et Mérite, Grande Commandeur. In 2023, he was elected to the U.S. Academy of Arts and Sciences, further solidifying his legacy as a pioneer in global health.