

Haiti Medical Mission Trip – October 2010

Five MMTF team members traveled to Hopital Ste Croix (HSC), Leogane, Haiti on October 30, 2010 to provide mobile medical clinics, work at the hospital, and visit the PaZaPa center in Jacmel. Trip members include Lisa Kerr Johnson, PharmD, RN, Pat Farris, RN, Lisa Sprague, MD, Nancy Rondel, RN, and Penny Woodhams, MD. Our team of medical professionals was joined at HSC by Alan Crisman, DDS, Mitch Mutter, MD, Rick Torok, board member, all of Children's Nutrition Program (CNP) and 2 nursing students from the school of nursing MMTF supports to make up our mobile clinic team. This is the first trip since the January 2010 earthquakes where we will resume our usual trip agenda providing medical outreach clinics.

We began our week with a christening at L'Cul church of a beautiful baby girl, Lisa Christie, who had been delivered by cesarean in February after the earthquake on a previous trip.

Lisa Johnson is the Godmother of the child and Delson Merisier, MD OB GYN is Godfather. This was a new experience to be part of the baptism and so intertwined into the lives of patients we have served during a very difficult time in their lives. Afterward, the family invited us to have dinner and a celebration in their home, a special cultural experience for team members who were able to go. Long term mission service has offered us rich life experiences with our partners.

Our clinical plan for the week was to provide 4 mobile medical clinics. Upon departure, the outbreak of a cholera epidemic looked to change the plans for our week, but actually it was weather which threatened and shaped our service. Waiting for our plane to depart in the Miami airport we first heard news of a rapidly forming hurricane, Tomas, predicted to become a category 3 and hit Haiti later in the week.

Monday Am before leaving for clinic, we see a man with a serious machete wound to his hand. He is evaluated and sent to Doctors w/o borders for surgery. We prepare to serve a tent encampment in Leogane that reportedly had an outbreak of fever in the past 2 weeks. It consisted of 50-60 crude tents which had been erected for shelter after the earthquake. It was estimated that as many as 400 people may be living here. We were able to set up our clinic in 4 simple new school structures, as Monday was a Haitian holiday; All Saint's Day, and school was not in session. Quickly we were able to determine the fevers were due to strep infection and word was spread in the camp that all with sore throats and fever needed to come to clinic for antibiotics. We treated 107 patients and 20 dental patients including 5 major abscesses. We had serious asthma and pneumonia cases and interfaced with HSC for more advanced care required for one little boy. He was taken back to HSC with us and treated for asthma until 8pm when he was well enough to go home. We saw many very sick children today, our pediatricians vital to their care.

Tuesday, the team traveled to Jacmel, Haiti to visit the temporary tent facility of PaZaPa, the center for disabled, deaf and developmentally delayed children. The medical team was also to do an outreach clinic to assess new patients entering the PaZaPa programs and services. They traveled up into the mountains outside of Jacmel into beautiful country. Treating 30 patients, the doctors assessed new patients and set plans of care for further physical therapy and related services. We also provided PaZaPa with a 6 month supply of their seizure meds for the children of the center. A child with appendicitis was identified and taken down the mountain to a hospital for surgery, likely saving her life by being at this place and time. Amazing. The current relationship of MMTF to PaZaPa needs to be reevaluated in the short term. Also on Tuesday, a dental clinic continued and patients were seen and treated with medical staff at HSC by some team members. 50 patients were treated today.

Wednesday, the hurricane progressed slowly and we traveled up river (carefully) to a village, Barrier Jeudi, with a new community center built from "sand bag" construction. It was sturdy, cool and novel post earthquake construction. At lunch they provided us with coconuts to drink water and eat the meat, another cultural experience for the team. The rain began after lunch as the initial rains bands moved closer to Haiti from Tomas. We saw 109 patients with serious conditions and transported one woman back to HSC with us at the day's end for further cardiac work up and EKG. We were able to offer her a more sophisticated treatment regimen with medications after complete assessment. It is raining heavily as we travel back to HSC tonight and the river to the south of Leogane is nearly over the road.

Haiti Medical Mission Trip – October 2010

Thursday AM we prepare for the approaching hurricane by placing all of our belongings up off the floor in our rooms and moving beds away from the windows. The team is not afraid and ready to provide more care. We trust that part of God's plan for this week is that MMTF has a vital role to play here and we are needed and called to this place at this time. Our facility is strong and solid, the unknown how much wind will drive the rain we get. I ask the volunteers who oversee the medical supplies at HSC to also move as many up off the lower shelves, as flooding is prevalent at HSC when excessive rains come. I have been here at HSC 3 yrs ago with a MMTF team when another category 1 hurricane hit and flooded the facility.

Thursday we provided a medical clinic at Mathieu, a close village we have served many times in the past. We set up at their church which still stands but has been destroyed by the earthquake. We held our clinic in their school. We saw 128 patients today, many sick children, again taking one girl back with us for obstetrical assessment and consultation with Dr Merisier at his clinic after the day is done. We provide support for her to obtain further tests and evaluation in Port-au-Prince.

Thursday pm, Lisa and Penny visited Johanniter, a German NGO in Leogane that provides amputees with prosthetic services, psychosocial support groups and physical therapy. Currently they are molding and fitting lower extremity limbs, but will also provide upper limbs soon. Their goals are to train Haitians to provide these services over the next 3-5 years, then turn the program over to Haiti. MMTF plans to identify and donate our last money from the earthquake funds for amputee care in Leogane. We had a good meeting with their director, psychologist and prosthetic expert and a tour of their facility and programs and believe we have found a strong group to make our donation. The rains are now falling heavily as we go back to HSC tonight-Tomas is coming in strong-category 1 hurricane.

Late Thursday pm, a man in sickle cell crisis in great pain comes into the hospital. Staff tell me someone is having a seizure, and I go assist as I have many seizure drugs that are uncommon in Haiti. It turns out he is not seizing, but writhing in pain. We treat him with IVs and strong pain meds Haiti does not usually have available.

Thursday night the rain falls steadily all night. I get up early at 5am and begin to explore the conditions outside. Very shortly I hear dogs barking, chickens crowing and people's voices rising and see the wave of water come flooding down the street to the north of HSC. It rises in front of the hospital. I call to the team to get up if they want to see the flood coming-we are safe on the second floor of the hospital in our guest rooms.

I go down to the hospital and wake the doctor on call and the night hospital supervisor, who is the brother of the priest in charge here. They are asleep in a tent that will flood in 10 minutes or so. The hospital administrator, chief of medical staff and priest are not here. Water is not flooding the hospital yet, but from past experience I know we have about 20 minutes to evacuate patients before the medicine corridor will flood. Pat and I evacuate the children from pediatrics first, including a girl with typhoid and take them upstairs to the second floor. Then the bedridden adult patients. Nancy and Lisa S. go and save the x-ray equipment. Just as the patient unit begins to flood we are transporting the last pt upstairs in a wheelchair. We help care for their IVs and make each comfortable in a room. There is one Haitian MD here, the one RN leaves to go to her home in the flood. Now there are no staff to care for the patients, there will not be anyone else who will come today with the weather conditions. Now we go and attempt to sand bag the major inflow of water using cases of dressings in cardboard boxes stacked up with glass blocks to weigh them down. It will only hold for a short time, but will keep water from flooding a second hallway. In the afternoon, NBC television crew comes and films. We make the evening news!

We have many supplies left from canceling our final day of clinics due to weather and we donate a large box to Dr Merisier of items for women in OB GYN and another for Dr Mathieu for pediatrics. We leave some in the med room of the mobile clinic area, after organizing that area for future teams.

We were able to work with the hospital, community MDs and PaZaPa and renew the many relationships with our Haitian counterparts. We treated chronic patients, clinic patients and partnered with the Haitian

Haiti Medical Mission Trip – October 2010

doctors and nurses in their care We saw 427 patients; 232 adults and 195 kids. We continued care from the clinic throughout the week as was required with a few very serious cases, and coordinated their continuing care with our Haitian medical partners upon our departure.

This team bonded and worked together well, enjoyed their week of experiences and expressed a desire to serve again in the future. Always gratifying for their team leaders to hear! This mission site continues to offer a rich experience for First Pres members.

Outstanding improvements to the 2nd floor (guest house) have been made since our last trip in May 2010 when we stayed and worked with World Wide Village. Peter Ferris now acting as guest house manager is a very positive continued aspect here. We are able to focus on the medical care we have come to provide this week and coordination of the trip prior to coming was also enhanced. The hospital inpatient ward has reopened in a small scale and continues to display extremely weak function and management.

Thank you to the members of the First Pres congregation and mission committee for your continued donations, prayers and support of the Haiti MMTF. Thank you to the MMTF team!!!! Thanks for your prayers-we felt them and were blessed to be a blessing to the Haitian people all week. We believe God chose our week in Haiti long ago and we were just where we were supposed to be for the hurricane and flood.

Bondye beni vous Ayiti. (God Bless You Haiti)

In Christ,

Respectfully submitted
Lisa Kerr Johnson, PharmD
Trip Leader
November 15, 2010