



HAITI HEALTH CARE NEWS

An occasional bulletin to report on the work of the Haitian Health Care Foundation of the Diocese of Richmond. It is available also at www.haitianhealth.org and www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti.

November 2009

Maternal Health Program

THE MIDWIFE TRAINING CONTINUES

Our collaborative efforts with Midwives for Haiti (M4H) are ongoing. Volunteer American nurse midwives from M4H have scheduled visits to Hinche from December through March to work with our Haitian nurse midwife trainer, Danise Delva. Our second class of trainees is working hard, and screening of applicants for the third class has begun.

Funding for this program is provided by the Foundation's donors, Bon Secours Health System, Inc., and Midwives for Haiti. Thanks to all at this season of thanksgiving!

Caritas: Eye & Ear Clinic

A POSSIBLE UPGRADE

The building at the Ste. Thérèse Hospital in Hinche now housing the eye & ear clinic is in such bad shape that repairs would seem to be a waste of resources. Conversations between Fr. Jacques Volcius, director of Caritas/Hinche, which is responsible for the clinic, and the HHCf Board of Directors revealed that the building is structurally unsound and has no running water.

As our readers may remember, the Foundation has been working with the Engineers Without Borders (EWB) chapter at Virginia Tech and Zanmi Lasante (the Partners in Health arm in Haiti) to construct a new outpatient clinic at the hospital. EWB has agreed to incorporate an outpatient eye & ear section in their plans for the new building, and our Foundation, with your help, will seek funding for the addition.

The slit lamp machine donated by the Eye Institute of Virginia has arrived in Hinche and will be in operation by the time you are reading this good news.

Dental Care Program

VISIT TO LaCOLLINE

Anne Knasel, M.D., and JoAnn McCaffrey, D.Min.

The Catholic Consortium for International Health Care sponsored a recent visit to Haiti. Organized by the Catholic Medical Mission Board's country director for

Haiti, Dr. Dianne Jean-Francois, the group included Sr. Rory Moynihan and JoAnn McCaffrey of Bon Secours Health System (JoAnn is also a director of the Haitian Health Care Foundation), and Dr. Anne Knasel (who also is on the Foundation's Board of Directors).

After visiting various health care programs in Port-au-Prince, we traveled to the Central Plateau, visiting the *Sant Fanm*, a clinic for women and children's health in Lascahobas, the hospital and dental clinic in La Colline, and the Partners in Health/*Zanmi Lasante* hospital in Cange.

At LaColline, Dr. Beauboeuf is working hard, with support from our Foundation, is doing a wonderful job in providing dental care to the thousands of people in the area who until recently had no access to a dentist.



JoAnn McCaffrey points to the sign at the LaColline dental clinic. With her are Dr. Roody Beauboeuf, director of the clinic, and Dr. Anne Knasel

Every site we visited had a focus on improving nutrition for children or mothers and infants, many of which had a component of training those in the community for work which would allow an income to purchase adequate nutrition.

Noteworthy was the dedication and expertise of the many physicians, nurses, hospital managers and religious to the important work of helping the people of Haiti.

Most of these were native Haitians.

The sites which have close relationships with sponsors in the United States or other countries were able to deliver good care with up-to-date equipment and facilities. Naturally there is always a new and continuing need for assistance. Some sites had little outside support and were struggling to maintain their buildings and programs.



The consortium group with Archbishop Miot of Port-au-Prince

Again and again we learned that malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and respiratory infectious diseases are the medical problems seen, but above all, the serious problem of AIDS and its accompanying illness, multi-drug resistant tuberculosis. Each of the clinics we visited is offering programs to treat or to educate regarding this devastating problem.

Haiti, a short distance from the United States, has huge health care needs. This trip, and visits like it, is small steps toward meeting some of those needs.

EXPANDING OUR HORIZONS

At the November Board meeting of the diocesan Haitian Health Care Foundation, Susan Pleasants reported that on a visit to Haiti after the CMMB visit described above, Dr. David Walton (the director of the hospital at LaColline where the dental clinic is located) approached her with a proposal that the HHCF expand our focus to dental care more widely on the Central Plateau in partnership with *Zanmi Lasante*.

Susan followed this up with Dr. David Zadik, a Haitian dentist, who suggested preventive care as a starting point—e.g., HHCF could provide funds for the purchase of toothbrushes which he could distribute to the existing clinics, and also work with the twinning parishes to collect and ship toothbrushes and toothpaste to their twin parish in Haiti.

The directors present expressed interest in expanding our horizons beyond (but still including) the LaColline clinic. We will be exploring this possibility, and with your help, we can have a wider impact on meeting the dental care

needs in the Central Plateau of Haiti. The Board needs to add to its membership someone to take responsibility for overseeing the Foundation's dental care outreach [see the "want ad" on p. 3].

Maison Fortuné Orphanage Wellness Program

MORE OPPORTUNITIES

The boards of directors of the HHCF and of the Maison Fortuné Orphanage Foundation collaborate on meeting the needs of the 150 children at the orphanage in Hinche.

As the orphanage grows into a major child welfare institution and school, health care needs are surfacing. As well as the usual cuts and scrapes, more serious illnesses have arisen among the children, including flu, HIV (contracted in the womb), tuberculosis, and conditions requiring surgery. In addition, of course, is the need for eye, ear, and dental care for the children who come to the orphanage from very poor situations and having never been to a doctor.

We are seeing that there is a need for the regular presence of a nurse at the orphanage clinic, and we will be exploring the possibility of hiring one as well as contracting with a pediatrician for regular visits. Another area in which we will be needing your help!

UND PROGRAM IS WORKING TO ELIMINATE LYMPHATIC FILIARIASIS

Haitian Health Care Foundation Board member Anne L. Knasel MD provides this report.

At past Richmond diocesan Haiti Gatherings, attendees have learned about the University of Notre Dame's program to help the people of Haiti in treating two very important but often neglected conditions there: lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis) and iodine deficiency. The program has developed a method to fortify salt with iodide and with DEC (diethylcarbamazine) so that both conditions can be treated by a simple dietary supplement. The program manufactures the fortified salt in Haiti and has a distribution site in Port-au-Prince. It costs 29¢ to produce the one-pound bag but since salt now sold in the markets costs less than this, the bags are sold at a subsidized cost to community distributors.

The Central Plateau has a lower prevalence of lymphatic filariasis (LF) than elsewhere in Haiti, so the Notre Dame program focuses its efforts on the highly endemic areas for treatment of this disease. Efforts involve both the use of MDA (mass drug administration) programs and the use of fortified salt for prevention. They believe, however, that distributing the iodized salt nationally is very important because of the serious problems of iodine deficiency throughout the country.

OUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS

You will note that our reply envelope for your contribution is addressed to us at **Commonwealth Catholic Charities** on Willow Lawn Drive in Richmond instead of the 7800 Carousel Lane address of the Diocesan Pastoral Center.

The operations of the diocesan Office of Justice and Peace are now headquartered at Commonwealth Catholic Charities where your donations will be processed. The Haiti Ministry will continue in the same manner it has in the past without disruption.

If you have any questions about the transition to Commonwealth Catholic Charities please call or email Patrice Schwermer at either 804 545 5974 or patrice.schwermer@cccova.org.

In the Central Plateau (where Hinche and many of our twin parishes are located), Notre Dame is working with Partners in Health and the MSPP (the Haitian government's ministry of health) to carry out MDA programs with the goal of reaching every parish or commune with albendazole and DEC which treat both LF and other worms. This is a World Health Organization goal which MSPP wants to achieve.

In order for a community to have the MDA, however, local involvement is crucial. Twin parishes in Virginia can help to get local (Haitian) designated persons from the community to work with the program. The distribution of the iodized salt is facilitated by helping local entrepreneurs to start up a business by purchasing the bags of salt in Port-au-Prince for local resale.

One example of this microenterprise is in Thomassique, where the interns at the St. Joseph Clinic (sponsored by Medical Missionaries) have received some training in the salt distribution program and are working with local people whom they have enlisted to sell the salt, which they obtain from the distribution center in Port-au-Prince; they use some of their profit to obtain more packets.

Information on this program is available at www.haiti.nd.edu, and the contact persons for these programs are Sarah Bayne Miller at sbayne@nd.edu or Sarah Craig at Craig.20@nd.edu.

The Notre Dame program and distribution headquarters is at the St. Francis de Sales Hospital in Port-au-Prince. Their research program is based at Ste. Croix Hospital in Leogane.

BOARD OPENINGS

The Haitian Health Care Foundation of the Diocese of Richmond, Inc., has openings on its Board of Directors for persons interested in participation in the Foundation's collaborative efforts with the Diocese of Hinche and other partners in improving health care for the people of Haiti.

The Foundation is seeking persons with expertise in dental care, vision care, website maintenance, and marketing & development.

For further information on the work of the Foundation, see www.haitianhealth.org, and to inquire about appointment to the Board, contact the Secretary at crubencamp@comcast.net.

SAVE THE DATE!

The Annual Benefit Dinner

for the work of the

*Haitian Health Care Foundation of the
Diocese of Richmond, Inc.*

will be held on

Friday, April 23, 2010

*at the Hermitage Country Club
Manakin-Sabot, Virginia*

I am enclosing a check for \$ _____ payable to: **Commonwealth Catholic Charities.**

I would like to designate it for (please check one):

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Midwifery Training Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Dental care project | <input type="checkbox"/> Orphanage Wellness Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eye & Ear Clinic project | <input type="checkbox"/> Outpatient clinic construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Greatest need |

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City State Zip

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