

Health Talents International January Surgical Clinic Jan 14-21, 2012

Team Participants: Surgeons: Ed Grogan, Tommy Hatchett, Scott Smith ; John Touliatos; Anesthesia: Beth Bailey, Susan Klosterman-Finke, Lawrence Freund, Phyllis Willis; Nurses: Glenn Berkey, Neva Berkey, Leah Bradshaw, Farrell Broman, Mike Caldwell, Sonia Chavez, Brittney Cover-Hatch, Carolyn Hatter, Lindsey Howell, Tina Howell, Ellen McCue, Kelly Smith, Lisa Sobert, Ann Stowe, Jenni Whitefield; Physician Asst/Surgical Tech: Joe Calderon, Jeanette Matthews, Tim Thurston; Translators: Edgar Lucero, Janet Smith, Vicky Schandavel, Dakota West; Sterilization: Carolyn Grogan, Kirk Latson, Jack Rowe, Jericho Steiner; Non-Medical Cargivers: Julie Anderson, Lindsay Bradley, Sharlet Cover, Victoria Cover, Cathy Good, Cindi Latson, Joyce Matlock, Klay Smith, Kristina Smith; Mr. Fix-Its: Jerry Hatter, Conley Matlock, Sam Yaws; UT Knoxville PhD's: Forbes Walker, Annette Wszelaki; Trip Chaplian: Rick Kaufhold; Team Leader: Rick Harper

Our team members arrived from fifteen states via three airlines and five different flights and only one person missed their flight. *It isn't every day that ice on the wings is a problem in Fort Walton, Florida.* Nevertheless, by Saturday evening at 6:00 PM our US surgical team travelers arrived at Clinica Ezell along with every piece of luggage. We unpacked, sorted supplies, prepped the OR and completed pre-op exams before supper and a brief orientation. It was off to bed for several, a meeting to discuss schedules for anesthesia and recovery for others and a short time later...lights out.

Our Sunday morning breakfast time was relaxing as old friends caught up on events from the prior year and new friendships were formed. Four on our team found about Health Talents via the internet and joined us without knowing anyone. Farrell Broman came from Colorado, the "Jersey Shore Girls" Ellen McCue and Lisa Soberg from New Jersey and Sonia Chavez from New Mexico and all were wonderful additions. We completed nine cases on Sunday, three GYN and six general surgeries, three of which were gall bladder cases.

Monday began with a note of sadness as we received a call that Ann Stowe's mother was in critical condition. Within about thirty minutes, we had changed Ann's return flight and sent her on her way to catch the 1:47 PM flight home. We missed Ann and knew she was where she needed to be...by her mother's side. Following a change to our nursing schedule, we pulled a veteran RN from recovery to take Ann's place in OR 3, we were off to the races with five GYN cases for the day and fifteen general cases. Dr. Tommy Hatchett was our lone OBGYN on this trip and he and his OR crew performed a yeoman's task all week long. Late that afternoon, we were joined by Jericho Steiner who lives in Guatemala City and Annette Wszelaki and Forbes Walker, both PhD's from the University of Tennessee's Institute of Agriculture. Annette and Forbes have been coming for several years to work with our community development program and were excited to see that we now have sixteen families in La Fortuna proudly growing vegetable gardens under the tutelage of Oscar Mejia, our senior community health evangelists.

January has been designated Health Talents' lone week for laparoscopic gall bladder surgery as we have a team that works together in the US on a regular basis coming down. Their familiarity with one another allows us to provide excellent care and maximize our limited laparoscopic resources. Of course, they almost wore out the sterilization crew as each set of instruments used for laparoscopic surgery requires 4-5 times the amount of effort to clean and sterilize for the next case. We completed seven GYN cases on Tuesday and thirteen general cases. Six of the general cases were gall bladders and we finished the week with fourteen in total.

While all of this was going on, our "fix it" crew of Jerry Hatter, Conley Matlock and Sam Yaws were busily making repairs, installing a security system and helping keep our facility in good shape. Our Director of Coastal Operations, Carlos Baltodano, does a great job in his own right with the help of Francisco Poncio...and he knows to save a few projects for Sam and his crew.

We unpacked a new portable ultrasound unit on Tuesday and before the week was out, two surgeons had used it on five occasions. This is a great addition to our diagnostic capabilities and future teams will be excited to know of this option. While we've had ultrasound machines for several years, they've always been older, donated models and not always dependable. Dr. Ed Grogan is already making plans on how he can best utilize the ultrasound for next year.

Wednesday proved to be another full day, but surgery was done and everyone out of the OR's by 6:00. Six more GYN cases and seventeen general cases with two of the seventeen general cases being patients scheduled for Thursday. Since we were running ahead of schedule, we moved two patients up for some minor procedures.

Ten patients were originally slated for surgery on Thursday, but two failed to show up and three did not need surgery at this time. So with five cases on Thursday, the OR was empty by 10:00 AM and twenty-six of our group prepared to make a side trip San Lucas Toliman. (We sent a group of eight earlier in the day so they would be back in time for their 3:00 PM shift.) Later that afternoon, things were relaxed and peaceful. So much so that Joe Calderon took a guitar into the OR and sang a few country songs. One of our patients joined in by playing the drums on a plastic water jug as Joe, a Tennessee native, sang Rocky Top to the amusement of the few patients remaining in recovery.

Out tally for the week was seventy-six cases and all patients were discharged on Friday. We had a safe trip to Antigua and everyone enjoyed shopping and seeing the sights.

Rick Kaufhold was our trip chaplain and early in the week he challenged with this statement, "God is more interested in what he is doing in you...than through you." Without question, God did much through us this week. It is equally certain that His spirit was working in us all week long!

Recovery Room Favorite with translator Vicky Schandevell



“Bluegrass” Joe Calderon



January 2012 Team