

HEALTH TALENTS INTERNATIONAL

Surgery Clinic Trip Report

April 30-May 7

Team Members: Surgeons: Drs. Mark Crane, George Robertson, Mark Williams; ***Resident: Drs. Anna Buzadzhi, Derrick Johnston***; Anesthesiologist: Dr. Steve Walsh; CRNA's: Jan DeHaven, Carrie Hovater and Tiffany Horton; Physician Assistant: Jonathan Clemens; Nurses: Mike Caldwell, Lisa Cantrell, ***Kristin Hall***, Cindy Herring, ***Danielle Hopson***, Barbara Jones, Mary Lokey, Tom McIntyre, Ericka Medina, Jodi Pilot, Andy Risner, ***Stephanie Rodriguez***, Barbara Van Beckum, Jane Walsh, Julie Williams and Katherine Williams; Nursing Students: ***Erin Harvill, Brooke Hutson***; Medical Asst: Tina Rhinehart; Sterilization: Cary Sills; Caregivers: ***Donna Black***, Terri Clemens, ***Theresa Connor, Gabe Crane***, Erica Horton, ***Sherry Seyer, John Walsh*** and ***Philip Williams***; Handymen: ***Steve Cantrell*** and ***Danny Hovater*** Translator: Alyssa Beyer, Kathlyn Beyer, Kristin Byer, ***Matt McIntyre***, Rita Sills; Trip Leader: Rick Harper.

(First-timers listed above in bold, italics.)

In addition to our surgical team traveling down on Saturday, we also had a team a mobile dental/medical team from Oklahoma Christian University flying into Guatemala...or that was the plan. Thirty-four people missed their flights on Saturday morning due to weather, air-traffic control issues and a measure of airline dysfunctionality. Before the day was done, travelers were rerouted through Dallas, Miami, Panama City and San Salvador. The line penned by Thomas Paine comes to mind, "these are the times that try men's souls."

On a grateful note, everyone did arrive in country by Sunday morning, the few missing bags arrived on Tuesday, our care for patients was not compromised and the attitudes of our volunteers was commendable.

Our bus departed within an hour of landing and we made it to Clinica Ezell before 5:00 that afternoon. Most of the supplies coming down with this group were with those whose flights were on schedule and we had plenty of time to unpack, inventory supplies and begin seeing patients before supper. Dr. George Robertson, a veteran of more than fifteen years was on one of the delayed flights, so Drs. Mark Crane, Derrick Johnson and Mark Williams handled his consultations that first night. Following a supper of fajitas and a brief orientation, we were off to bed after a lengthy day of travel.

We awoke Sunday morning, refreshed and ready for a peaceful morning and a time of worship. By the time we concluded our worship time with the Montellano church family, our wayward travelers arrived. Once everyone was assembled in the dining room, Dr. Walter conducted our med/surg orientation and we quickly took a moment to introduce ourselves to one another, an activity normally performed on Saturday evening.

Surgery began around 1:30 and we had eight patients scheduled for the day. While all three rooms were up and running with patients on the table, our recovery room nurses met to review their responsibilities, the role of our Guatemalan nurses and aides, our system for handling narcotics, the process for assigning patients to beds as well as intake and discharge responsibilities. A short time later, the lab arrived for donations of O+ blood in the event of an emergency. We were out of the OR at a reasonable time, a smooth start to a trip that began with some bumps.

Our original trip chaplain had to cancel his plans to join this trip, the congregation where he preaches was celebrating 200 years of existence and he could hardly miss such a special occasion. That meant we went to plan B with Rick Harper serving in that capacity and we spent the week discussing being ready and available to serve. Having your *heart ready*, being *God fed* and *Spirit led* were a few of the principles brought out in scripture.

Monday provided a great opportunity to test those very concepts!

During the course of collecting O+ blood on Sunday, the lab tech, Heidi, sought out Barbara Van Beckum, one of our volunteer donors, but mistakenly asked Barbara Jones. Barbara said she was willing, but she was O-. Fast forward to Monday and Heidi receives word at her lab from the hospital in Mazatenango that they are in need of O- blood for a young man going into renal failure and they had been unable to locate a donor anywhere in the country.

Heidi remembers Barbara and places a call to Carlos, our Director of Coastal Operations to ask if Barbara might be willing to donate, and during the conversation he learned that the patient, Lorenzo, was related to our one of our Guatemala team members. Of course, Barbara had already made herself available to serve, her heart was ready, she was God fed and being Spirit led...she said yes!

Over the next twenty-four hours, Barbara donated her blood, was able to meet Lorenzo's parents, Lorenzo was stabilized and moved to Guatemala City for further care and dialysis. God be praised!

Now, back to our surgery patients on Monday, we had twelve general and four urology patients scheduled and day two of surgery went off without a hitch.

Tuesday is the day we normally hit our stride and the May team was no different. Twelve general cases, five urology and other than a stubborn anesthesia machine display that persisting in inverting all data, it was without drama. Fortunately, the daughter of CRNA, Tiffany Horton was with us, and Erica is dyslexic...no problem for her as she assisted her mother

Meanwhile, building contractor Danny Hovater, and bio-medical engineer Steve Cantrell were busy trying to install and repair the x-ray machine in the dental clinic. After several unsuccessful attempts, tenacity paid off and the dental team gave Danny and Steve a standing ovation once it was operational for the first time in many months. Danny and Steve confessed, this was the first occasion they received a standing ovation and I suspect they'll return for another round of Guatemala encouragement in the future.

Over the course of two more days of surgery, another twenty-one general cases were completed and six urology. Final count of sixty-eight surgical patients and more than 700 medical, dental and physical therapy patients were treated.

Once surgery was completed on Thursday, Steve Cantrell was able to repair our miscreant anesthesia machine, icing on the cake if you will. Dr. Mark Williams and his wife, Julie, an RN and also known as OR Angel, left for Guatemala City that afternoon, needing to fly home on Friday morning.

We concluded our week with safe travels to Antigua on Friday morning and then to our respective homes on Saturday. Chapter five of our 2016 surgical storybook is complete and we give God the glory for the burden he has placed on our hearts for the precious people of Guatemala.

(Team photo inverted out of respect for the anesthesia machine in OR 1.)

