

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY MEDICAL PRACTICUM REPORT  
January 2020

The 36th Medical Practicum returned to the Maya villages of Esfuerzo Chejel and Nuevo Amanecer in the Baja Verapaz mountainous region of Guatemala. Working hand in hand with Foundation for the Development of the North (FUNDENOR) workers and Ministry of Social Assistance and Public Health (MASPAS) health care providers in this productive short-term experience in global health affected all involved.

Our group from the United States included 17 undergraduate students, 1 fourth-year pharmacy student, 7 physicians, 2 physician assistants, 1 certified nurse midwife, 1 pharmacist (MU professor Jason Isch), 1 lab coordinator, and 1 dentist. Guatemalan group members included 7 FUNDENOR development workers, 1 MASPAS nurse, 11 English-Spanish interpreters, 9 MASPAS auxiliary nurses (also Spanish-Mayan interpreters). We immersed in these Q'eqchi' and Poqomchi' (Maya) rural communities, where limited cell phone service and electricity helped us be mindful and in the present. Locally prepared food, school room floor sleeping, and bucket showers gave new perspective on what is essential. The mentorship to our students by the providers, four of whom had been undergrad participants themselves, was once again a distinctively special, trip outcome.

Financial and material donations from 38 U.S. individuals, businesses, and organizations, along with Medical Practicum Endowment Fund earnings, enabled us to use \$28,412 to provide our clinic with medicines and medical/dental items. We left extra medicines and clinic supplies with FUNDENOR to support its other health clinics.

Although a trip like this one is about much more than numbers, some quantitative outcomes can provide a helpful perspective: 1,587 medical consultations (344 in women's health); 109 dental patients (269 tooth extractions); 420 lab tests on-site; and 3,244 prescriptions. Our on-site testing included glucose, HbA1c, chlamydia, hemoglobin, urinalysis, and pregnancy, with the MASPAS regional health system processing Pap tests. We had three providers in women's health working closely with the MASPAS nurse in charge of regional women's health, per FUNDENOR's request to expand that specialty emphasis and align with their strategy of educating and empowering village women for community development.

In addition to the pre-trip training *Ethical Challenges in Short-Term Global Health Training* and education on cultural humility, we also continued to learn much from our close partnership with FUNDENOR.

Professor Emeritus Ed Miller accompanied the group in its service work, for perhaps his final time, because 2020 marked the 40th year of the Medical Practicum program. In large part due to Ed's mentorship and support, I am delighted to summarize that the 2020 Medical Practicum in the Baja Verapaz region of Guatemala continued the Manchester tradition of service in a way we believe was worth the effort.

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