

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY MEDICAL PRACTICUM REPORT

January 2026

The 40th Medical Practicum returned to the Baja Verapaz region of Guatemala for the sixth successive time to work with underserved rural Maya communities in a short-term experience in global health. We collaborated with Fundación para el Desarrollo del Norte AQ'AB'AL (FUNDENOR), which facilitated essential connections with Ministry of Social Assistance and Public Health (MASPAS) healthcare providers, as well as with the Community Councils of Urban and Rural Development of Guatemala (COCODES), representing 35 Q'eqchi' and Poqomchi' communities near our clinic in Vista Hermosa.

Warmly welcomed by the people of the region, our group from the United States included 14 undergraduate students, 6 physicians, 3 physician assistants, 1 certified nurse-midwife, 2 pharmacists, 1 dentist, and 2 laboratory technicians. Guatemalan group members included 5 dentists, 6 FUNDENOR development workers, 3 MASPAS nurses, 4 MASPAS auxiliary nurses, and 22 interpreters (English-Spanish and Spanish-Mayan).

While the Medical Practicum's impact is more than numbers, we completed 1,988 medical consultations, 663 tooth extractions, 537 on-site lab tests, 3,312 prescriptions, and 71 fluoride varnishes. Lab tests included glucose, HbA1c, hemoglobin, urinalysis, pregnancy, *H. Pylori*, and Gram stain. MASPAS nurses and auxiliary nurses worked with our team to provide care, process Pap tests, and coordinate referrals for further care.

Mayan radio broadcasts, Facebook and social media livestreams, and WhatsApp groups publicized our clinic days, and some patients even created influential TikToks after their visits.

Support from 25 U.S. individuals, businesses, and organizations, along with earnings from the Medical Practicum Endowment, provided the \$28,556 used to purchase medicines and medical/dental items at substantially reduced costs. Unused supplies remained with FUNDENOR to help support other health clinics in their work with the COCODES.

Few individuals have shaped Manchester's culture of service, global engagement, and excellence in teaching and mentorship as profoundly as Ed Miller. When founding the Medical Practicum in January Session 1981, he created one of Manchester's most enduring and transformative educational programs.

To date, 42 former medical practicum students have returned on trips as providers, facilitating service and experiential learning that are faithful to Manchester's tradition and a testament to the program's lasting impact. As the 2026 Medical Practicum in Vista Hermosa, Baja Verapaz, Guatemala, closes the chapter of January Session trips, a new chapter of Summer Session Medical Practicum trips will open in May 2027. While things change, much remains the same. We believe it is all worth the effort.

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