

Report
MANCHESTER COLLEGE MEDICAL PRACTICUM, JANUARY 2002

During the 20th annual Medical Practicum in Central America, and the 10th to Nicaragua, the medical team delivered health services to 1565 patients (1313 medical consultations and 252 dental consultations) in Mulukuku and the surrounding areas. We are extremely grateful to those who contributed to the success of this program.

Medicines and supplies were provided at reduced costs by Interchurch Medical Assistance, Inc., Blessings International, MAP International, Roche Laboratories, World Dental Relief, and Bayer Corp. Follas Laboratories graciously allowed us to use a portable lab kit. The total cost of medicines and supplies for this year's trip was \$8,828. All of the medicines and supplies were hand carried as 22 large checked bags on our flight and all arrived and passed through customs with us. Because our friends in Managua had diligently processed all necessary official papers, not one bag of medicines or personal items was opened for inspection. All medicines not used during our two weeks of clinics remain at the Maria Luisa Ortiz Clinic in Mulukuku, Nicaragua.

Our team consisted of five physicians, a midwife, three nurses, two dentists, a pharmacist, 14 Manchester College students, two faculty, five translators and four family members. In addition we had four electricians rewiring the clinic to meet the Nicaraguan government's new standards. This year the clinic organizers provided bus transportation to the clinic for people in remote locations as far away as a four-hour drive. During our two weeks of clinic, we saw a large number of patients with malaria, parasites, impetigo, and malnutrition.

We were fortunate to be able to work side-by-side with 26 members of the Maria Luisa Ortiz Women's Cooperative. They have an amazing sense of organization that makes the clinic run very smoothly. They also made sure that our daily needs for food, water, lodgings, laundry and security were met. The Clinic has come a long way since it's beginnings. This year we ate our meals in their newly finished dining hall. This was the first year we have used the three newly acquired dental chairs. What an improvement from using rocking chairs! Our dentists performed a total of 564 extractions. Perhaps in the future the dental team may be able to provide fillings.

The medical practicum experience for students and professionals is priceless. The majority of people in our group had never before seen life in a third world country where health care is unavailable to a large percentage of the population and the average age is 14 years old. We are fortunate to be able to continue working with a community that cares deeply for its people.

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Manchester College Medical Practicum