

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY MEDICAL PRACTICUM REPORT  
January 2016

This 32nd Medical Practicum was the 22nd to Nicaragua and the sixth to the remote villages of the Alto Wangki-Bocay, which are accessible only by dugout canoe. We conducted health clinics for nine days in the Mayangna indigenous communities of Wisu, Amak, and Winah in conjunction with the nationwide Nicaraguan Ministry of Health system of small clinics called Sistema Local de Atención Integral en Salud (SILAIS). This effort was made possible by contributions from many individuals, businesses, and organizations.

Medicines, medical supplies, and dental supplies were acquired using \$17,414 from 32 donors, with Brotherhood Mutual the largest contributor, and from Medical Practicum Endowment Fund earnings. Most medical items were purchased in Nicaragua through Acción Médica Cristiana, a Nicaraguan non-governmental organization that works with non-profit pharmacies in underserved regions. Manchester Family Dentistry of North Manchester, Ind., donated most of the dental items. Medicines and medical supplies not prescribed or used in our health clinics were left with SILAIS.

We performed 1,731 medical consultations, saw 151 dental patients, extracted 256 teeth, completed 677 lab tests, and filled 2,839 prescriptions. Our on-site lab testing included glucose, HbA1c, *H. pylori*, Chagas disease, Chlamydia, hemoglobin, and pregnancy, while Pap smears were left with SILAIS for analysis. Local agricultural university graduates worked with us for the fourth time, deworming 60 cattle, 5 dogs, and 113 pigs.

Team members from the United States were 16 students, 6 physicians, 1 pharmacist, 1 dentist, 1 dental assistant, 1 laboratory coordinator, and 2 support people. In Nicaragua, our group added 8 English-Spanish translators, 1 assistant, 2 physicians, 1 community health worker, 1 nurse, 2 watchmen, the vice-president of the Mayangna Nation, and 13 boatmen. This group of 57 people traveled more than 100 miles in 6 motorized dugout canoes to access the communities, where we ate food prepared by villagers, purified river water, slept in hammocks, and lived mostly without electricity.

Dr. Denise Clark MC'87 has been our pediatrician for the last three years and also participated as a student. Upon returning home from Nicaragua this January, she wrote the following perceptive words:

*"This trip is about providing care – not just medical care, but care to the people who have health worries and frustrations, care to their sense of importance, care for their culture and value, care for the students' investigation of self, care for the students doubts about themselves, care for yourself when needed, care for your traveling companions when they are having an off day. It is life stripped bare to living, being and working with others, for others, and in the presence of so many others that you might feel you are drowning - only to be buoyed up by them and strengthened and so very blessed."*

In closing, we believe the Medical Practicum continues to be worth the effort.

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