

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY MEDICAL PRACTICUM REPORT
January 2018

This 34th Medical Practicum was the 24th to Nicaragua, and the eighth to the Alto Wangki-Bocay autonomous region. In this short-term experience in global health, we accompanied Nicaraguan Ministry of Health providers working in the Mayangna villages of Amak, Wina, and Wisuh.

Our group from the United States included 20 students, six physicians, one physician assistant, one pharmacist, and two dentists. MU President Dave McFadden, as well as former trip leaders Ed Miller and Julie Garber, joined us for part of the trip. Nicaraguan group members included nine English-Spanish translators, one assistant, two local physicians, three medical students, one community health worker, three nurses, three watchmen, three agricultural workers, and 13 boatmen. This group of more than 60 people accessed the communities by more than 100 miles in seven motorized dugout canoes. Without cell phone service or electricity, we focused intensely on the present, constantly interacting with other people and different cultures and adapting to unfamiliar living challenges such as eating locally prepared food, drinking purified river water, sleeping in hammocks and using latrines.

Financial and material donations from 51 U.S. individuals, businesses, and organizations, along with Medical Practicum Endowment Fund earnings, enabled us to purchase medicines and medical/dental supplies for \$18,706. We left extra medicines and supplies with the health clinics. Unused veterinary medicines and supplies were donated to the *Proyecto de Extensión y Desarrollo Comunitario Amak (PEDCA)*, a part of the *Universidad Nacional Agraria (UNA)*; National Agrarian University in Managua), with whom we are now collaborating.

The longest-lasting impacts of our trip are difficult to quantify. Some numbers, however, provide a window into our work: 1,669 medical consultations; 305 dental patients; 698 teeth extracted; more than 300 lab tests; more than 408 vaccinations; 2,652 prescriptions; and more than 2,000 animals attended. Our on-site lab testing included glucose, HbA1c, chlamydia, hemoglobin, urinalysis, and pregnancy, with the regional health system processing the Pap smears.

An 11-day, summer coordination trip to the Alto Wangki-Bocay with the elected president of the *Gobierno Territorial Indígena* (Indigenous Territorial Government) for the *Mayangna Sauni Bu* region continued the development of relationships and cooperation between the Medical Practicum and those communities. Similarly, that trip set up a collaboration with PEDCA to provide more local sustainability.

Since 1981, 126 different U.S. health care provider volunteers, including 48 MU alumni and 25 former trip students, have paid their own expenses to join Medical Practicum trips. Along with more than 43,000 patient consultations, they provided unparalleled mentoring for the 393 MU student participants. The 2018 Medical Practicum continued this tradition of service in the Alto Wangki-Bocay. We believe it was worth the effort.

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