

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY MEDICAL PRACTICUM REPORT
January 2019

After 24 consecutive trips to Nicaragua, political instability required the 35th Medical Practicum to relocate, finding purchase in the Baja Verapaz mountainous region of Guatemala.

Accompanying Ministry of Social Assistance and Public Health (MASPAS) health care providers and Foundation for the Development of the North (FUNDENOR) workers in the Maya villages of Esfuerzo Chejel and Nuevo Amanacer provided a powerful short-term experience in global health for those involved.

Our group from the United States included 19 undergraduate students, 2 pharmacy students (4th year), 6 physicians, 2 physician assistants, 1 nurse practitioner, 1 pharmacist, 1 physical therapist, and 2 dentists. Guatemalan group members included 9 English-Spanish interpreters, 8 MASPAS auxiliary nurses (Spanish-Mayan interpreters), 1 MASPAS nurse, and 5 FUNDENOR development workers. In these rural Q'eqchi' and Poqomchi' (Maya) communities, limited cell phone service and electricity helped us focus on the present, listening to others as group members adapted to eating locally-prepared food, sleeping on school room floors, and taking bucket showers. The priceless mentoring of our students by our providers was, once again, a tremendous outcome of the trip.

Financial and material donations from 44 U.S. individuals, businesses, and organizations, along with Medical Practicum Endowment Fund earnings, enabled us to use \$25,600 to stock our clinic with medicines and medical/dental supplies. We left extra medicines and clinic supplies with FUNDENOR to use at other health clinics it facilitates.

Although a trip like this one is about more than just numbers, these quantitative outcomes provide some useful perspective: 1,986 medical consultations; 310 dental patients; 574 teeth extracted; 420 lab tests; and 3,694 prescriptions filled. On-site testing included glucose, HbA1c, chlamydia, hemoglobin, urinalysis, and pregnancy, with the MASPAS regional health system processing Pap tests. Our two specialists in women's health saw patients with the MASPAS nurse in charge of women's health in the region, complementing each other well. Similarly, this year's greater women's health emphasis also reinforced and augmented FUNDENOR efforts to educate and empower village women to effect holistic community development.

We continue to learn from the growing body of ethics literature relevant for the short-term experience in global health that is the Medical Practicum. Before the trip, students now complete the online *Ethical Challenges in Short-Term Global Health Training* and an in-person training on cultural humility, as well as less formal assignments. Towards this end, our close partnerships with FUNDENOR and MASPAS are essential.

The 2019 Medical Practicum in the Baja Verapaz region of Guatemala continued MU's tradition of service in a way we believe was worth the effort.

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