

# The Boletín

Spring 2020

Medicos en Accion  
Guatemala Surgical Teams



## Antigua Report

Thanks to the generous support of our volunteers and donors, we had another successful mission to Antigua! The team utilized the 4 operating rooms to perform 183 surgical procedures for 138 individual patients:

**General Surgery** completed 22 procedures

**Gynecology** completed 60 procedures

**ENT** completed 57 procedures.

This year we had gynecology surgery through the second week so fewer ENT cases were scheduled.

Our team had the opportunity to again share in the capacity and cost of a shipping container to Guatemala in August 2019. We shipped an increased supply of drapes and gowns this year to try to provision for two years and decrease shipping costs to every second year. As a higher number of gynecology surgeries were performed this year, the team will need to purchase and transport some gynecology drapes for the 2021 mission. We are again grateful to Dr. Joe Delvicario of Health for Humanity who organized the purchase of these supplies through St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver and provided a location for us to drop off several boxes of supplies provided again this year by the Compassionate Resource Warehouse (Victoria, B.C.).

## Hearing Clinic:

Working with a single audiologist, the team was able to see 87 patients in the clinic, conduct hearing tests with 44 patients, fit 29 new hearing aids, provide 18 new molds, repair and program 45 hearing aids of repeat patients, and refer 15 patients to Otolaryngology for medical consultation.

For several years the Audiology program at the University of Washington undertook to train hearing aid technicians in northern Guatemala. One of the local people they trained has assisted our ENT team in the Petén on two missions. This year the team invited the technician, Oscar Cano, to join our team and work with the Hearing Clinic volunteers in Antigua. Our intent was to support his learning through contact with the audiologist as well as to have him obtain the hearing assessments. This experience was successful and the team looks forward to Oscar joining us in the future.

Planning for the November 2020 mission to San Benito and the 2021 mission to Antigua is underway. We have made a slight change to the fee structure for the Antigua mission as we appreciate many nursing volunteers are concerned about the cost. We have also reduced the application donation amount.

Please note: in the event a Guatemala mission must be canceled because of a Canadian government travel warning about COVID-19, deposits will be refunded



## Surgical Team Members Antigua 2020

### Surgical/Audiology Team Members

#### Antigua 2020

##### Surgery

Herb Wong, Norm Weir, Amelie Foucault, Sari Kives, John Cleland, Alysha Nensi, Jennifer Soucie, Donald Lovely, Daniel Okavim, Elyse Lackie, Albert Rosengarten.

##### Anesthesia

Murray Reimer, Gordon Wood, Harold Booy, Patrick Rice, Grant Stefanyshen.

##### Nurses PAR

Libby McMullen, Joanne Marceau, Catherine MacKenzie,, Kelly Phillips, Annika Dierckx, Ann Szostakiwskyj, Shaelynn Johnston.

##### Nurses OR

Joanne Richard, Gina Hawryschuk, Robin Edwards, Janet Hardie, Karen Hill, Mina McCrea, Nancy Doherty, Jonathan Hsuing

##### Audiology

Jean-Gregoire Roveda, Oscar Arden

##### Translators

Murray McCallum, Florrie McCallum, Julian Szostakiwskyj

##### Support

Cindy Reimer, Brenda Uhrynuk, Laurel Cleland, Jocelyn Faire, Ian Doherty.

*Thank you*

Our work in Guatemala is only possible through the generous donation of time, expertise, money and supplies by our enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers and supporters in North America and Guatemala.

## San Benito Adventure

The March mission to San Benito was a very different mission with surprises each day. The team began to travel just as borders began to close. Two members, Murray and Cindy Reimer, never got past Toronto airport. Passengers were removed from the flight as borders closed. (Unfortunately, Canada Customs seized our anaesthesia drugs even though the aircraft never left the Toronto gate. They were considered to be 'importing' drugs.)

With no anaesthetist, but with supplies and medications stored from the earlier mission, the hospital contracted with local anaesthetists for services. This resulted in additional fees charged to patients and a few had to cancel because of the additional cost.

As Guatemala shut down, so did transportation systems. With the combination of no buses running, social distancing and control of numbers, many patients could not access the hospital. Regardless, the team had a very busy ENT and hearing clinic on Sunday. Ninety-nine patients were seen in both clinics and 17 surgeries were booked.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday was also busy with clinic visits after the OR. Norm cleaned and treated many ear infections and other conditions. We also started a list of surgeries for November as we were informed we could not fill the remainder of our list because other surgical groups needed the OR. By Friday, 13 surgeries were completed and 22 hearing aids dispensed.

Departing Flores became a challenge as airlines began cutting service and hotels closed under government orders. Joanne reported that she and Norm's flight was changed five times. However, Friday evening the five team members were able to depart for Guatemala

## About Medicos-en-Accion Canada

Formed in 2001, Medicos-en-Accion's volunteers provide surgical services, community health and education support in Guatemala and The Gambia.

##### Medicos-en-Accion Society

450 Greenstone Drive  
Kamloops, British Columbia  
V2C 1N9

##### Medicos-en-Accion/Guatemala Surgical Division

1431 Frontier Place  
Nanaimo, BC V9X 1P5

##### Medicos-en-Accion Board

President: Koos Meijerhof  
Vice President/Team Leader The Gambia: Gareth Eeson  
Vice President Surgery Guatemala: Brenda Uhrynuk  
Vice President /Team Leader Medicine Guatemala: Brian Poelzer  
Treasurer: Dennis Wallis  
Secretary: Bill Beaton  
Website: Blake Farren

##### Medicos-en-Accion/Guatemala Surgical Teams

Vice President: Brenda Uhrynuk  
Team Leader Surgery Guatemala: Norm Weir, Jennifer Soucie  
Secretary: Cindy Reimer  
Communications: David Hill-Turner  
Volunteer orientation: Joanne Marceau



medicoscanada@gmail.com



Medicos-en-Accion Guatemala Surgical Team



www.medicos-en-accion.com

Medicos-en-Accion is a registered charity in Canada.

City and were able to secure seats on a plane dispatched from the US to pick up Americans and, luckily, Canadians.

Despite this, the team reports it was a successful mission. The people in need were served and the hospital staff were very helpful. As a bonus, the weather was beautiful, the sunsets colourful and Flores was quiet and peaceful.

##### March 2020 team:

Norm Weir, Joanne Richard, Murray Reimer, Cindy Reimer, Odra Flores, Roxanna Just, Megan Funk, Oscar Arden.



Day one: ENT and hearing clinic waiting area.

Photo: Hospital Shalom



# The 2021 Antigua Mission

## January 29 - February 12

including travel days

Applications are now being accepted for 2021 on a first received basis. This means a fully completed application form, signed waiver, certificates and for physicians, a copy of your degree, specialization certificate and current license. If your license will be renewed after your application is posted, please send proof of your renewal after you receive it.



Please ensure your application is complete *before* you mail it. Your application must include a cheque for \$250 CDN, payable to *Medicos en Accion* or it will not be considered. If you are not accepted to the team, you will be notified via email and your cheque will be shredded. For those accepted to the mission, the amount will be deducted from your final donation and expense payment.

We regret that because of limited accommodation, friends and family visiting with team members should make their own hotel arrangements.

**Application deadline: September 9, 2020**

### San Benito Mission

**October 30 - November 6, 2020** (ENT and hearing clinic only)  
OR and PAR nurses are encouraged to apply. The mission is based in Flores. **Application deadline: August 28, 2020**

**To help us with planning, please apply early!**

## Fundraising for your Medicos mission?

Medicos missions operate on a full cost recovery model and for our team that adds up to \$800USD per person for the two week mission. Costs are creeping up and currency exchange on the Canadian dollar adds to the burden.

Many volunteers have become very imaginative in raising funds to offset mission costs. Please remember that if you do receive donations to cover the cost of your trip, please keep track of contact information and amounts so that your donors can be issued a tax receipt for 2020.

### How to make a donation?

#### Cheque:

Some volunteers ask friends and family for donations to support their mission. Cheques can be sent to Medicos en Accion at our Kamloops address. Please ensure that the donor identifies that their cheque is to support your mission expenses. Cheques are payable to Medicos en Accion.

#### On-Line:

Medicos en Accion works with Canadahelps.org to facilitate donations. To use this convenient option:

1. Go to [medicos-en-accion.com](http://medicos-en-accion.com). Select **Donations** from the list in the left column.
2. Click on **Fund** and scroll down the menu to **#4 Medicos-en-Accion Guatemala Surgeries**.
3. In the **Message** box enter the information to route the donation. For example, to support a specific volunteer, enter the person's name and also the mission they are volunteering for: San Benito 2020, Antigua 2021 etc..
4. Complete the donation form and then click on **Complete Donation Now**.

#### ♦ Important

For 2020 tax receipts, donations must be made before December 31, 2020.



For information about the missions or fundraising, please contact us at

[medicoscanada@gmail.com](mailto:medicoscanada@gmail.com)

**YES, I want to make a difference to someone's life!**

I will sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ surgeries X \$75CDN each: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your donation to:  
Medicos-en-Accion (Guatemala Surgeries)  
c/o 450 Greenstone Drive  
Kamloops, BC V2C 1N9

Make cheques payable to: Medicos-en-Accion

Thank you. Tax receipts are issued for donations supporting this project.

