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Winter 2011

International Update Newsletter

Being the Change: Ending “Duffle-Bag” Medicine

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As the American medical community continues its involvement in global healthcare, critics continue to criticize the practice of so-called “duffle bag medicine,” a reference from a 2006 JAMA article which addressed the lack of sustainability of international medicine. Through the founding of the non-profit organization ‘Heal the World,’ however, the methods of international healthcare have been advanced, and we can now ensure both effective and sustainable healthcare.

In 1988 Paul Farmer established a

method of healthcare in Haiti that revolutionized the way physicians think of global health. His well-known method involved educating local healthcare workers, using local resources, expanding the local infrastructure, and working with the community to help it “heal itself.” Using this idea we can better address important global health challenges such as the “brain drain” that continues to plague much of Africa and Southeast Asia.

(On the picture: Natasha Demerhi performing HIV tests in post-war Gulu, Northern Uganda)

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Save the Date!

2011 AAFP Family Medicine Global Health Workshop

- ✓ Learn the latest in global family medicine development;
- ✓ Develop lasting approaches to sustainability issues;
- ✓ Network with leading international developers;
- ✓ Earn CME Prescribed credits.

October 13-15, 2011
Hotel Salomar
San Diego, California

Visit www.aafp.org/intl/workshop for details



American Academy of Family Physicians
Center for International Health Initiatives
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Being the Change

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On a trip to post-war Northern Uganda in 2009, our team addressed this challenge by using the country's own resources – Clinical Officers. These healthcare workers are the equivalent of U.S. Physician's Assistants, and in Africa their degree is much less marketable than a Medical Degree. This essentially leaves Clinical Officers as the only medical hope left for war-stricken towns of Africa. On our trip we treated 1,749 patients and distributed 93,000 vitamins, 600 reading and sunglasses, 400 pounds of medicine, and 5,510 packages of agricultural seeds. We completed 281 lab tests, did 74 ultrasounds, fed over 1,000 people, de-wormed 975 villagers, and counseled over 100 trauma victims. At the end of the day, however, our most sustainable impact was teaching the clinical officers through classes in infectious disease and medical care, permitting them to care for the local community after we left.

Whether improving water filtration systems in Costa Rica, working with local volunteers to desensitize children to the sounds of war in Africa, or completing dental hygiene education in India, the impact of sustainable care must be recognized as the most priceless asset that we carry with us.



Natasha Demehri (5th from right) and fellow Medical Students from FSU College of Medicine stand alongside their partnered Clinical Officers in Gulu, Northern Uganda. Along with a group of physicians they helped train the Clinical Officers and learn from them to help provide sustainable care



WONCA Conferences in 2011 at a Glance:

See Wonca website www.globalfamilydoctor.com for more information

❖ 2011

21 – 24 February	Asia-Pacific Regional Conference	Cebu Philippines	Paradigms of Family Medicine: Bridging Old Traditions with New Concepts	http://wonpacebu2011.org/
8 – 11 September	Europe Regional Conference	Warsaw Poland	Family Medicine - Practice, Science and Art	http://www.woncaeurope2011.org

AAFP Family Medicine Global Health Conferences and Meetings in 2011:

- International Networking Meeting, a special event during the 2011 AAFP Scientific Assembly, Orlando, FL, September 14-17, 2011. Contact Alex Ivanov for more information – aivanov@aafp.org
- Annual AAFP Family Medicine Global Health Workshop, San Diego, CA, October 13-15, 2011. See the workshop website www.aafp.org/intl/workshop for more information