



Needed: Haiti Volunteers

Volunteer orthopods are desired for periods of one month.

(In special cases, shorter periods would be considered.)

To: OTA Member Haiti Volunteers

From: John E Herzenberg, MD
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I just returned (June 17) from a week mission to **Adventist Hospital in Port au Prince, Haiti**. This hospital survived the earthquake intact, and has a very reasonable infrastructure compared to most other sites in Haiti.

Dr. Scott Nelson of Loma Linda University has been staffing **Adventist** since January 14, but recently (June 20th) returned to the USA. There is an **orthopedic void until Scott's replacement arrives in November**. Scott has done an amazing job at organizing the facility, and here is what you can expect if you volunteer there:

1. Three Haitian anesthesiologists
2. Three air conditioned OR's (two large, one small)
3. Modern, large 9600 C-arm in OR, and radiolucent table
4. Digital x-ray machine in clinic
5. Sythes DHS, large frag, small frag, cannulated screws
6. Hemiarthroplasty set
7. Pedicle screw set for spinal instrumentation
8. Ex-fix (Hoffman, Synthes large ex-fix, Orthofix, TSF)
9. Wound VACs
10. SIGN nail set
11. Full time ex-pat hospital administrator, and nursing supervisor, both on location.

The volunteer program is organized by the [Loma Linda Global Help Initiative](#), and they have a full time coordinator in California to insure that the teams that go complement each other. Generally there are about 30 volunteers at any given time (nurses, docs, PT's, etc).

Read more: <http://curecaribe.blogspot.com/>

However, there is a **desperate need for orthopedic volunteers** (and anesthesiologists). You can contact **Alex Sokolov:** asokolov@llu.edu to start the volunteer process.

Your expenses will include airfare and you need to bring most of your own food. Accommodations at the hospital are rustic: army cots with mosquito nets. Local hotel (Auberge) is available, but I recommend staying at the hospital.

Translators are plentiful and always present. Locals (patients and staff) are very **friendly, appreciative, and fun to work with**. We felt very secure and safe in the hospital, and even ventured out to visit a nearby tent city.

There is still much untreated earthquake trauma, and complications of earthquake trauma (non-unions, malunions, osteomyelitis). There is also a constant flow of new trauma, as well as many elective cases if you are so inclined, including both adult and pediatric. **We operated on over 50 cases in 6-1/2 days, using 2-3 rooms, and operating past midnight on four nights.**

This is a bit unusual, but it shows you what is potentially possible at this facility. **Cases included ORIF's, pedicle screws for T12-L1 fx-dislocation, hemiarthroplasties for femoral neck fractures, percutaneous pinning of femoral neck fracture, SIGN interlocking nails for acute and old trauma, osteotomies for malunion/nonunion, bone grafting of nonunions, Ex fix cases, Ilizarov bone transport, I&D's, VAC changes, and elective clubfeet (an interest of mine).**

I took a team of 18 from my hospital, including residents, fellows, nurses, anesthesiologist, PT, and other helpers, but you can also go there lean and mean with a team of yourself and one or two assistants. **My high school age daughter was on our team, and had a great experience helping with the children.** Mini-dream team would include Orthoped, O.R. nurse, floor nurse, PA or resident, and anesthesiologist. Every member of our team felt that this was a **life altering experience**.

The disaster situation in Haiti is far from over. Hundreds of thousands are still living under tarps, in make shift tents, and hunger is rampant. Haiti is still in desperate need of expert medical help from North America.

If you have basic orthopedic trauma skills, you can make a very worthwhile contribution here.

You must be flexible, willing to work hard, and be accommodating. It is hot in Haiti (95 in the day and 80 at night). Adventist has running water (cold), purified drinking water, flush toilets, and cold showers (actually quite refreshing after a long day). **I highly recommend this location.** Prior experience in developing world is desirable but not required.

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**It takes several days to get our volunteers oriented and functioning efficiently.
Week long visits do not provide the continuity needed and
place undue strain on the local infrastructure.**

Questions? Feel free to call me...John Herzenberg (Baltimore, MD) 443.562.3300.