

August 1, 2010

The *100 Beds for Haiti Campaign* was created in response to an urgent request from the Hôpital Sacré Coeur where a shortage of hospital beds is compounding the extreme challenges facing its health care professionals and the patients they are treating under the most difficult circumstances.

**The desperate need for this type of assistance has become clear:**

Prior to the earthquake, Hôpital Sacré Coeur (HSC) had 73 permanent inpatient beds with plans to expand the hospital in time. Following the disaster, the hospital made *emergency expansions* to meet the inpatient needs of an additional 400+ patients, many airlifted from Port au Prince by U.S. Coast Guard and Navy helicopters with serious trauma injuries requiring care that only HSC could provide.

As Haiti's largest functioning and best private hospital, with a full Haitian staff and a volunteer staff of trauma surgeons and orthopedic surgeons, a *permanent expansion* is a priority. HSC needs an additional 100 beds to meet the urgent demand to serve more patients now, as well as to support the sustainable, long-term recovery and development of Haiti for the future.

Misch Whitaker, a nurse who spent two weeks volunteering at HSC, shared her experience with us, noting: *"It would be great to start expanding the number of beds to match the number of patients. Having proper beds improves patient outcome by limiting post-op discomfort, that in turn aids in speeding physical therapy (PT) tolerance. PT promotes rehabilitation but also prevents complications such as pneumonia and [deep-vein] thrombosis (DVT). Plus, decubitis ulcers (bed sores) seem to form quicker in patients who are cot-ridden as opposed to a bed."*

**Supporting patient recovery means supporting hospitals:**

Hôpital Sacré Coeur was built in 1968 by a Catholic congregation, Brothers of the Sacred Heart, who established the Center for the Rural Development of Milot (CRUDEM) to build roads, schools, wells and several co-operative ventures in the town of Milot, Haiti. Over the years, led by Dr. Ted Dubuque and a grassroots movement originating in St. Louis, MO, HSC grew from an eight-bed clinic to a 73-bed hospital and to Haiti's best healthcare center.

In 1993, The CRUDEM Foundation was established as a non-profit organization in the United States and took over the operations of HSC. Since then, HSC has provided 56,701 outpatient visits, conducted 1,227 surgeries, enabled 12,840 *antiretroviral* clinic visits and organized 10,075 community-health patient visits.

Located 70 miles from the earthquake's epicenter, the northern Haitian town of Milot has received thousands of displaced women, children and families that have migrated and resettled in the surrounding areas seeking food, shelter and medical care, greatly expanding the population served by HSC. Hôpital Sacré Coeur is overwhelmed by the influx of patients and has been forced to set up a makeshift "Tent City" using cots and mats to treat patients they don't have beds for.

**With more patients to care for than beds available, doctors and nurses are hard pressed:**

*"I would say in an average day I personally did between five and eight cases,"* says Dr. Brian Liddy, a visiting anesthesiologist at Hôpital Sacré Coeur. *"The OR was doing at least 30 cases a day. I was there late February and they had done upwards of 800 cases for 2010. Last year they did 1200 cases in the entire year."*

*“We knew it was as bad if not worse for the patients. I remember a patient that just had a revision of his lower-leg external-fixation device. So a med-student and I carried him across the street [to a cot in the “Tent City”] in the pouring rain and we were all soaked. The patient plopped himself down on his cot, KAPHLUMPH! He and his family thanked us profusely. All the other patients were peering out from their sheets to see what all the commotion was. I couldn’t help think, ‘I have absolutely nothing to complain about.’ But, I really think he would have benefited from a real hospital bed. The cots are far from the least comfortable thing to sleep on, but post fracture fixation patients do require a bit of malleability in their resting quarters.”*

**As time passes the recovery process and recovery needs continue:**

*“We still have 300 patients in Hôpital Sacré Coeur and still have over 50 volunteers a week,” says Peter Kelly, MD, President of the CRUDEM Foundation. “Our staff continues to work without complaint and we are receiving calls from around Haiti to accept patients.”*

Influenced by a trip to northern Haiti in 2009 as a part of my work in healthcare with Haitian immigrants in the Dominican Republic, I founded the *100 Beds for Haiti Campaign* in response to the pressing need of the recovering population and organizations working in healthcare in Haiti. Through a diverse network of young professionals with experience in public health, economic development, law, media, marketing, and disaster management, *100 Beds for Haiti* aims to raise the necessary resources to help Hôpital Sacré Coeur rise to meet the crushing demands of a population desperate for quality medical care. **I am reaching out to you and your organization today to help in anyway you can. We are currently looking for hospital bed donations and financial contributions for shipping costs.** We have already delivered 70 hospital beds and, with your help, will deliver at least 30 more.

For more information and to stay updated on our progress, please visit us online at <http://100bedsforhaiti.com>. I welcome your questions, comments, and input and encourage you to contact me directly if you would like additional information.

Kind regards,  
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