



**The George Washington University Medical Center  
Office of International Medicine Programs  
Affiliation with Project Medishare  
Thomonde, Haiti**

**Project Description  
Spring 2011 & Summer 2011**

Haiti's healthcare system is a reflection of the state of economic and civil destitution that faces the country today. Haiti has an estimated population of 9,446,000 and is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Its population growth rate, 2.08 per year, is one of the highest in the Western Hemisphere, and the World Health Organization lists the country's health indicators as far below the world's average. The WHO portrays the health disparities between the United States and Haiti as staggering. According to the UNDP, Haiti spent 7.6% of its Gross Domestic Product on healthcare in 2004, an increase from 1990's 1.2%. However, people are still dying needlessly in Haiti of preventable and treatable diseases.

Project Medishare (Medishare), a 501©3 non-profit organization registered in the state of Florida, was founded in 1995 by Dr. Barth Green and Dr. Arthur Fournier. The first team of faculty from the University of Miami Schools of Medicine and Nursing were charged with assessing the healthcare situation in Haiti in order to explore ways in which they could improve health conditions for Haiti's largely impoverished population. Since the first trip, Medishare has developed partnerships with many remarkable organizations, physicians, and allied health professionals who share a strong belief in social justice and the right to quality healthcare.

Sharing the goals of GWUMC, Medishare's mission is to share its human and technical resources with its Haitian partners in the quest to achieve quality healthcare for all. They aim to accomplish their mission in several ways:

- A continuing commitment to rural communities by establishing and funding sustainable programs;
- Training of Haitian physicians, nurses and allied health professionals; and
- Providing technology, supplies and equipment to our clinic in Thomonde and other affiliated programs throughout Haiti.

To assist Medishare in meeting its goals and to promote health in the underprivileged societies of Haiti, GWUMC and Medishare established a partnership in October of 2004. Through this partnership, GWUMC offers health education, nutrition assessments, maternal and child health and reproductive health services, information to increase child survival, water and sanitation assistance, and HIV/AIDS and TB information to the people of the Central Plateau. Moreover,



GW has helped to establish health information systems for the Haitian people by developing the healthcare infrastructure in several communities and facilities in rural Haiti.

Medishare has been granted permission by the Haitian Ministry of Health to oversee the Health Center of Marmont, an area situated in the Second Section of the Commune of Hinche, in the Central Plateau of Haiti. It is composed of 52 agglomerations and has a population of approximately 9,000. GWUMC was asked to adopt Marmont Health Center as its own, and thus has begun sending medical missions to the site, as well as offering clinical rotations to medical students and residents, and internships for public health students in Marmont.

The Marmont Health Center is managed by two LPNs who live nearby. Community members infrequently visit the center, and community health activities are virtually non-existent at the site despite the presence of two health agents who generally work without supervision or clearly defined plans. However, when a mission team is deployed, patients will arrive to be seen by the American physicians and students by the hundreds. The health center will hopefully soon employ an Obstetrician and a resident working full time. Nevertheless, more assistance is needed in the clinic as the population in Marmont continues to grow.

GWUMC's goal is to visit the area a minimum of twice per year to assist in managing the Marmont Health Center and maximizing the use of the facility. The Center consists of five patient rooms, one dedicated to Pediatrics. A new obstetrics ward is being added to accommodate for the rising number of pregnancies in the region.

Since 2004, GWUMC has sent six interdisciplinary teams on medical missions to the Central Plateau of Haiti to assist Project Medishare with their growing needs. The groups consisted of physicians specializing in Emergency Medicine (1 MD), Internal Medicine (5 MD's), Pediatrics (4 MD's), ObGyn (1 MD) and Surgery (1 MD); medical students (48, MS I-IV); public health students (23); residents (3); EMT (2); and IMP staff members (3). During these missions, approximately 5,050 patients were seen in a clinic or in their homes. Teams have also collected thousands of dollars worth of medications for mission clinics and Project Medishare. Additionally, a mission is currently being planned for March of 2011.

We hope to continue these successful missions in the future in order to broaden the education of GW students and provide Haitians with access to essential healthcare. More than this, we hope to provide those we serve with a better understanding of the healthcare issues that face their communities, and to encourage Haitians and Americans to work together in developing thoughtful and effective solutions to Haiti's pervasive challenges.