

## Healing, Teaching and Discovery in Haiti, South Africa and Tanzania

*Mackenzie Cook, M.D., Alexis Moren, M.D., M.P.H. and Estin Yang, M.D.*

Surgical resident interest in international health is at an all-time high and will likely continue to grow given the simultaneous trend among medical students. This interest in international surgery complements the rural surgical focus of the OHSU general surgery residency, and has led to new and exciting partnership opportunities. A number of surgical residents have recently taken the “healing, teaching and discovery” mission of OHSU beyond the Portland city limits to follow their international interests.



*Alexis Moren, M.D. with  
Martin Schreiber, M.D. in Haiti*

In October, **Libby Windell, D.O.** and **Alexis Moren, M.D., M.P.H.** traveled with the Lane Haitian Relief (LHR) team in Belle Anse, Haiti, led by Dr. Snell Fontus, the U.S. team leader. They worked under the guidance of **Karen Kwong, M.D.** and **Martin Schreiber, M.D.** as the first residents involved in a long-standing relationship between LHR and Dr. Philippe of the Centre Medical Emanuel. Working with American and Haitian surgeons, Drs. Windell and Moren participated in more than 30 surgical cases over the course of 5 days and staffed a clinic that saw over 800. Cases ranged from hysterectomies to complex ENT cases to management of tropical infectious diseases. The LHR team travels to Belle Anse twice a year, and in April 2014 will be accompanied by **Lucia Chou, M.D.** and **Lillian DiGiacomo, M.D.**



*Libby Windell, D.O. in Haiti*

**Estin Yang, M.D.** is currently studying and conducting independent research at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, as part of the Masters in Public Health program.

Continuing an institutional relationship pioneered by **Megan Frost, M.D.** and **Katrine Lofberg, M.D.** under the faculty mentorship of **Sanjay Krishnaswami, M.D.**, Dr. Yang has spent nearly 18 months in South Africa, completing coursework and research. His thesis focuses on South Africans undergoing appendectomies at public and private hospitals and compares their journey of care, from accessing hospitals, their operative management, and recovery at home. Dr. Yang is joined by his wife, Esther, who has been working in Cape Town as a classical music reviewer and program administrator for an ophthalmology NGO.



*Estin Yang, M.D. with wife Esther in South Africa*



*Mackenzie Cook, M.D. operating in  
Tanzania*

**Mackenzie Cook, M.D.** traveled to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, along with **James Peck, M.D.** as part of the pilot partnership between Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) and the Alliance for Global Clinical Training, a non-profit that grew out of the Pacific Coast Surgical Association. This organization seeks to link representatives from American surgical programs with the faculty and residents of MUHAS. The partnership aims to support the education, development and academic activities of Tanzanian colleagues and seeks to achieve a year round presence by rotating American faculty and residents for shorter, recurring trips. During their one month stay in November 2013, Drs. Cook and Peck were amazed by the massive disease burden due to cancer and impressed by the dedication and intellectual curiosity of their host surgeons.

Although apprehension remains about residents operating overseas, especially in a location without a preexisting educational infrastructure, this proved to be of little concern in either

Haiti or Tanzania. The education of the residents was overseen by OHSU faculty, and all remarked that the broad exposure to different pathology and making do with limited resources resulted in challenges that were satisfying to overcome. While resident cases are not yet counted towards ACGME requirements, there is interest in developing and expanding the curriculum. With an established curriculum, these rotations can offer surgical residents an immense amount of opportunity to advance their education and surgical skills, while providing a sustainable enterprise to foreign partners.

With any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Cook ([cookmac@ohsu.edu](mailto:cookmac@ohsu.edu)), Dr. Moren ([moren@ohsu.edu](mailto:moren@ohsu.edu)), or Dr. Yang ([yang@ohsu.edu](mailto:yang@ohsu.edu)).