

Report to the Canadian Friends of Hôpital Albert Schweitzer Improving Maternal and Child Health Outcomes in Haiti 2023 Activities

Hôpital Albert Schweitzer Haiti (HAS) and the individuals we serve in the Artibonite Valley are deeply thankful for the generous support received from Canadian Friends of Hôpital Albert Schweitzer. This support enables HAS to persist in its ongoing mission of delivering health services to a population encompassing 350,000+ individuals who rely on our expert care and assistance. We particularly appreciate the invaluable contribution of CFHAS towards bolstering maternal and child health services at HAS.

Throughout 2023 and into 2024, Haiti has been facing an ongoing humanitarian crisis and the situation across the country has continued to deteriorate. Haitians are living in a state of danger and fear as gang violence escalates unchecked. The government has been non-functional, reaching a low point in February with the Prime Minister forced to resign. At that time, gangs seized power, releasing thousands of prisoners from jails and forcing airports and ports to close for over a month. With gangs also controlling road access, there are shortages of everything from food and water to fuel to vitally needed medicines. The future remains to be seen as a transitional government council installed in Haiti just days ago begins its work.



In the midst of it all, HAS has continued to achieve the near impossible. While 80% of hospitals in Haiti have had to close during this crisis, HAS has remained open and carries on with providing life-saving care. In this difficult time, we have succeeded in creating a safe space for our patients and we continue to be a resource to all who come to our doors.

The severity of the crisis in Haiti has had some impact on the service numbers at HAS for 2023. Overall, hospital activity was down 15% over the prior year and community health activity was down 20%. Considering the massive challenges faced by our staff and the tenuous security situation which rendered many people unable to leave their homes except in health emergencies, it is miraculous that HAS has been able to continue to provide our services to the Artibonite. We take immense pride in the accomplishments of our dedicated team of 500+ Haitian employees throughout the past year. With 11,271 hospital admissions, 1,697 surgeries performed, and 50,611 home health visits conducted by our community health workers, our commitment to service remains unwavering.

Highlights of HAS' key maternal and child health services are featured in the following pages.

HOSPITAL-BASED SERVICES

Our specialized surgical care at HAS continues to stand out as a cornerstone of our service provision. Surgical services are particularly critical for female patients, who constituted 70% of all hospital surgeries in 2023. This trend primarily stems from the substantial volume of high-risk Cesarean sections performed (666 in total), indicating the vital need for this specialty care.

Women's Health Services - Obstetrics and Gynecology

HAS's reputation for high-quality, compassionate maternity care remains among the best in all of Haiti. **Maternal, newborn, and pediatric care account for over 60% of hospital admissions in the past year.**



Mothers within HAS' service network benefit from at least one consultation with a skilled professional prior to childbirth. Our esteemed medical personnel persist in administering life-saving, resource-intensive care to an expanding cohort of expectant mothers contending with severe conditions such as preeclampsia, placenta previa, post-partum hemorrhage, and peripartum cardiomyopathy. Key highlights from 2023 include:

- **6,427 prenatal consultations were held at the hospital in 2023**
- In 2023, **1,702 babies were delivered in the HAS hospital**, and 815 births attended by matrons were recorded in the communities we serve
- **39% of hospital deliveries in 2023 were high-risk Cesarean sections**

Neonatal and Pediatric Health Services

In spite of the challenges of 2023, **53,491 patient days were registered** in the hospital, 51% of which were dedicated to pediatric patients.

In 2023 HAS **provided neonatal care to 564 infants**. There were **3,782 pediatric hospital admissions**, averaging over 10 admissions per day. We are grateful for CFHAS' support which helps make care for these vulnerable patients possible.

In 2023, 138 children were admitted to the hospital for treatment of severe malnutrition. A child's inpatient stay in the hospital Nutrition Stabilization Unit averages three weeks and the recovery rates are exceptional. At the community level, 350 children participated in early intervention programs for malnutrition, an unfortunate 2% increase from last year, attributed to food scarcity and insecurity in our area.





The numbers affirm that malnutrition screening and prevention, with early treatment at the community level, are a critical service for the community to positively address and continue in the prevention of severe childhood malnutrition.

Outpatient clinics in the hospital were also essential for children. 9,390 children were treated through hospital outpatient clinic visits, and **1,425 outpatient pediatric surgeries** were performed.

COMMUNITY HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

2023 brought many challenges to the delivery of community health services. Many of our patients were hampered in safe travel and thus less likely to seek health services except in true emergencies.

Our 50+ Community Health Workers (CHWs), stepped up to this challenge and worked diligently to navigate through their communities despite security concerns, logging over 50,000 home health visits in 2023.



CHWs have been so effective that we are planning to hire more in the coming months. In addition to home visits, our CHWs helped to establish extra mobile health clinics, providing as much coverage as we can while keeping people safe.

Community-Based Women's Health Services

Highlights for 2023:

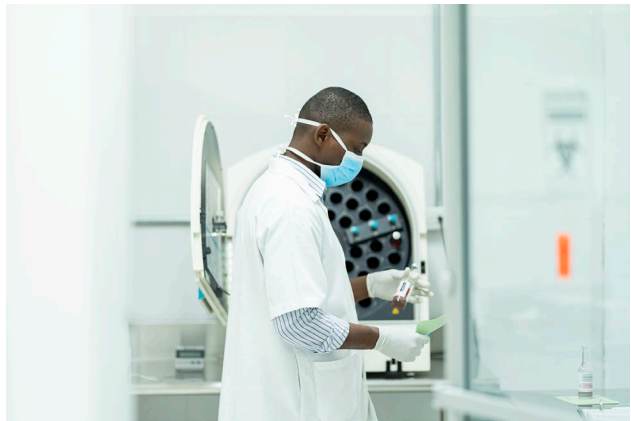
- **83,478 beneficiaries participated in 3,700 community education sessions** conducted by CHWs discussing topics ranging from good hygiene and sanitation practices to reproductive health and pregnancy, COVID, water treatment and cholera
- CHWs made an astounding **50,611 home visits**
- **5,093 prenatal consults and 1,143 postnatal consultations** were held at community health centers
- **4,702** pregnant women received voluntary testing for HIV/AIDS
- **7,765 family planning/reproductive health consultations** were held with women and men. Due to insecurity in communities, we were unable to hold large-scale family planning events as we have done in the past.

Community Children's Health Services

Preventive care, such as vaccinations and screenings, are at the heart of care for children in HAS' four community health centers. Services provided in 2023 include:

- Malnutrition screenings are performed on **7,500+ children per month**, which included weighing **90,640 children** and taking **78,401** middle upper arm circumference (MUAC) measures
- **551 mobile clinics** enabled **3,114 pediatric consultations** in the hardest to reach communities
- **1,255** children age five and under received all of their required vaccinations
- **350 children** were treated through community-based malnutrition programs, early intervention to avoid hospital care

HIV/AIDS Testing



In 2023, HAS provided HIV/AIDS screenings to 4,702 pregnant women seen in prenatal care at our four community health centers or in the hospital outpatient clinics and maternity ward. Testing is provided at least once, but ideally twice, during pregnancy to ensure proper diagnosis and to help patients get treatment as needed. In 2023, there were 78 positive test results (1.65% of those tested), showing that both screening and treatment remain vitally necessary.

In addition to screening and treatment, HAS provides education about HIV prevention and has established support groups providing ongoing counseling and assistance to HIV+ pregnant women and new mothers. Thank you for your supporting our efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in Haiti and provide the best possible treatment for mothers and children who have been affected by it.

Matrons and Birthing Kits

We thank CFHAS for special support for community-based births, including both funding and preparing and shipping birthing kits to HAS. These efforts support our matrons, traditional midwives who are primarily women, whose main activity is to perform home births. HAS has a network of 300 matrons throughout our service area. They are community leaders who, in addition to assisting births, participate in mobilization, awareness, education for behavior change. Thanks to their mandate, our matrons play a leading role in the fight against maternal mortality and in the promotion of health in general.

Thank You! / Merci! / Mèsi Anpil!

Generous support from CFHAS has made a huge impact for HAS and our maternal and child health patients. Thank you for your dedication and partnership which is helping to keep HAS operating as well as making us a strong and viable health care facility for the future. We are deeply grateful to our Canadian Friends for all that you do to support this important work.