

Report to the Canadian Friends of Hôpital Albert Schweitzer Improving Maternal and Child Health Outcomes in Haiti 2021 Activities

Providing quality healthcare and bettering the lives of the people of the Artibonite Valley is the main mission of Hôpital Albert Schweitzer (HAS). Support from around the world has allowed HAS to respond to one of the most challenging years in Haiti's history and to excel in providing preventive health services and care to a population of 350,000.

The situations Haiti has faced in the past year are almost unfathomable. June 2021 brought a dangerous resurgence of COVID-19 to a country that at the time had not received even one dose of COVID vaccines. Haiti's President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated in July, sending shockwaves around the world and spiraling the country into uncertainty. In August, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit in Haiti's southern peninsula leaving more than 2,200 dead and 12,200 people injured, followed immediately by a destructive tropical storm.

The security situation in Haiti reached crisis levels with gangs controlling over 50 % of Port-au-Prince, encompassing the areas around the ports. Haiti now leads the world in kidnappings for ransom, including many Haitians but also American and Canadian missionaries who narrowly escaped after months as captives. Fuel supplies and access to roads are being disrupted by gangs, virtually shutting down transportation in Haiti and also forcing many hospitals to close or severely limit services. In the midst of it all, HAS has continued to serve the health needs of the many people who are counting on us. We are sharing resources and helping other health institutions, responding to crisis after crisis.

Earthquake Response and Partnerships

We thank CFHAS for providing special support to HAS for earthquake relief efforts. Although HAS is located well north of the 2021 earthquake zone, our assistance was urgently needed in Haiti's overall earthquake response. While maintaining regular health services in our own area, HAS set up an operations base in Port-au-Prince and took the lead with logistics to help our partners get the medical and humanitarian supplies they so desperately needed into Haiti. Our teams assisted Haiti Air Ambulance and Hero



Client Rescue with medical triage and care of critical patients who were transported by helicopter from the earthquake zone to the field triage tents at the Port-au-Prince airport.

We were hard at work supporting World Central Kitchen and their efforts to feed the hungry, proudly participating in their deployment serving almost 800,000 meals. It was truly a team effort, working hand in hand with our friends at CORE Response and so many others in the earthquake response: USAID and the DART rapid response team; the Haitian Ministry of Health as well as "Protection Civil" and other hospitals and health providers including Partners in Health.

COVID Treatment

Designated a COVID-19 treatment site by the Haitian Ministry of Health in 2020, HAS reactivated its COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan in June 2021 to mitigate the effects of a new surge of coronavirus and its variants. Dozens of patients were cared for in our dedicated COVID Treatment Center throughout the summer, with many less severe cases managed through quarantine and care at home. With our new high-capacity oxygen generator provided by USAID, and as critical oxygen supplies were scarce in Haiti, HAS was able to produce and share with nearby hospitals nearly 3,000 of cannisters of oxygen essential for COVID treatment. The ability to produce medical grade oxygen has been a crucial resource for HAS as the fuel and security crisis continue to exacerbate oxygen shortages.

COVID Vaccines

COVID vaccines were very slow to arrive in Haiti, with the first half million doses donated in July 2021. Haiti was the last country in the Western Hemisphere to receive COVID vaccines. Even now, just 1 % of the country's 12 million population has been fully vaccinated – but HAS has been a major contributor to vaccine efforts in Haiti.

After receiving approval in mid-September from the Haitian Ministry of Health to administer vaccines, HAS' vaccination campaign was immediately underway. With initial vaccine supplies expiring, HAS administered an amazing 7,449 first doses in just 23 days! Our front-line medical staff at the hospital were the first to be vaccinated, both for safety and to set an example for others that the vaccine is necessary and safe.



HAS then urgently rolled out mobile vaccine clinics to bring protection to people throughout the hundreds of miles in our service area. With vaccine teams at the HAS hospital, four community health centers and mobile teams dispatched throughout our area to sites including many local churches, HAS mounted a highly successful COVID vaccine effort. **HAS has administered 20,000+ COVID vaccines – nearly 10% of all vaccines administered throughout Haiti.**

In the midst of it all, HAS has continued to provide health services as per usual, with no disruption to emergency medical services.

There are days, though, when strikes, road closures and concern about COVID keep people with non-urgent health needs at home, thus some people continue to defer routine care as they did in 2020. Some highlights of HAS' key programs and services are featured below.

HOSPITAL-BASED SERVICES

Hospital general operations and services have not been immune to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, both for 2020 and 2021, but services at the HAS hospital are now trending toward pre-COVID levels. The number of surgeries performed in the hospital continues to rise, highlighting a growing need in our area for specialized surgical services such as high-risk Cesarean sections, which comprised 30% of all surgeries at HAS in 2021.

Women’s Health Services – Obstetrics and Gynecology

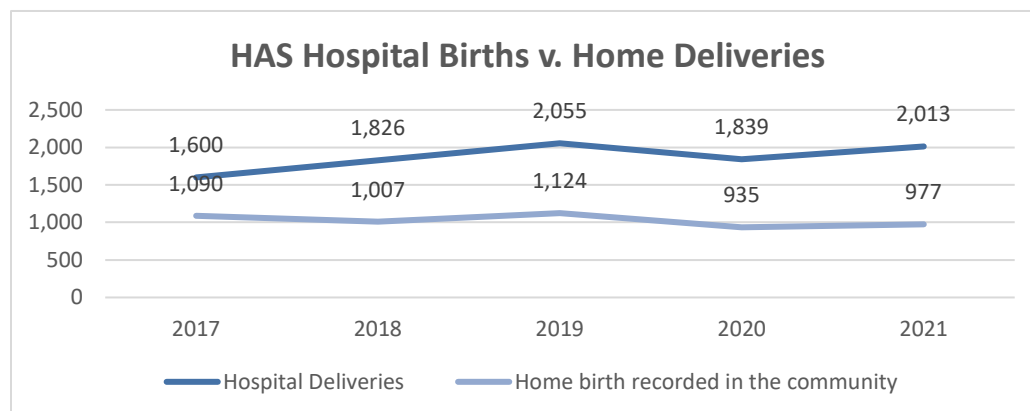


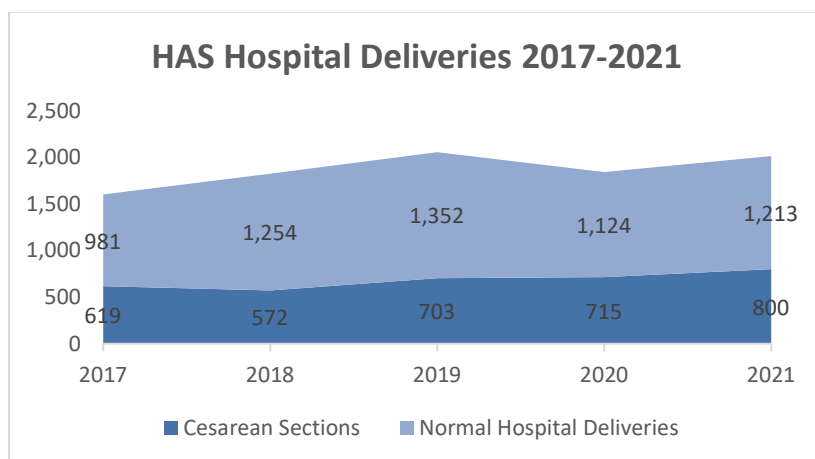
HAS’s reputation for high-quality, compassionate maternity care remains among the best in all of Haiti. The impact on mothers is apparent in the numbers: **maternal, newborn, and pediatric care accounts for roughly 60 % of HAS’ services.**

Mothers in the HAS service area network receive at least one consultation with a skilled professional before giving birth. HAS’ excellent medical staff continue to provide lifesaving, resource-intensive care to a growing number of expectant mothers suffering from serious conditions such as preeclampsia, placenta previa, post-partum hemorrhage, and peripartum cardiomyopathy. Highlights for 2021 are below:

- **Prenatal consultations are returning to pre-COVID levels.** In 2021, HAS completed 10,370 prenatal consultations, up 22% from 2020
- In 2021, **2,013 babies were delivered in the HAS hospital**, and 977 births attended by midwives were recorded in the communities we serve
- **39.7% of hospital deliveries in 2021 were high-risk caesarean sections**, a slight increase over 2020 when 38.8% of hospital deliveries were high-risk

With encouragement from the Haitian Ministry of Health, women in Haiti are increasingly choosing facility-based births over giving birth at home, as HAS’ five-year trend chart below indicates. HAS is also experiencing a growing rate of high risk deliveries at the hospital.





Neonatal and Pediatric Health Services

In spite of the challenges of 2021, **54,451 patient days were registered** in the hospital, 45% of which were dedicated to pediatric patients. Care provided to children at the HAS hospital generally falls into three categories: neonatal care, pediatric surgeries, and nutrition rehabilitation.

In 2021 HAS **provided neonatal care to 855 patients**, well above the five-year average of 780 neonatal cases per year. Neonatal patients included multiple sets of twins as well as a set of triplets.



In 2021 there were 3,732 **pediatric patient admissions**, with an average stay of 4.3 days.

151 children were admitted to the hospital for treatment of malnutrition. Of them, **128 were severely malnourished children** and were admitted into the Nutrition Stabilization Unit to receive specialized treatment. While there were grave concerns that malnutrition levels would increase as the impacts of COVID and insecurity in Haiti continue, this has thankfully not been the case so far.

The malnutrition treatment program is 100% subsidized, therefore there is no financial burden on the parent for their child’s inpatient stay in the hospital Nutrition Stabilization Unit, which averages three weeks. 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. Nearly 9,000 children were treated through hospital outpatient visits, and **1,789 outpatient pediatric surgeries** were performed.

COMMUNITY HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

HAS’ comprehensive Integrated Community Services division provides vital community-based preventive healthcare services such as vaccines and malnutrition screening, as well as water and sanitation activities to promote clean water and prevent water-borne illness. The division consists of three main programs: Community Health, Water and Sanitation, and Agroforestry.

With a strong team of dedicated auxiliary nurses, aide auxiliaries, and 48 Community Health Workers (CHWs), HAS provides clinical care and education to families throughout our 610 square mile service area. HAS operates four community health centers, two of which are in remote and difficult to access mountain towns, and also reaches our service population through mobile health clinics and home visits.



Community-Based Women's Health Services

Highlights for 2021:

- **122,325 beneficiaries participated in 5,144 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 **76,594 home visits** – over 25,000 more home visits than were possible in 2020
- **8,094 prenatal consults and 1,104 postnatal consultations** were held at community health centers
- **12,621 family planning/reproductive health consultations** have been held with women and men. This follows the trend of a steady increase in the demand for family planning services

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 2021 include:

- Malnutrition screenings are performed on 9,000 children per month, which included weighing **107,424 children** and taking **98,026** middle upper arm circumference (MUAC) measures
- Mobile clinics enabled **3,370** pediatric consultations in the hardest to reach communities
- **1,763** children age five and under received all of their required vaccinations
- **287 children** were treated through community-based malnutrition programs, early intervention to avoid hospital care

Thank You! / Merci! / Mèsi Anpil!

Despite the tense political unrest and the devastating effects COVID-19 presented in 2021 and myriad other challenges, HAS continues to move forward to provide its constituents with the best healthcare. This month, HAS celebrates **66 years** of leading health care efforts in the Artibonite. The work begun in 1956 continues today, spearheaded and sustained by extraordinary leadership and a dedicated team of experienced health professionals, thus fulfilling its mission to establish a comprehensive health system servicing the most vulnerable and fragile people of Haiti.

Your generosity allows HAS to continue in our ongoing efforts to provide health services to a population of 350,000 children, women and men who need our help. We are deeply grateful to the Canadian Friends of HAS for all that you do to support this important work.