



## **Report to the Canadian Friends of Hôpital Albert Schweitzer Haiti Improving Maternal and Child Health Outcomes in the Lower Artibonite Valley – 2018 Activities April 2019**

### **Maternal and Child Health at HAS**

Hôpital Albert Schweitzer Haiti (HAS) gratefully acknowledges the Canadian Friends of Hôpital Albert Schweitzer Haiti for its ongoing support of maternal and child health programming at HAS. Each year, the hospital saves thousands of lives, particularly those of infants, children and mothers, dramatically impacting the health and well-being of the entire community.

Through the services it provides, HAS aims to improve maternal and child survival rates in Haiti, which are among the lowest in the world. From emergency obstetric care for high-risk pregnancies, to community-based education about various topics including breastfeeding, nutrition, and prenatal warning signs, HAS strives to meet the healthcare needs of mothers and children, and adapting its approach and services to address the evolving public health situation in the Artibonite Valley. In addition to the wide range of maternal health services, HAS also specifically focuses on mothers and their children until the child reaches five years of age in order to promote optimal health for local families.

Since its inception in 1956, Hôpital Albert Schweitzer Haiti (HAS) has provided integrated hospital and community-based healthcare to the more than 350,000 residents of its large service area. HAS is the only full-service hospital (131-beds) in the region, and provides quality health care through its main hospital campus, four community centers, 70-80 mobile clinics, and 225 health posts per month. The 525 staff members (98% Haitian) enable HAS to deliver top-



notch health care, even in the midst of challenging circumstances, with limited resources and a growing volume of patients. As of 2018, HAS still must generate its own electricity (now with the help of solar panels), treat and process its own water, operate and maintain vehicles that deliver medicines and supplies, and manage a busy and complex hospital—all without any nearby modern infrastructure.



The extremely generous and loyal support of the Canadian Friends of Hôpital Albert Schweitzer Haiti allows us to continue to provide consistent, reliable, and effective healthcare to our patients – enabling HAS to fulfill its mission of collaborating with the people of the Artibonite Valley to improve their health and quality of life. The following report provides an overall summary of the maternal and child health services provided by HAS in 2018, as well as highlights some of the trends over the last seven years in maternal and child health at HAS.

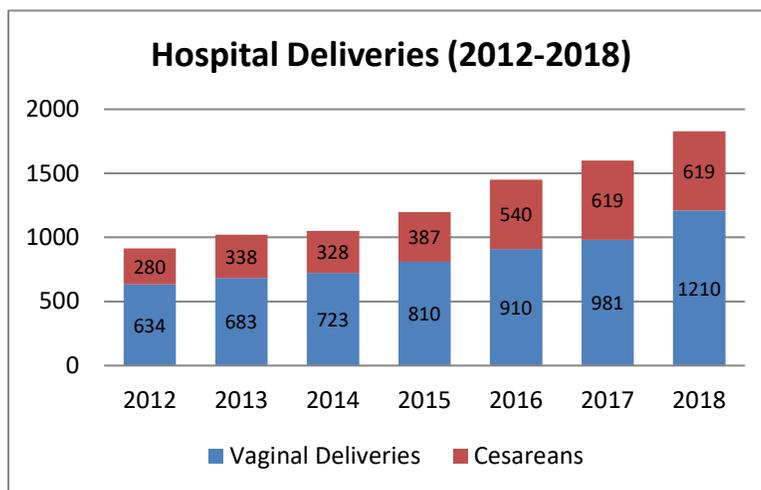
## Inpatient Maternity Health Services

The majority of pre and post-natal care at HAS is provided as a part of the extensive community health services – either in one of the four community health centers, mobile clinics, or home visits. However, the main hospital is equipped to provide high-risk, emergency obstetric care to women with pregnancy complications. If a woman seen during a visit at community health center, mobile clinic, or home visit is found to have a potential pregnancy complication, such as high blood pressure, she is immediately referred to the hospital where she will be followed for the remainder of her prenatal care and delivery.

Due to its long-standing history of providing high-quality health care to the most vulnerable populations, the demand particularly for obstetrics services continues to rise at HAS. As you can see in Figure 1, the number of deliveries occurring at the hospital has grown significantly over the past seven years. This trend is expected to continue over the next several years – leaving HAS to consider innovative ways to support this increasing demand with its limited available resources.

The continuing trend of increasing admission rates highlights the on-going need for the quality emergency obstetrics serviced offered at HAS. Additionally, this rate indicates that the volume of expectant mothers coming to HAS with pregnancy complications such as preeclampsia, placenta previa, post-partum hemorrhage, and peripartum cardiomyopathy continues to grow. These conditions are not only life-threatening to the

Figure 1: Growth in Hospital Deliveries (2012-2018)



mother and newborn child, but due to the highly technical interventions needed to treat these conditions, also puts an enormous strain on the financial and material resources available at HAS.

#### Overall OB/GYN Services provided at the hospital in 2018 (highlights):

- The two HAS obstetricians completed 9,392 consultations in the hospital outpatient clinics. This represents a 17% increase in consultations compared to the 7,997 consultations completed in 2017.
- 2,150 women were admitted to the high-risk maternity unit in the hospital, a 12% increase over the 1,911 women who were admitted in 2017.
- A total of 1,829 deliveries occurred at the hospital, a 14% increase compared to 2017 (1,600).
- 619 (39%) of the deliveries were done via Cesarean section due to the high-risk nature or complications of these pregnancies.

### **Inpatient Children's Health Services**



HAS has a long-standing reputation for providing high-quality pediatric care, with over half of the available beds reserved for the various pediatrics wards (pediatric surgery, general pediatrics, nutritional rehabilitation, pediatric isolation, and neonatal intensive care). Additionally, the general pediatrics clinic and the pediatric surgery clinic combined make pediatrics the second busiest hospital outpatient clinic division, behind internal medicine. In 2018, children

represented 30% of all admissions, but 46% of total patient days, indicating that their cases are often complex and require them to stay in the hospital for a considerable length of time. The children who are admitted to the hospital for care often suffer from serious, even life-threatening health conditions, including severe, acute malnutrition, infectious illnesses such as diarrheal diseases and upper respiratory infections, and injuries or conditions that require surgery and rehabilitation.

#### The following are the main hospital pediatric service numbers from 2018:

- There were 11,497 consultations completed in the general pediatric outpatient clinic, and an additional 2,110 in the pediatric surgery clinic (compared to 10,514 general consultations and 2,445 surgical consultations in 2017)
- A total of 931 children were admitted to the pediatric surgery ward (a 5% increase over the 895 admissions in 2017)
- There were 2,499 admissions to general pediatrics
- 186 children were admitted to the nutrition stabilization unit ("malnutrition ward"), a 4% increase in the number of children treated as compared to the 179 admitted in 2017
- 733 newborns were admitted to the neonatal ICU, representing a 13% decrease compared to the 843 infants admitted in 2017. Infants admitted to the neonatal unit, similar to those admitted to pediatric surgery, have significantly higher number of patient days spent in the ward that can be



attributed to the fact that cases referred are often the most complex cases of prematurity, sepsis, etc.

## Introduction of Cervical Cancer Screening

In 2018, HAS was able to introduce, for the first time, a cervical cancer screening program. Cervical cancer has been reported as the most common cancer among Haitian women, and the second most common cause of cancer death for Haitian women. Haitian women also experience cervical cancer at a rate as much as 50 times higher than women in the United States, and four times higher than those in the neighboring Dominican Republic. However, when pre-cancerous cell changes are identified early, cervical cancer is easily preventable. HAS is therefore very excited to now offer this service to our community.

Partnering with Rotary International and a team of doctors from the United States, our obstetricians, women's health physician, and selected nurses from the hospital were trained in a see-and-treat method of cervical cancer screening. Using visual inspection and either Loop Electrosurgical Excision Procedure (LEEP) or cryotherapy, this method enables the treating doctor to immediately remove any problematic cells identified during a patient's screening. See-and-treat removes the need for follow-up, which can result in women with cell changes failing to receive treatment. The program, which began in June, has now screened over 1,000 women, with more than 30 receiving treatment for cell changes. HAS hopes to continue the program into the future and aims to screen 120 women each month.



## Community Maternity and Pediatric Health Services

In addition to the full-service hospital, HAS also operates a comprehensive Integrated Community Services Division. In the first years of HAS, although patients received high-quality health care services in the hospital, children were still dying in the communities from preventable diseases such as measles, tetanus, and diarrheal illnesses. To address this serious problem, Dr. Larry Mellon established a community health and development division to provide community-based healthcare services such as vaccines and malnutrition screening, as well as water and sanitation activities to provide clean drinking water and improved sanitation facilities. These efforts continue today, with an ongoing focus on improving the health and well-being of mothers and children. For example, a core component of the activities of HAS community health workers is providing monthly training to HAS *matrones* (traditional birth attendants).

In 2018, our Integrated Community Services Division once again oversaw an extremely large amount of health care delivery and preventive services. A total of 163,635 consultations were conducted at the four community health centers and the mobile clinics in 2018, a 2% increase over 2017 (160,302). These consultations included:

- 40,300 pediatric consultations
- 12,839 general consultations with pregnant women

- 2,179 postnatal consults
- 11,911 prenatal consults
- 21,395 family planning consults

In addition, community health workers held a total of 6,634 community education sessions – sharing vital public health information on exclusive breast-feeding, vaccinations, pregnancy complications, good hygiene and sanitation practices, and communicable diseases. These critical health topics directly benefit mothers, infants, and children in the large HAS service region.

## Community Maternity Health Services

Although the goal of the community health department is to provide primary health care to the overall population, HAS continues to place great focus on addressing maternal and child health needs, the beneficiaries of CFHAS's generous support and the two population groups that tend to be the most vulnerable.

The majority of primary and preventative women's health services are provided at the hospital's four community health centers and approximately 70-80 mobile clinics. Services specific to maternal health include pre- and postnatal consultations, family planning services, and reproductive health education. Located in some of the most remote regions of HAS' service area, the community health centers and mobile clinics ensure quality maternal health care is accessible to all patients, who may live up to eight hours' walking distance from the main hospital. Additionally, HAS' cadre of 50 community health workers play a vital role in maternal health care through community education and home visits, encouraging women to attend regular prenatal exams, and teaching women about important pregnancy milestones and warning signs of pregnancy complications.



### Overall maternal health services provided in the communities in 2018 (highlights):

- 11,912 prenatal consults at either the health centers or mobile clinics. (Compare to the 11,324 prenatal consultations conducted in 2017, which had already seen a 25% increase over 2016.)
- 1,393 births were recorded in the community, all of which were assisted by a traditional birth attendant (in most cases, a HAS-trained matron); this is compared to 1,090 births recorded in the community in 2017.
- 2,179 postnatal consultations at the health centers, and 1,394 women received a post-natal consultation at home
- 21,395 family planning/reproductive health consultations with women (and men). This follows the trend of a steady, consistent increase in the demand for family planning services
- 1,494 lactating women received the recommended postnatal dose of Vitamin A.

## Community Children's Health Services

HAS community health centers, mobile clinics, and community health worker activities also emphasize child health in a variety of ways. Activities from nutrition screenings to immunizations to distribution of vitamins and deworming medication are targeted at reducing child mortality, particularly in the “first 1,000 days of life.” During this critical time period, proper nutrition and health can profoundly impact a child’s ability to grow, learn, and live a full and productive life. In 2018, HAS maintained or increased service levels for most child health activities in comparison to 2017, indicative of the true and continued need for these services.

The following are highlights of Community-based Children’s Healthcare in 2018:

- A total of 27,399 general pediatric consultations were held among the four community health centers, and an additional 12,901 pediatric consultations at the mobile clinics
- 24,554 immunizations were administered including all vaccines required by the Haitian Ministry of Health
- Community health workers performed a total of 104,013 screenings for malnutrition for children 5 and under, amounting to approximately 8,668 per month. HAS estimates that it covers at least 96% of the children in its service area with routine nutrition screenings
- A total of 22,161 doses of Vitamin A were given to children between 6 months and 6 years (average of 1,847 children per month), which is important for preventing childhood blindness
- 9,177 doses of albendazole (deworming medication) were distributed to children with diarrhea, an easy and effective way to prevent malnutrition, anemia and even death due to diarrheal disease.



## Family Planning Services

In Haiti, thirty-five percent of currently married women have an unmet need for family planning, with 20% wanting to limit births and 16% desiring to space births. Fourteen percent of young women ages 15-19 have already begun childbearing: 11% are mothers and 3% are pregnant with their first child.<sup>1</sup> At HAS, two of our priorities is to expand understanding of reproductive rights and to provide access to quality reproductive education and health services. As shown in the tables below, we are proud to report that in total we had 7,789 family planning users and 998 new users for 2018.

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Public Health and Population, Haitian Childhood Institute, and ICF International. *2012 Haiti Mortality, Morbidity, and Service Utilization Survey: Key Findings*. Calverton, Maryland: MSPP, IHE, and ICF International, 2013.

**Table 1: Total Contraceptives Distributed-All Users (January-December 2018)**

Contraceptive Method	CCS Liancourt	CCS Deschapelles	CCS Tienne	CCS Bastien	Total
Lofeminal (pills)	159	150	74	59	442
Depo-provera (shot)	1812	991	1001	869	4673
Implanon/Jadelle (Implant)	601	537	485	988	2611
IUD (Intrauterine Device)	17	22	7	17	63
					7789

**Table 2: New FP Users (January-December 2018)**

Contraceptive Method	CCS Liancourt	CCS Deschapelles	CCS Tienne	CCS Bastien	Total
Lofeminal (pills)	7	42	3	7	59
Depo-provera (shot)	242	166	208	238	854
Implanon/Jadelle (Implant)	23	19	15	27	84
IUD (Intrauterine Device)	0	0	0	1	1
					998

## THANK YOU!



We cannot overstate the ongoing impact of Canadian Friends of HAS on the people of the Lower Artibonite Valley, particularly the programs that directly reach women and children. While this report highlights several important statistics from 2018, the numbers tell only a portion of the story. Seeing the people who are directly impacted by the support of the Canadian Friends annual financial support, and knowing how their lives will be impacted for years to come is the real meaning behind the numbers. Thank you for your generosity and compassion for the families we serve!