



REPORT TO THE CANADIAN FRIENDS OF HÔPITAL ALBERT SCHWEITZER HAITI

IMPROVING MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH OUTCOMES IN THE LOWER ARTIBONITE VALLEY – 2019 ACTIVITIES

Hôpital Albert Schweitzer Haiti (HAS) is deeply grateful to the Canadian Friends of Hôpital Albert Schweitzer Haiti for decades of support and partnership which enable HAS to provide integrated hospital and community-based healthcare to more than 350,000 residents over 610 square miles in Haiti's Lower Artibonite Valley.

The past year has been one of progress and change. Maternal and child health outcomes in Haiti are among the lowest in the world, thus HAS has reaffirmed its commitment to our core mission: health services for mothers and children. This reaffirmation has been led by our CEO Jean Marc deMatteis, who began his tenure at HAS in June 2019. A native of Haiti with over 20 years of experience in both health care and commercial enterprises, Jean Marc has long been active in public health efforts in Haiti and will guide HAS as it embarks upon a long-term plan of strategic growth and refinement of services in order to fully respond to Haiti's changing healthcare landscape.

Haiti has experienced civil unrest since 2018, which at times has had an impact on the ability of some patients to partake of health services. The country experienced a lockdown or "Peyi Lòk" that caused people to fear leaving their homes as there were road closures and demonstrations. The situation in the Artibonite is relatively quiet but can still create challenges for delivering healthcare.

Even so, HAS' impact on maternal and child health continues to grow, with nearly two-thirds of hospital and community health services focused on women and children. We value and appreciate the support of CFHAS in making these services possible.

Some highlights of the life-sustaining and live-saving services HAS provided to women and children in 2019 follow.

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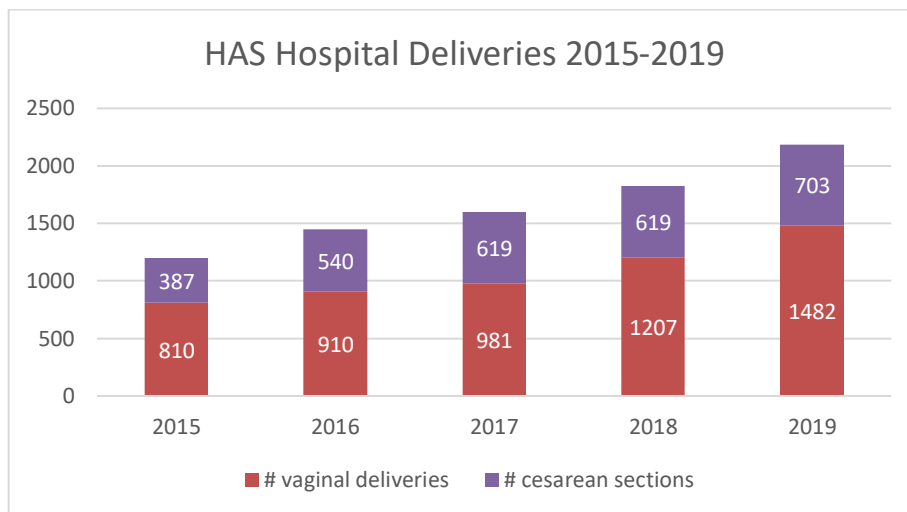
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INPATIENT MATERNITY SERVICES

HAS is one of the most advanced hospitals in Haiti. In 2019, we had over 14,000 hospital admissions, as has been the trend for the last three years. Our impact on mothers is apparent in the numbers: 20% of all hospital admissions were for maternity services.

Over the past five years, there has been a shift in practice in Haiti, favoring facility-based deliveries over home-based deliveries. The Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population (MSPP) has been actively educating women about the advantages and importance of delivering at health care facilities. This has been a positive development for health outcomes. It has also greatly increased the demand for maternal care in the HAS hospital. The figure below demonstrates that hospital deliveries at HAS have nearly doubled in five years, with over 2,100 babies delivered at HAS in 2019. The number of high-risk deliveries has also risen steeply.

Figure 1: Growth in hospital-based deliveries and high-risk deliveries



Our excellent medical staff provided 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. In the hospital outpatient clinics, HAS obstetricians completed almost 10,000 pre-natal consultations in 2019.

INPATIENT INFANT AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

As always, 2019 was a busy year providing hospital inpatient care to infants and children. Almost 61,000 patient days were recorded in the hospital, over half of which were dedicated to pediatric patients. Overall, there were 4,155 pediatric patient admissions in the hospital in 2019, with an average length of stay of 4.6 days.

Care provided to children in the HAS hospital at generally falls into three categories: neonatal care, pediatric surgeries and nutrition rehabilitation. HAS provided neonatal care to 768 patients in 2019, which is slightly higher than the five-year average of 759 neonatal cases per year.

The number of surgeries performed at HAS in 2019 was 2,476 – almost 1,000 fewer than in 2018. As part of restructuring, HAS performed fewer elective surgeries to ration our limited resources for emergency procedures. Even with fewer surgeries overall, pediatric surgeries remained steady. There were 772 pediatric surgeries performed in 2019 – 31% of the surgical volume. Caesarean sections accounted for 28% of surgeries, and overall 60% of HAS’s surgical patients were female.

Nutritional rehabilitation services in the hospital were needed by 169 children in 2019, a slight decrease from the past two years. We believe that Peyi Lòk contributed to this decline. The number of severely malnourished children seen at the hospital has declined from a high of 273 children in 2015, with the positive implication that interventions at the community level are helping to address severe childhood malnutrition. Unfortunately, we expect severe malnutrition will rise this year as a result of the economic implications of COVID-19.

COMMUNITY-BASED WOMEN’S HEALTH SERVICES

At the outpatient and community levels, HAS provided extensive primary healthcare services to patients of all ages. In 2019, HAS clinicians and healthcare workers cared for thousands of pregnant women and mothers and provided community-wide reproductive health education and family planning services. Participating children and families received all required childhood immunizations; malnutrition prevention, education, and screenings; and community-based health education on various topics.

The general health seeking behaviors of the Haitian population dictate that women are much more likely to seek care and accompany their children to health care visits than men. HAS reaches at least twice as many women as men through community education. **Figure 2** lists the community education activities led by HAS – over 55,000 home visits were conducted in 2019 with Community Health Workers (CHW) discussing topics ranging from good hygiene and sanitation practices to reproductive health and pregnancy, water treatment and cholera. HAS community education efforts reach a large portion of the 350,000 service population each year.

Figure 2

	2019
Community Education	
Number of community education sessions	4,233
Attendees at education sessions (average per month)	9,127
Home Visits	55,675
Health Posts	2,369

COMMUNITY-BASED CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

HAS community-based medical staff and community health workers provide preventive healthcare for the most vulnerable infants and children, directly addressing the most common causes of illness in children. This is accomplished through HAS' four community health centers, based in both mountain and valley communities, and reinforced by the efforts of our network of community health workers.

Community-based health services were provided to tens of thousands of children, including:

- Over 30,000 pediatric consultations were conducted in community health centers (76%) or via mobile clinics (24%)
- In addition, 2,205 post-natal visits for infants were completed
- Community health workers performed a total of 86,844 screenings for malnutrition for children 5 and under by measuring average middle upper arm circumference (MUAC); 8,630 children were weighed each month as another screening measure
- 400 at-risk children benefited from preventive treatment for malnutrition through the community-based malnutrition program and nutrition stabilization program
- Almost 23,000 doses of Vitamin A (important for preventing childhood blindness) were given to children between 6 months and 6 years
- 9,324 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.

MESI ANPIL! / THANK YOU!



The people of the Artibonite Valley rely so heavily on the healthcare services we provide. HAS sends sincerest thanks to the Canadian Friends of Hôpital Albert Schweitzer Haiti for helping us be the best we can to serve as many as possible. Mesi anpil for your support in 2019!

AN UPDATE ON COVID-19 AT HAS

HAS has experienced first-hand the heartbreak of COVID-19. As an official COVID-19 treatment site designated by the Haitian Ministry of Health, we began receiving suspected cases in April 2020. While our first few suspected cases proved to be negative with testing, a critically ill patient with presumptive symptoms arrived recently at HAS and was not able to be saved. Test results later confirmed the COVID-19 diagnosis.

HAS staff have been working around the clock since March, when HAS activated its COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan. Here are some of the actions taken:

Community Education and Containment

There is a tremendous amount of anxiety about coronavirus in rural Haiti, as well as stigma around this virus. HAS community health workers have been trained in depth about COVID-19 and are out in the community with megaphones, sharing messages to improve hygiene and increase social distancing. HAS has installed new handwashing stations in the hospital and community, and also more household “tippy taps” that enable contact-free handwashing.

At the hospital, emergency protocols and containment procedures have been in place for months to limit transmission, including:



- Triage and screening of patients before entering the hospital
- Postponement of all non-emergency procedures at the hospital
- Limiting and screening visitors to patients at the hospital

COVID-19 Treatment and Testing

HAS renovated our former Cholera Treatment Center (CTC) as a site for coronavirus patients. The CTC is a building completely separate from the hospital – well down the road from the main hospital entrance. This will help limit contact and potential transmission of the virus. There is a large area around the CTC for erecting tents as needed for COVID-19 patient overflow. Staff are carefully following protocols to move all suspected cases to the CTC for evaluation and treatment.

Testing is managed by the Haitian Ministry of Health (MSPP). HAS does not have its own supply of tests and is following government guidelines for COVID-19 testing. MSPP has assigned a designated health official to HAS who manages the testing process for all suspected cases.

Oxygen Therapy

HAS has the capability to produce and store oxygen on site. Our oxygen generators are not new, but so far are working sufficiently to maintain a good supply of oxygen. Oxygen therapy will be the primary treatment for COVID-19 in Haiti, along with fever control and hydration. HAS has requested additional oxygen equipment through USAID to be ready for a spike in demand.

Protective Actions

Surface Disinfectant and Sanitizer

There are critical shortages of bleach and all other surface sanitizers on the local market, leaving hospitals and health centers all over Haiti in dire need. HAS is very fortunate that recent donor-funded upgrades to our water system included the timely addition of a Mixed Oxidants (MIOX) water purifying system. The MIOX system can be put to work to manufacture surface disinfectant which is 2.5 times more effective at sanitizing/inactivating pathogens than chlorine/bleach.

HAS can produce up to 200 gallons per day of surface disinfectant using simple supplies like sand, water and alcohol. Teams are in place at HAS, producing sanitizer at a rapid clip. In addition to our own needs, HAS has begun to supply health facilities in our area and also the local police with this high-quality cleaning solution. Production is very cost-effective, at \$3 per gallon, and has important implications for containment of the virus.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is in short supply around the world, and even more so in Haiti. We have been seeking donations and purchases of medical-grade PPE through all avenues and some of our partners have come through. In addition, HAS staff have been sewing reusable masks and gowns on site. We are also purchasing locally sewn PPE from a new collective in Haiti.

Continued Essential Health Services

In the midst of preparation and treatment for COVID-19, HAS continues to provide essential health services to meet the needs of our 350,000-service population. Our hospital remains open 24 / 7, providing vital maternal and child health services including high-risk obstetrics, prenatal and neonatal care and pediatric services. We continue to perform emergency and critical surgeries and to receive acutely ill patients at the hospital. In the community, health services continue as much as safely possible.

Serious challenges lie ahead. As of mid-May, coronavirus is beginning to emerge much more rapidly in Haiti. This is somewhat later than other parts of the world, and experts expect the impact to be potentially devastating. But HAS is no stranger to crisis. We will meet this challenge as we have many other times before.

We greatly value the long-term and very generous support the Canadian Friends of Hôpital Albert Schweitzer Haiti have provided to HAS, enabling lifesaving, compassionate care to the people of the Lower Artibonite Valley.