



Outreach Initiatives in Haiti and Ethiopia

Dr. James Chris Fleming and Jeff Bennett, ophthalmology equipment repair specialist with 2M Medical Solutions, traveled to Port au Prince, Haiti in August 2017. During their stay, they participated in meetings with the Director of the Hospital de Universite d'Etat d'Haiti (HUEH) and representatives of several surgery centers and clinics from Christian Blind Mission (CBM), the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness in Haiti (CNPC) and Haiti Medical Missions.

Dr. Fleming and Mr. Bennett laid the foundation for future collaborations by connecting the Director of the University via telecommunications to Hamilton Eye Institute (HEI) Grand Rounds, a successful teaching tool held every Friday afternoon that presents medical problems and treatments to an audience of doctors, researchers, residents, and medical students. Mr. Bennett was able to repair significant surgical and clinical ophthalmic equipment that was in disuse due to the lack of local specialized technicians. His goal is to implement a training program to teach others how to repair specialized equipment in Haiti. In addition to the training program, Dr. Fleming was able to evaluate several patients at the St. Vincent's School for Handicapped Children.

With 10 million people living in Haiti, there are only 75 ophthalmologists and productivity declined due to the impact of earthquakes and hurricanes on surgical facilities. Officials from the HEI, World Cataract Foundation (WCF), CBM, CNPC and Haiti Medical Missions are partnering to improve infrastructure and efficiency in existing surgery centers.

On November 16, 2017, Drs. Fleming, Aaron Waite (clinical faculty, Utah), Dr. Cale Hildebrand (HEI 2nd-year Resident) and Dr. John Van Dyck, one of WCF mission ophthalmology surgeons skilled in the SICS technique, participated in the first annual Cataract-A-Thon in Haiti. The event took place at the International Grace Children's Hospital in Port-Au-Prince. Over thirty cataract surgeries were provided to local Haitians who would have otherwise lacked the financial means to undergo the procedure. Two surgery tables were set up to provide phaco and small-incision cataract surgery (SICS), as well as a teaching station that allowed local residents to view live surgery footage from a monitor. The ophthalmic surgeons from the U.S. and Haiti performed surgeries jointly. Dr. Mike Maingrette, President of CNPC, and his supportive team members provided invaluable guidance for this successful event.



HEI Resident, Dr. Cale Hildebrand examines patient in Haiti



Cataract-A-Thon Haiti Team



Dr. Waite with grateful patient in Haiti



Dr. Fleming and Dr. Tara Goecks, 2017 Oculoplastics Fellow, perform surgery in Ethiopia

Dr. Fleming also traveled to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in May 2017 to visit with Dr. Scott Lawrence, HEI graduate and Associate Professor of International Ophthalmology. With one ophthalmologist for every one million people in Ethiopia, the need for eye care and physician training is overwhelming. Of the population, 1.6 million people are blind and 2.5 million are debilitated with low vision from preventable and treatable causes. Dr. Lawrence invited HEI and WCF to support his efforts to establish the Discover Eye Institute, an innovative center of excellent eye care in Addis Ababa. During his visit, Dr. Fleming evaluated more than 30 patients and trained a number of staff and residents through lectures and teaching clinics. Biannually, HEI will bring training to two institutions, St Paul's Hospital ophthalmology residency and Sight for Souls Eye Institute in Addis Ababa. In 2018, future collaborations between physicians of the University of Michigan and the Himalayan Cataract Project will expand teaching and outreach missions.