

Manos Amigas and SATC calls on the Honduran Ministry of Health

Members of the Serving at the Crossroad (SATC) Board of Directors and representatives from Manos Amigas (MA) Foundation in La Entrada traveled to the capital city of Tegucigalpa to visit with the Minister of Health recently. The meeting was very cordial and provided the opportunity for our respective organizations to introduce ourselves and to make our presence in La Entrada known to the leaders of government. This was the first face to face meeting where MA presented documentation of the number of patients treated and discussed the services provided by the current, interim clinic.

The Minister thanked Serving at the Crossroads for its role of empowering Hondurans to help themselves and for the services provided to their country. The Minister was pleased to know that a new clinic will be constructed shortly. She was impressed to learn that the entire seven acres of property held by the MA Foundation will be turned into a medical campus. The minister complimented MA on the types of services the current clinic offers, saying they were very much needed in that part of the country. The Ministry welcomes an expanded medical presence with the construction of the new MA clinic in the Copan Region.

After acknowledging the difficulties of reaching people who have the greatest need for medical services, the Minister described an initiative characterized as a **New Model** her organization was starting to implement in the country. In this model, 34 participating clinics are involved in partnerships to provide *service and synergy* for patients. After learning of our medical network, the number of patients served by MA in less than three years, and hearing about the programs we plan to launch upon completing construction of the new clinic, she seemed genuinely impressed. MA was invited to explore the prospects of working with the Ministry in a program that would bring synergistic service to the patients. Obviously this will take time, as in any administrative bureaucratic agency, but with this visit, a dialog has opened up and the first steps were taken to explore how both groups might work in concert with each other.

The Ministry is particularly interested in our thoughts of offering continuing education for Honduran healthcare practitioners on the MA Campus with the possibility of building an Education and Conference Center as well as extending the clinic's ability to reach into the most distant barrios and other remote areas which are currently underserved.

After these collegial discussions, the ball is clearly in *Manos Amigas'* court so to speak. It remains to be seen how aggressively and effectively the clinic leadership elects to pursue those opportunities that will bring the biggest benefits to their community.

- Clinic offers episodic care
- Nearly 25,000 patients treated in 3 years
- 1,600 patients treated in 2 weeks by visiting team of healthcare professionals from Geisinger Hospital
- Well-stocked pharmacy dispenses medications to patients
- No one denied treatment because of their inability to pay for services rendered
- Clinic fee set at the price of one coca cola

