

A team including RIDE John Smarge, Past Director Barry Rassin, DGE Diana White, and myself went into Haiti yesterday morning to meet with the Haiti Task Force Leaders and ground Team. We are thankful that Rotarian Georges Nicolas, and Rotarian Jean Baptiste Brown were present representing the clubs in the quake affected areas. The purpose was to better understand the exact status of the International Relief effort and to get a clearer understanding of what role the Government and Local Rotarians needed Rotary to play. This meeting was extremely effective because Rotarian Claude Surena, who is also our Disaster Chair for Haiti was there. He was not only representing the Rotarians, but as Haiti's Coordinator of the Haiti Health Commission he is the highest ranking person in the country for Health, and intimately involved the International Relief and the decision maker for Haiti's response priorities.

The groundswell of International Relief effort is finishing the "acute" stage and now beginning to focus on what it calls more appropriate priorities. As a result of that they have begun to move throughout the country and address not only the remaining medical issues but the population shift, and the resulting infrastructure shortfalls in areas such as food supply, shelter, mental health, prosthetics etc. This can change what we are doing and needed for overnight. As an example we had 50 people at Les Cayes that needed Orthopedic surgeries on Monday morning. We had the medical practitioners and supplies on the way. Early Monday afternoon a UN Hovercraft arrived with a team of 14 Brazilian Doctors and began the surgeries and should have all surgeries done by today. As a result of this change of focus from the International Relief group, we are going to reassess our efforts and redirect our relief towards the areas where we are most needed and not duplicating efforts others are or will be doing, and in some instances better equipped to do.

We have a ground team evaluation going on in each (Rotary) region to assess the needs in that area as it relates to this relief effort shift. We also have another team which includes a number of our volunteer physicians assessing the medical needs of the region and evaluating or short and long term needs as it relates to supplies, equipment and manpower. We are looking at a two week window and then a two month window, and then beyond.

Given all of the above we have made the following decisions. Effective immediately any medical personnel relief we have on line will need to stand down until further notice. All medical supplies in transit and that have been specifically asked for should still be consolidated and sent as planned. All offers for medical supplies and equipment going forward will be re-evaluated individually on the basis of the results of this assessment.

I will be back to you shortly with our priorities going forward. In the meantime be thinking about, bulk food, shelter (Tents, not Shelter Boxes) bedding, clothing (sorted) etc. I'll get back to you soon. keep going on collecting and fund raising. This will be a long and hard recovery!

PDG Dick