

## pcDR14.09 TRIP REPORT

September 7 - 14, 2014

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### Personnel

- University of Illinois-Chicago (PeaceCare) - Minesh Shah, Sae-Rom Chae, Morgan Madison, Lauren Greene, Hannah Nam

### Acknowledgments

- Peace Corps Dominican Republic admin and volunteers (Dylan Andrew)
- The Guaymate community and the Community Advisory Board members
- Grupo Voluntario de Guaymate
- Guaymate Hospital and its staff
- Clinica de Familia La Romana and its staff

### Phases of Project

1. Partnership Formation – August 2012 to current
2. Assessment – March 2013 to current
3. Intervention Development – September 2013 to current
4. Project Implementation – February 2014 to current
5. Evaluation – February 2014 to current

## 6. Dissemination – April 2014 to current

### **Partnership Formation**

PeaceCare has been in communication with Peace Corps Dominican Republic beginning June 2012, at which time we began discussions of organization for a collaborative project. Partnerships with Northwestern University Access to Health and Clinica de Familia La Romana began shortly thereafter.

### **Site Selection**

Upon the recommendations of Peace Corps Dominican Republic, the municipality of Guaymate in the eastern province of Romana, was chosen as the collaborative site. The site was chosen with the following considerations:

- The municipality and its surrounding bateyes have a need for improved health care capacity
- The local community desired a collaborative relationship
- Clinica de Familia in La Romana is a primary care/specialty clinic actively involved in the Guaymate and batey communities, and its staff has experience collaborating with US academic centers and is well-versed in conducting research in the DR
- A Peace Corps Volunteer is currently in place in Guaymate as a Youth and Family Community Development volunteer and is integrated within the community

### **Assessment**

Community assessment of Guaymate began in the summer of 2013. Members of the Community Advisory Board (CAB) conducted several focus groups in Guaymate and the bateyes. As part of the pcDR13.09 site visit in September 2013, the PeaceCare team conducted further focus groups, and also key informant interviews.

The focus groups and key informant interviews identified the following major areas of need:

1. Improvement of health care services at Guaymate Municipal Hospital
2. Improvement of community members' understanding of health and common diseases, including both acute and chronic illnesses.

### **Intervention Development**

Intervention development began in the fall of 2013, after the PeaceCare team returned from the pcDR13.09 site visit.

In response to the first area of need (health care services at Guaymate Hospital), the PeaceCare team chose to introduce a quality improvement process that has been used in over 50 LMICs in diverse clinical settings – EngenderHealth's Client-Oriented, Provider-Efficient (COPE)<sup>®</sup>

program.<sup>1</sup> COPE is a process that helps health care staff continuously improve the quality and efficiency of services provided at their facility and make services more responsive to clients' needs. COPE involves meetings of all levels of hospital staff every 3 months, with regular monitoring and follow-up by a selected quality committee in between meetings.

The focus of the pcDR14.02 trip in February 2014 was to introduce COPE to Guaymate Hospital, with facilitation by Johanna Lendor, the COPE facilitator at Clinica de Familia La Romana. The first COPE meeting was done, an Action Plan was created, and a COPE Committee was selected.

### **Project Implementation**

The pcDR14.02 site visit was the first phase of project implementation, and involved introduction of COPE to Guaymate Hospital, with facilitation by Johanna Lendor, the COPE facilitator at Clinica de Familia La Romana. The first COPE Exercise was done, an Action Plan was created, and a COPE Committee was selected.

In collaboration with Northwestern University's Access to Health program, the pcDR14.02 site visit also featured a Guaymate Community Health Fair, which attracted over 300 members of the Guaymate and local batey communities.

### **pcDR14.09 Site Visit (September 7-14, 2014)**

Day 1: Sunday, September 7

- UIC/PeaceCare team arrived in Punta Cana, and traveled to Guaymate, arriving at their host location, La Iglesia Bautista.

Day 2: Monday, September 8

- The team visited Guaymate Municipal Hospital, and met with the medical director, Dr. Oscar Estevez.
- Drs. Estevez briefed the team on updates to Guaymate Hospital since last site visit:
  - Ambulances were now being used (identified as a priority through COPE Action Plan) – a driver is paid for by the government, and fuel costs are collected by a voluntary user fee for each use (500 pesos). Estimate is 50 trips/month; used to bring in sick patients from community, transfer patients to higher-level care when necessary, and also used by epidemiologist Dr. Mateo and outreach workers in bateyes.
  - 3 emergent surgeries had been performed in last 6 mos, despite available anesthesia
  - Generator remains a problem, but there is some hope for at least a temporary solution in coming weeks

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.engenderhealth.org/pubs/quality/cope-handbook.php>

- Donated hospital materials from Project C.U.R.E. had arrived – greatly appreciated; requested our assistance in helping to sort through materials and provide education on proper use
- Hospital remains under-staffed and under increasingly tight budget pressures, but there is hope for more support from new leadership in Ministry of Health
- Dr. Estevez briefed our team on COPE progress
  - Several of Action Plan items had been addressed in appropriate time fashion
  - COPE process, however, had not been continued. A second COPE exercise as scheduled was postponed, and the COPE Committee has not been meeting
  - Interest is still high; challenge is finding time and personnel resources

Day 3: Tuesday, September 9

- Guaymate community orientation and tour was done, led by returning pcDR team members Sae-Rom Chae & Morgan Madison
- Part one of Project C.U.R.E. hospital supply re-organization – all items had been put into 2 large supply rooms, had not yet been reviewed or organized. Our team reviewed and re-organized by current necessity of use and by hospital unit.
- Team prepared discussion on Diabetes Management for Clinica de Familia staff.

Day 4: Wednesday, September 10

- Site visit to Clinica de Familia La Romana
  - The residents presented Diabetes management to CFLR physicians and health providers
    - Audience was engaged and asked many questions
    - Most patients are diagnosed when symptomatic; few are diagnosed by screening
    - Oral medications more commonly used than insulin
    - Maintenance visits are rare
  - Discussion with Dr. Milagros de la Rosa and Nurse Dominica Arias regarding family planning services at CFLR and in La Romana generally
    - Almost all forms available; large program called Segura through a German NGO; adolescents fully subsidized
    - Implantable contraception is particularly popular, especially for adolescents
    - Many myths exist about menstrual cycle and about IUDs specifically
    - Comprehensive family planning and STI surveillance program for commercial sex workers (legal and regulated in DR)
  - Discussion with Dr. Leonor Lerebours (Medical Director) and Luis Lewis (Volunteer Coordinator regarding changes at CFLR)
    - CFLR awarded large award from Brugal foundation to improve infrastructure and service delivery
    - New programs in general prevention, LGBTQ, Men's Health, Chronic Diseases (CVD & DM)
    - Integration of HIV & general medicine patient areas to lower stigma

- Request our assistance in improving CME for their staff (low-cost, Spanish availability)
- Discussion with Johanna Lendor about COPE – updates from CFLR and recommendations for Guaymate
  - Need to find a dedicated point person for COPE, someone with the interest and the time
  - Leadership needs to make QI a priority
  - Success at CFLR came after 2 years of starts & stops
  - Currently 3 active COPE processes; HIV QI has now broadened beyond COPE (CIPEX)
  - Short-term and long-term COPE processes
  - Monthly meetings and consistent oversight/accountability

#### Day 5: Thursday, September 11

- The team continued working with the supplies at Guaymate Hospital, re-organizing and training staff on how to use specific supplies
- The team watched a documentary, “The Price of Sugar,” about bateyes in central DR. The film provided cultural context to the people living in bateyes. While many challenges remain, it was reassuring to see that living and working situations today in the bateyes near Guaymate were improved from those in the film
- Peace Corps Youth Group Meeting
  - PCV Dylan Andrew organized a meeting with Guaymate youth group members – seven members from ages 13-19 attended
  - The youth discussed the educational and outreach programs they lead, which cover topics such as HIV and STI prevention, pregnancy prevention, violence prevention, gender awareness and equity, and professionalism/maturity
  - UIC team reviewed syllabi from Peace Corps pertaining to “Deportes para la Vida” and “Superman” (2 Peace Corps programs aimed at HIV/STI prevention and male adolescent development).
  - Youth felt their interventions were impactful based on the verbal feedback they received from attendees and from attendee performance on pre- & post-testing
  - Youth leaders asked for support from Peace Care in the form of presentation materials – we discussed specific plan to print their prepared presentations on reusable, sturdy cloth that can be maintained for long-term use

#### Day 6: Friday, September 12

- COPE meeting with Dr. Estevez, Guaymate Hospital
  - Dr. Estevez debriefed what he thought were the successes and missed opportunities of the first COPE exercise
  - Dr. Estevez discussed new initiatives by the Ministry of Health to improve quality of services, training of staff and leadership, and how COPE could fit nicely into these new initiatives
  - Dr. Estevez discussed the major barrier to implementation and follow-up was time and human resources. Together with the team, brainstormed the idea of

- having one new energetic pasante (early physician trainee) and two retired physicians who are still invested in the community serve as leadership for COPE.
  - We discussed having regular meetings and regular follow-up on the part of Peace Care to ensure that COPE was being implemented
  - The team reviewed all the necessary paperwork and documentation for COPE and left these materials with Dr. Estevez.
- Deportes para la Vida
  - The team attended a session by the Youth Group leaders at the new high school in Guaymate
  - This was the first session in a series of 12 regarding HIV, and the focus today was on stigma and myth correcting
  - The youth leaders did a fantastic job facilitating the session and the attendees were actively engaged
- Visit to Hospital Buen Samaritano
  - The team visited Buen Samaritano hospital, located in La Romana, which has a long-standing history of relationships with US universities and NGOs
  - The discussion focused primarily on the Health Promoter program that Buen Samaritano operates
    - There are 56 current health promoters in bateyes throughout La Romana. However, there is only 1 health promoter near Guaymate, in Batey 80.
    - The health promoters are required to attend four 1-day trainings/yr
    - Training focuses on triage, treatment of common illnesses, family planning, nutrition, wound care and basic first aid
    - Health promoters are not paid, but costs for transportation/food for trainings and costs for transportation of patients to the hospital are reimbursed
    - Promoters are required to live in the area they serve, are recruited through the local church, schools, and are selected after an interview process
    - The hospital has worked with Guaymate hospital previously, as a transfer center for higher level acuity patients
    - Would like to expand program; limiting resource is funding. Cost of each promoter is about \$650/year, which goes toward training, supplies, transportation
  - Buen Samaritano staff expressed interest in the planned Batey health symposia for fall 2015, as discussed with 53<sup>rd</sup> Week previously.
- Dinner/debriefing with local PCVs
  - Dylan, Natalie (who lives in a batey near el Cebu, north of Guaymate), and Sara (who lives in Batey 80) – all youth sector volunteers
  - Discussed PeaceCare and possible project partnerships going forward

Days 7-8: Saturday-Sunday, September 13-14

- Cultural exploration

- Dylan led the team through a tour of Santo Domingo (the first community settled by European explorers in the Americas)
- Further feedback/debriefing with PCVs, future project planning

Day 9: Monday, September 15

- Travel back to Chicago through Punta Cana

## **Evaluation**

The pcDR14.09 site visit continued the process of evaluating the partnership and its educational role. Resident physicians completed pre- and post-trip surveys assessing knowledge and attitudes in global health. IRB approval for further evaluation of partners and partnership is pending.

## **Next Steps**

- Following up with Dr. Estevez on the re-introduction of COPE
  - Weekly follow-up phone calls between Minesh and Dr. Estevez
  - Selection of COPE leader and new COPE committee
  - Johanna has offered her assistance as an external facilitator
  - Next COPE exercise before the new year
- Working with Peace Corps Guaymate Youth Group in improving and broadening their community educational programs
  - Minesh to follow up with Dylan on next steps to printing prepared talks
  - PeaceCare to add visual educational materials to shared electronic folder with youth group
- Working with Dr. Lerebours on continuing education for CFLR staff
  - PeaceCare to search for open-source, Spanish language professional training
- Pending IRB approval for further research and evaluation
- Further partnership with other U.S. universities and NGOs in coordinating their projects and promoting batey health in La Romana province.

## **Future Site Visits**

- pcDR15.03 – March 4-17, 2014