



Global Indigenous Peoples' Health Caucus
Committee on Indigenous Health

The Health of Indigenous Children and Youth

Proposed by:
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My name is Joyce Carol Keeler, of the New York City American Indian Community House. I would like to bring a recommendation to the Indigenous Health Committee. The issue I am presenting at this time concerns the health of indigenous children in the United States and internationally.

I am a new Forum on Indigenous Issues observer, so I have not been advised on the relationship this Forum has with Medical Missions for Children. If a working relationship with this organization has not been established, I propose that the Indigenous Health Committee consider offering formal support to the Medical Missions for Children. According to their mission statement:

Medical Mission for Children is a not-for-profit 501(c) (3) charitable organization supported entirely by charitable donations and dedicated to providing medical expertise to catastrophically ill children whose illnesses exceed the care-giving capability of their communities.

MMC is dedicated to providing medical education interchange and comprehensive medical assistance to critically ill children in rural America and developing countries in a timely and sustainable manner. MMC is not dedicated to a singular cause or disease and maintains no political or religious affiliations.

Elements of the MMC Mission Statement

- To provide U.S. medical support to catastrophically ill children through diagnostic assistance, by mentoring operations, and by providing consultative research and knowledge transfer.
- To provide educational medical information and instruction to doctors and nurses in order to increase the medical efficacy of participating hospitals.
- To provide hospital management training and operational support.
- To provide a framework for data processing and patient record keeping.
- To educate teachers and students on health issues.
- To facilitate the procurement of medical supplies, equipment, pharmaceuticals, and vaccines.
- To use "distance learning" to repair and calibrate medical equipment.
- To provide the general population of an underserved medical community with electronic access to U.S. diagnostic and second opinion services.

- To monitor outbreaks of infectious diseases, provide mission information to remote clinical sites, and advise the requisite governmental agencies and international organizations.
- To provide communications and medical support via telemedicine in the event of natural disasters or terrorists attacks.

What the Medical Missions for Children Does

The mission of Medical Missions for Children is to raise the level of health care in medically underserved communities through long-distance medicine, or "telemedicine." MMC builds a virtual information bridge between U.S. mentoring hospitals and underserved participating hospitals. The bridge facilitates the delivery of interactive real-time medical education that provides information on new techniques, procedures, pharmaceuticals, and vaccines. In addition, doctors from the U.S. mentoring hospitals provide help with difficult cases by assisting with diagnosis and providing second opinions and treatment options. When appropriate, doctors will mentor actual operations through video conferencing.

The need to educate and train has never been greater or the reward higher. Today in the United States, we have over 10,000 prescription drugs available compared to several hundred in most underserved countries. We have over 400 new pharmaceuticals in clinical trials, more than any other time in history. With the advent of the genetic code being broken, there will be a proliferation of others. Providing medical education and support customized to each individual hospital's needs creates an economical and sustainable program. The program is capable of helping thousands of children directly and hundreds of thousands indirectly through medical education and training. Each day, 40,000 children under the age of 5 die in underserved countries. Hopefully, the Global Telemedicine and Teaching Network will substantially lower that number.

Joining Medical Missions for Children as strategic partners are: The United Nations, the World Bank, USAID, DoD/PIMS, Polycom, and the Brody School of Medicine. Mentoring U.S. hospitals presently participating include: St. Joseph's Children's Hospital, Mount Sinai Medical Center and School of Medicine, and Johns Hopkins University and Medical Center, with 11 additional major U.S. hospitals committed for future participation.

The MMC Global Telemedicine and Teaching Network provides the following to medically underserved hospitals:

Interactive medical education

- Information on new equipment and devices
- Introduction of new pharmaceuticals and vaccines
- Training programs
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Direct medical assistance

- Second opinions, diagnosis, consults, treatment options
- Mentoring real-time operations
- Infectious disease and bio-terrorism instructions and training
- Repair and calibration
- Training
- Spare parts

Organizational support

- Source medical equipment, supplies, pharmaceuticals, and vaccines
- Patient records retention and transmission, inventory control, and procurement support
- External funding source support

The network allows participating hospitals in developing countries to contact hospitals and medical specialists in the United States for assistance diagnosing and treating children with severe medical conditions. The initial contact is made via e-mail or fax to the MMC Help Desk describing the problem and the help requested. MMC then contacts the appropriate U.S. children's hospital and arranges for a telemedicine conference.

Medical Mission For Children Board of Advisors includes:

Yolanda Prada de Banzer, Former First Lady of Bolivia
Ruby Moscoso de Young, First Lady of the Republic of Panama
Maria Fernanda F. Alemán, First Lady of Nicaragua

The Medical Mission program has already been set up in Bolivia, Nicaragua, Panama and soon Mexico, Brazil and Iraq.

Frank Brady is the Chairman of Medical Mission for Children. Peg Brady is the Executive Director/CEO. It is located in the United States at St. Joseph's Hospital for Children in Patterson, New Jersey.

Respectfully submitted for Joyce Keeler by Kathy Thunderbird

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Monday, May 19, 2003