

Annual Report 2010

Update on Project Hope Belize

1/25/2011

Project Hope Belize

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Executive Summary:

Project Hope Belize (PHB) is the only Prosthetic and Orthotic clinic in the country of Belize. It was founded by dedicated individuals who have persisted in not only keeping the doors open, but over the fifteen years since we began providing prosthetic services in Belize, we have slowly and steadily kept the clinic growing.

PHB had a phenomenal year in 2010 in a large part due to the support from our many supporters. We continue to grow in our capacity to provide services and in our collaborations with like minded organizations both in Belize and the United States. By way of appreciation for the support from RCCL, this report has been collated so that you have the opportunity to see directly how your support has affected our organization and the people of Belize we so earnestly aspire to assist.

Thanks.

Highlights from 2010:

- Provision of 7 artificial limbs to 5 adults with amputations. (Two had bilateral below the knee amputations)
- Evaluation of 15 additional patients who did not receive treatment yet.
- Provision of 23 orthotic devices to 13 children with cerebral palsy, spina bifida, spinal meningitis or other diagnoses that result in the need for orthotic interventions.
- Tiling the clinic to cut down on dust and make the walking surface safer
- Acquisition of a new vehicle (well, new to us)
- Partnership with International Hospital for Children, CARE Belize & the Belizean Ministry of Health which brought about the introduction of custom orthotic services for the first time ever in Belize.

Mission Trips:

In 2010, two mission trips were hosted. The first in July, the second in October. Mission Reports for these trips are available upon request. The third trip was planned for December 2010, but it was shifted to January 2011 in order to accommodate team preferences. As such, it is anticipated that 4 missions will take place in 2011.

There were a total three practitioners, one technician and five students who participated in mission trips in 2010. All have plans to return for subsequent missions.

July 2010

In summary, the July mission consisted of Robert Kistenberg, Team Leader and three students from the MSPO program at Georgia Tech. Bringing students on these trips allows them to experience prosthetic and orthotic services beyond the confines of the US Healthcare system and allows them the opportunity to provide direct patient care, with supervision in an accelerated fashion.



During this 5-day mission trip, four prostheses were made, one set of orthoses were made and follow up care was provided to 2 additional patients.

Partnerships and Collaborations

In the summer of 2010, the International Hospital for Children (IHC) contacted PHB to see if custom orthotic devices could be provided for 10 – 15 children who would be receiving soft tissue releases or osteotomies in September 2010 at the main hospital in Belize. When surgeries had been conducted in the past, arrangements were made for orthotic services to be provided in Mexico however traveling to and from Mexico from Belize proved challenging for the families and children so an alternative was being sought.

PHB agreed to develop the capacity to fabricate custom orthotic devices so that the collaboration with IHC could be facilitated. A fund raising campaign was initiated to raise funds to acquire an oven, plastics and the other materials needed for orthotic services. This collaboration led to a memorandum of understanding in which Project Hope Belize agreed to provide custom orthotic services as well as follow up services and IHC agreed to fund the 2/3rds the cost for the orthotic services. The remaining balance would be the responsibility of the patient's family in the event they could afford to pay for the orthoses. In the event they were unable to pay, the Ministry of Health agreed to cover the outstanding balance. This partnership allowed for all of the children who had undergone surgery to receive the essential orthotic services. Providing orthotic services to children, however, requires teams to be in Belize at least every 3-4 months for follow up care.

October 2010 Mission Trip

This mission represented the first of what will be many that allow for PHB to provide both prosthetic and orthotic services. A story detailing the "First Orthotic Mission to Belize" can be found at http://www.usispo.org/news-first_orthotic_mission_trip.asp.

This team consisted of Rob Kistenberg, Team Leader, Mike Malagari, CO and Josh Utay, CPO, were the team clinicians, Craig Violette, CTPO was the team technician and Tyler Dunham and Chris Dunning participated as students from the MSPO Program at Georgia Tech.



During this 4.5-day mission trip, three prostheses were made, twenty four orthoses were made (23 of which were for children), evaluations were done of an additional 12 children and follow up care was provided to 4 additional patients.

Facilities Improvements:

By far the biggest capital improvement in 2010 was the installation of floor tiling. While the clinic had been operating since 2004 with bare cement as the floor, it was dusty, impossible to clean and presented a tripping hazard for the patients as the floor was quite uneven in spots. With the addition of tiles, the floor is now level and the clinic remains far less dusty. Lastly, the patients get the experience of walking on a level flat surface.



New PHB Vehicle:

Project Hope Belize has had at least a half dozen “clinic” vehicles since we started providing services. It is critical to the Project Hope Belize activities that there is a vehicle available to facilitate the clinical manager, Adrian Camara, to visit new amputees both at home and in the hospital as well as to transport teams whilst they are in country. As many of the patients live in the rural areas, access requires a stout vehicle.

The challenge has always been that the vehicles we have purchased are used and fairly beat up due to the demands of driving in Belize. Part of the income generated through donations this year were used to pay off the loan on a new vehicle. A local business, recognizing the work that we have been doing in Belize for 15 years, offered to give PHB a very deep discount on a vehicle

they were selling which was quite robust and large enough to accommodate a mission team and their supplies.

The new vehicle was appraised at \$15,000US more than what we paid for it and is expected to be providing patient and team transportation for years to come.

What's ahead in 2011:

For 2011, the goal is to have 3 – 4 mission trips. To do this, additional leaders will be identified to lead teams and provide services. These leaders will be identified from among those practitioners who have lead teams previously.

The partnership with International Hospital for Children will continue to grow as we have established ourselves as the provider of orthotic services for children in Belize. In general the need for orthotic services in developing nations is 10x that for prosthetic services.

We will be getting the electrical capacity of the clinic upgraded in 2011. While this project was initiated towards the end of 2010, due to travel, the holidays and then preparing for a mission the first week of 2011, we had to postpone the actual electrical work until late January or early February.

Lastly, we are in negotiations to purchase a tract of land in the back of the clinic in order to have an area for parking. At this time, the patients must park dangerously close to the road. By purchasing the land in the back of the clinic, we will have a place for the patients to wait without the dangers of the on-coming traffic. As our patient population is becoming a greater percentage of children, this expansion became a very high priority.

In Summary, 2010 was a great year for Project Hope Belize. While by the metric of number of patients fit it was a year of low productivity, we spent a great deal of time laying infrastructure and building partnerships which have put in place what was necessary to grow in 2011 and in the years to come.