



Horn of Africa Neonatal Development Services

2nd Quarter 2017
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Horn of Africa Neonatal Development Services (HANDS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to saving infants' lives in Ethiopia by facilitating the implementation of skilled medical care by the local medical professionals.

HANDS Team made its second trip to Bahir Dar

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In March-April 2017, Dr. Mesfin Woldesenbet (HANDS member and neonatologist); Raymond Laberge (HANDS member and respiratory therapist) and Andrea Beckman (a volunteer and a registered neonatal nurse), flew over from the U.S to make the long trip to Felege Hiwot Referral Hospital (FHRH), which is affiliated with the Bahir Dar University (BDU). Bahir Dar is a regional capital in the northwest part of Ethiopia. This is the second trip made by HANDS and its volunteers. The trip lasted about two weeks.

During this trip, experiences were exchanged, with special emphasis on infection prevention, nutrition and fluid management, respiratory support, monitoring sick babies and proper neonatal documentation. The medical and nursing staff at FHRH were very receptive and willing to learn, teach and generally share their experiences with the travelling team.

The traveling team delivered equipment that is desperately needed in FHRH including a bubble C-PAP (breathing support machine) and other neonatal equipment collected from neonatal ICU's, especially through generous donations from the Shady Grove Adventist Hospital located in Rockville, Maryland.

The HANDS team had very productive meetings with the administrative staff of BDU, FHRH and the Regional Health Bureau. The discussions focused on pertinent issues involving the neonatal ICU including potential upgrading of the building and its content as well as the need for expanding quality improvement projects.

HANDS would like to thank Miss Beckman and Mr. Laberge who travelled and exchanged their experiences with the local Ethiopian medical professionals. HANDS would also like to express its gratitude to the constant advocacy of individuals and institutions that continuously provide their unwavering support in making this trip a reality. Our special gratitude goes to the staff of Bahir Dar University and Felege Hiwot Referral Hospital, especially Professor Yeshigeta Gelaw (Chief Executive Director, College of Medicine & Health Sciences, Bahir Dar University), Dr. Laway Beza (Head, Pediatrics Department) and Mr. Mollalign Tarekegn (CEO of Felege Hiwot Hospital).

"The Legacies we leave behind define our success in life" MWS.

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Raymond Loberge, Andrea Beckman and Mesfin Woldesenbet, MD



Andrea Beckman sharing her bedside experiences with pediatric Interns and Nurses



Major shipment worth \$62,000 sent to Bahir Dar University Hospital

Observations: The Need for Support and Involvement from Non-Medical Professionals

Since the inception of HANDS, the team has made approximately 1-3 trips every year for the last 5 years. During these trips, both the HANDS members and especially the volunteers have observed issues that relate to neonatal care that are non-medical that require very close attention. These issues have a direct or indirect impact in the health care provided to newborns. These issues can be dealt with support from non-medical professionals who may volunteer to travel and share their expertise and experiences with local resources. Key areas include the following:

- 1- **Organizational and administrative professionals:** The lack of trained and professional organizational and administrative resources such as hospital administrators, charge nurses, human resource department professionals that are critical in establishing efficient and effective organizational designs for different departments in the various hospitals.
- 2- **Information Technology (IT) professionals:** The need for setting up and maintaining effective IT systems is critical. The hospitals in Ethiopia HANDS has been working with over the last 5 years have basic WiFi services which works well with a need for some upgrading. An effective IT infrastructure build will help enhance many aspects of the patient care experience and other resources, including health provider's order and daily notes entry, collecting data for research, access to journals and reference books and peer-peer networking through teleconferencing.

- 3- **Engineers:** A number of new hospitals are being built all over Ethiopia. HANDS has observed that there is a need for qualified engineers and construction professionals with experiences in US and other developed country hospital management and construction experience. This includes, biomedical engineers who may help in repair and maintenance of neonatal equipment, electrical engineers who could share their experiences in installation of equipment like central cardiorespiratory monitors and electrical outlets for multiple neonatal equipment, and other engineering subspecialties.
- 4- **Legal professionals:** As professionally disciplined as the Ethiopian medical professionals are, the medical ethics practiced in the US and other developed countries are significantly different than what HANDS observed in Ethiopia. Legal professionals and ethicists who are involved in medical ethics are very essential to share their experiences with Ethiopian medical as well as non-medical professionals and build a system of core values, discipline and accountability.
- 5- **Other professionals** dealing with:
 - Environmental Sanitation/Personal hygiene
 - Storage/Dispensing
 - Epidemiology and statistics

HANDS Visited Gondar Medical School

HANDS members and volunteer visited the University of Gondar University's-College of Medicine and Health Sciences (UOG-CMHS) on April 2, 2017. UOG-CMHS is located in the historical city of Gondar, northwest of Ethiopia. This visit was arranged by the Global Initiative for Better Health or GIHB, a non-profit organization based in Houston, Texas. This visit's purpose was to assess the need for neonatal support at GUMS. During their visit of their neonatal ICU at GUMS, the HANDS team was very impressed on the progress the ICU team made despite the huge demand for significant upgrades. The ICU team is in the process of building a new hospital. The HANDS team met with the Dr. Sisay Yifru, the Dean of UOG-CMHS and the staff of the pediatrics department and discussed ways of upgrading the level of neonatal care and exchanged its experiences with the dedicated and resourceful ICU team at the UOG-CMHS. HANDS would like to express their gratitude to the UOG-CMHS team for their hospitality.



HANDS Team with Dr. Sisay Yifru, UOG-CMHS Dean



HANDS Team with UOG-CMHS Pediatrics Department Staff

Next Steps

We are planning to have more frequent visits to Bahir Dar and to continue collaborating with the Bahir Dar team. HANDS is planning to have three additional trips to Bahir Dar in 2017.

We hope the information contained in this newsletter will trigger thoughts, discussions and a resolve to action by individuals and organizations (especially those residing in the developed world). We are also willing to work with local Ethiopian professionals towards the common goal of upgrading neonatal care in Ethiopia through the exchange of knowledge, expertise and experiences.

How You Can Help

Would you like to get involved with HANDS by volunteering your time and talents? We have volunteer opportunities for skilled, talented and dedicated people in the following areas:

Clinical Staff

- Neonatologist
- Neonatal Nurses
- Neonatal Respiratory Therapists
- Pharmacists

Non-Clinical Staff

- Administrative Assistance
- Engineers
- Fundraising
- IT
- Legal
- Marketing
- Shipment
- Travel Arrangements
- Website Maintenance

We welcome monetary donations in any amount. Your contributions will enable us to continue our work to improve neonatal health care facilities and the delivery of medical care to newborn babies in Ethiopia.

To volunteer or make a donation, please contact us at:

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