



February 8th, 2010

Re: Launch of the Mothers and Newborns of Haiti Donation Campaign

Dear Colleagues,

Since the January 12th earthquake in Haiti, the SOGC has reestablished communication with our partners at *la Société Haitienne d'Obstétrique et de Gynécologie* (SHOG) and have obtained more information on how this devastating disaster has impacted the association and its projects. There is good news and bad news...

The earthquake has affected everyone in Port-au-Prince and its surroundings, including the associations' members and staff. Sadly, the SHOG association lost several of its members, including Dr. Alix Laroche, who was well known to the SOGC for his past work as a member of SHOG's Executive Committee and his current work at the National Nurse and Midwifery School, where he was a long term faculty member and more recently, the Interim Director of the Institution. Dr. Laroche perished while teaching at Port-au-Prince's National Nursing School in class with his students. Many of the members and staff of SHOG have also lost family, friends and neighbors. Many have lost their homes and private clinics, and are trying to reestablish their lives after this devastation.

SHOG's secretariat has sustained minor damage to its infrastructure and to some of its contents. However, the staff has nevertheless returned to work and the Executive Committee members of the association continue to assume their roles and responsibilities.

In the last week, SHOG has turned its attention to ensuring the provision of maternal and infant health services at the maternity unit of the Croix-des-Bouquets Health Center. Although the health center and its maternity unit were closed for several days immediately following the earthquake, activities have resumed at the center. The maternity unit continues to be staffed by 5 midwives, several of whom have lost their homes and/or close family members. Certain areas of the health center have been transformed into a dormitory so that the midwives and their children could have a safe place to sleep. SHOG is currently looking into securing a staff house close to the health center so as to provide temporary accommodation for some of its staff and thus ease the living conditions of those who have lost the most.

Taking into account the fact that a tent city of approximately 50,000 victims of the disaster will soon be established in close proximity to Croix-des-Bouquets, SHOG is mobilizing support to upgrade the

capacity of the current maternity unit to provide comprehensive maternal and newborn health services, including family planning and emergency obstetrical care. Discussions undertaken with several national actors, including UNFPA, MSF Holland and JHPEIGO lead the SHOG to believe that this is a real possibility and that the center can be functional within a couple of weeks.

As you can imagine, such an undertaking is a huge initiative which will need the support of many partners. Plans are now underway to establish the two operation theatres; establish and furnish post operation recovery rooms; expand the current pre, intra partum and post natal care services to include the provision of family planning; purchase essential equipment, supplies and medication for the operating theatre; recruit the necessary staff; drill a well to ensure continuous clean water; upgrade the latrines; as well as many other important steps that need to be taken in order to expand the centre's ability of providing quality reproductive health services to the women of Croix-des-Bouquets.

The SOGC has maintained a strong partnership with SHOG for over 10 years and has been a vital contributor to the FIGO Saving Mothers and Newborns project of implementing the maternity unit of the Croix-des-Bouquets Health Center. We have demonstrated our determination and goodwill for the success of this project in the past, but now our help is needed in Haiti more than ever.

SOGC is supporting SHOG's efforts to expand the maternity unit of the Croix-des-Bouquets Health Center as quickly as possible and has already committed \$50,000 towards this initiative. Your help is also desperately needed to respond to the needs of the potential 12,500 women of the district of Croix-des-Bouquets who will need maternal health care in the next year.

SOGC urges its members to help the people of Haiti by donating one day of salary to our **Mothers and Newborns of Haiti Donation Campaign**. Ob/gyn departments of medical schools and hospitals are also encouraged to join together and fundraise as a group in support of this campaign. All donations can be sent to:

Canadian Foundation for Women's Health
780 Echo Drive, Ottawa, ON - K1S 5R7
www.cfwh.org

Attached please find a flyer which provides more information about the campaign. I also invite you to check our web site regularly for updated information about the evolution of this very important initiative.

Sincerely Yours,



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Executive Vice-President
The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada