

# **KHANH HOA MEDICAL MISSION 2007 REPORT**

By

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The mission to Khanh Hoa Province, Vietnam from June 17<sup>th</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> of 2007 is now complete. This report is written to summarize the activities that have been done in the first mission by our team. It will be sent out to our donors and supporters and will go to the public so that we can inform people about our mission.

This year, our medical team included 2 physicians (one pediatrician and one general surgeon), 6 medical students, 1 Ph.D. student, 1 research specialist, 1 volunteer, and 3 hired translators/tour guides.

Khanh Hoa Province is located in the south central region. The province has 137 communes and its capital is Nha Trang City. Dien Khanh District is at the southern border of Nha Trang city. It includes many communes on both dry land, close to the water, and high land. Dien Khanh Hospital is in the Dien An Commune, which is 15 kilometers from Nha Trang city.

Departing from the United States, our team arrived to Tan Son Nhat Airport and headed to Khanh Hoa province on the Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>. On June 20<sup>th</sup>, we went to the Dien Khanh Hospital to meet with the doctors and staffs to start our work. Dien Khanh hospital has 15-20 doctors and nurse practitioners who usually work in the hospital. The hospital has around 120 beds where many patients have to share a room. The hospital is poorly-equipped in most departments, especially in the emergency room and operation room. Most patients came to the hospital for both acute and chronic diseases such as respiratory and digestive infections, motorcycle accidents, infectious diseases, and minor surgery, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

Our medical team was divided into small groups under the instructions of our doctors to work at different departments to see patients with the local doctors. In the morning, we worked in the inpatient centers to check on the patients who were either in their rooms or came from the emergency or outpatient center. We listened to their complaints, did physical exams on them based on the patient profiles, consulted them their current status and suggested them what to do to improve their health. In the afternoon, we worked in the outpatient centers to see new patients. These patients came normally with different complaints where diagnosis was needed to be made quickly. We worked with the local doctors to check on these patients.

There were both advantages and disadvantages for working in the hospital in Vietnam.

- ❖ For the advantages, first, working in the hospital created a safe environment for the team to work and be familiar with the healthcare system of Khanh Hoa province in particular. Since this was the first mission, the hospital environment helped our team expose and learn about the medical system, the health conditions and the real needs of the people in the province.
- ❖ Secondly, working in the hospital offered us a great learning and information exchanging environment for the students and doctors. Students had more time to see and do physical exam on patients with less pressure on the time. By doing it this way, we had a two-fold advantage:
  - Helping the students to learn by their careful service,
  - Maximizing the care that we could offer to the patients.

Moreover, our doctors also had a chance to discuss with the local doctors about some tropical diseases and their symptoms that were very unique about the diseases in Vietnam.

- ❖ Thirdly, it was about the patients that we have been in contact, and the relationship between healthcare givers and patients that we have developed. We realized how the hospital's lack of equipments and resources limited the ability of the local doctors in helping the patients. It helped us to better understand that treating patients was not only about giving them the medicines, but also about the care and the attention that a doctor or a healthcare provider could offer to the patients. The patients loved to talk to us and were grateful when we came to visit.
- ❖ For the disadvantages, the biggest limitation in working in the hospital was that we had to follow the rules and the regulations of the hospital and the governmental health system. A big part of this limitation was the issue about the medicine that we brought from the United States. The hospital has restricted us from using the medicines, and required them to be further inspected by the department of health. Therefore, we decided to help the patients without health insurance by paying for their prescriptions. All of the medicines of our team were donated to the Red Cross Organization in Nha Trang City so that they could use the medicine in their community free clinics in the suburban villages.

Besides seeing patients, we did other activities as we have planned which are:

- ❖ A survey research has been conducted on the patients and their family members who came to the hospital. The purpose of the survey was to help us understand how people's lifestyle and environments have affected the health of the people in the area. This understanding has helped us in developing better educational programs and targeting the right people to be more effective in doing our work.
- ❖ We presented our educational program in the hospital for the patients and their family. We had separate programs for children and adults. The programs covered different topics on health protection and information about different diseases. The patients liked our program very much and ask us questions to learn for their knowledge. In the future, we will bring these programs to the villages to further help a larger number of the residents.
- ❖ Lastly, we gave out vitamins and toys to the children that we visited. Especially in the days of our educational program, we have given out more than 100 portions of gift for the children and 150 portions for the adults. Depending on their ages, each portion for the children included books, notebooks, toys, pencils, coloring books, coloring pencil, back bag, toothbrushes and toothpastes. For the adults, we gave out a box of cookies, medicated oils, toothpastes and toothbrushes.

To build our contact and network for the organization to come back and work in Khanh Hoa province next year, we have contacted the Red Cross Organization in Nha Trang City. This organization shares some similar goals with us. We have donated our medicines and a monetary contribution to help this organization in running their clinics for a month to help the poor in the suburban of the city. The health care providers and residents at those clinics were very happy to have

our visit and receive our support, and they also hope to cooperate with us in doing mission work in the future.

In conclusion, we have faced different challenges in our first mission; however, this trip has provided our team a meaningful medical and cultural experience and an opportunity to reach out to help the people who are less fortunate in Vietnam. Learning from these experiences, we will grow stronger, prepare better and keep working harder to help more people in Vietnam who are in dire of need.

Last but not least, our trip would not happen if we did not get your support and encouragement. Your trust has helped us stay focus and move forward to complete this mission. We would like to thank you for your trust and contribution. We will do our best to keep your trust and hope to continue receiving your support in the future.

We would like to thank all of the team members for the uniqueness that they have brought with them in this trip to make this experience memorable.

Huy Do & Nguyen Nguyen- Team Leaders

Khanh Hoa Medical Mission Team in June, 2007