

Konbit Sante

CAP-HAITIEN HEALTH PARTNERSHIP



New ULS clinic opens

With your support, we raised more than \$200,000 to fund landscaping and construction, and to provide some operational support. Ground was broken in April 2018, and the building was completed earlier this year.

After five years of planning and fundraising and almost a year of construction, the new primary care center for ULS opened in April and began serving the community of the economically distressed community of Bande du Nord (Fort Bourgeois).

Since 2010, ULS (United de Lutte pour la Sante, or "Fighting Unit for Health") has been the only easily accessible source for health care in Bande du Nord, a community of about 25,000 situated in the very mountainous rural outskirts of Cap-Haitien. Konbit Sante began partnering with ULS in 2012, and offered to build a permanent health center if it could secure ownership of a suitable plot of land. The situation became even more precarious when ULS was informed that it faced eviction from the building that housed its clinic.

Fortunately, ULS garnered enough support from the community to acquire land, and in 2014 a team of Konbit Sante volunteer engineers and architects began surveying the site and designing a new clinic. With your support, we raised more than \$200,000 to fund landscaping and construction, and to provide some operational support. Ground was broken in April 2018, and the building was completed earlier this year. While the building is largely completed, we will continue to support ULS as it serves the community with quality holistic care.

The ULS project is a perfect example of what can happen when people from different backgrounds, experiences, and cultures band together in a konbit for the common good. Without your donation, it would not have been possible.

Konbit Sante Founder Honored



In February, Dr. Michael Taylor received the prestigious Presidential Citation Award from the American Academy of Dermatology for his work with Konbit Sante, which he co-founded with his wife, Wendy, in 2001. Michael was presented the award during the AAD's 77th Annual Meeting conference in Washington, D.C. The largest organization of dermatologists worldwide, AAD has more than 16,000 members from more than 35 countries.

While in Washington, the Taylors also had a special lunch with U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree, D-Maine, in the Capitol dining hall. Congresswoman Pingree entered an acknowledgement of Konbit Sante and its role into the Congressional Record on Feb. 28.



Dr. Michael Taylor, left, and Wendy Taylor, right, accept the Presidential Citation award from AAD President Dr. Suzanne Olbricht.

Maine Walks with Haiti 5K fundraiser celebrates 10th birthday

The 10th annual Maine Walks with Haiti 5K walk/run was held in perfect weather on June 8 in Portland's Back Cove Park. Participants enjoyed a special performance by Pihcintu, a nationally renowned choral group, before embarking on a the 5K walk and timed run in the spirit of this year's theme, "Building Bridges." The walk/run raised more than \$24,000, which will be directly applied to our work to strengthen capacity for health in North Haiti.



Runners begin the 10th Maine Walks with Haiti 5K walk/run. (Leslie Wagner photo)

New website launched

We didn't just redesign our website this year, we totally overhauled it! In March, the new www.konbitsante.org went live, featuring a user-friendly design, easier to navigate donation and volunteer pages, expanded information about our history and partners, and new features such as a Newsroom section that provides up-to-date information about our work. Many thanks to the folks at Rugged Coastal of Portland, who designed the new website and provided technical support.



For more information, visit Konbitsante.org

Volunteers mentor residents at JUH

In the spring, three New England physicians traveled to Haiti to mentor medical residents participating in Konbit Sante’s research training initiative at Justinien University Hospital (JUH). The pilot program is being offered as a collaboration between JUH, Konbit Sante, and the Haiti Medical Education project, and focuses on conducting practical research that helps clinicians measure the scope and nature of problems in their own work settings. The goal is to come up with solutions that will improve care and patient outcomes. There are 12 groups of residents conducting research that will help inform quality improvements in the hospital.



Orthopedic resident Dr. Emmanuel Cyriaque explains a case to Dr. Stephen Hoenig, Konbit Sante Executive Director Nate Nickerson, and Dr. Dan Sobel.

As part of this model, we invite volunteers with expertise in the subject matter being studied to supplement the training in research methods, both in person and remotely. Dr. John Devlin, an endocrinologist affiliated with several hospitals in the Portland area, is mentoring two groups of internal medicine residents looking at the quality of outpatient diabetes care. Dr. Dan Sobel, a retired neonatologist from Portland, is supporting a group of pediatric residents that is looking at how well JUH’s laboratory diagnostics system is working for neonatal and pediatric care. And Dr. Stephen J. Hoenig, a vascular surgeon in private practice in Concord, Massachusetts, is working with two groups of surgical residents—one looking at post-surgical infections, the other the quality of post-surgical counseling.

HCBH pilot program aims at efficiency

Haiti Baptist Convention Hospital (HCBH), one of our partner facilities in Greater Cap-Haitien, has made great progress in recent years to become more self-sustaining and less reliant on external support by implementing many management improvements. Sustainability and provision of high-quality, accessible care to their patients are top concerns for them, and they are not yet where they want to be.

To that end, we are working with HCBH on a pilot project to restructure how it procures medications and supplies in such a way that will allow it to increase revenue while decreasing prices for patients and expanding access to free medication for patients who can’t pay. The first large order of medications was received from IMRES, a low-cost provider of essential medicines, and we will work together to analyze whether the strategy will meet those goals.

Partnership examines quality improvements at healthcare facilities

Konbit Sante is partnering with the Haiti Ministry of Health Northern Department on a \$30,000 grant from PAHO (Pan American Health Organization) to conduct research to identify factors that have effectively promoted the implementation of quality improvement (QI) initiatives at health-care facilities in Haiti, as well as factors that impede their progress. Only 13 projects out of 240 proposals from 22 countries were accepted, and this was the only one from Haiti. That speaks to how important and relevant the question is to so many low-resource settings.

The research, spearheaded by Konbit Sante Program Director Dr. Adrien Demes, is well underway. The research team is actively looking at a number of case studies of QI efforts on which we have been collaborating with our partners at JUH, FSM, and HCBH. For example, at JUH, we are studying what factors have facilitated or hampered efforts to reduce newborn deaths or efforts to improve the monitoring and care of women during the progression of labor in the JUH maternity. At FSM, we are looking at factors that lead to or block improvements in the quality of prenatal visits and improving staff attendance. This is a rigorous study that we hope to complete by October, and we look forward to sharing the findings at that time.



JUH stockroom manager Melik Derius displays some of the oxygen containers.

Oxygen cylinders alleviate power disruptions in pediatric service

As public power has become less reliable in Haiti, Justinien University Hospital has had to rely more on bottled oxygen rather than electric oxygen concentrators. However, there has often not been enough large bottles available for lease to keep the oxygen in stock in the pediatric service. This has often had catastrophic consequences to patients reliant on oxygen, especially premature infants who cannot breathe on their own.

In March, SwiMSA (Swiss Medical Students Association), a longtime collaborator with Konbit Sante in Haiti, informed us that their project Amitié Hispaniola (Friendship Haiti) was dissolving, and gave Konbit Sante a generous final contribution that we used to purchase eight large oxygen cylinders dedicated for the pediatric service at JUH. This allows for the service to maintain a good reserve of oxygen and helps ensure that empty cylinders are refilled well before the supply of O2 runs out, lessening the impact of power outages on pediatric patients.



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