

Konbit Sante

CAP-HAITIEN HEALTH PARTNERSHIP



Donate online: www.konbitsante.org
Tel. (207) 347-6733 • 362 US Route 1, Falmouth, ME 04105 USA

Konbit Sante
CAP-HAITIEN HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

Non-profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Portland, Maine
Permit #348

Konbit Sante helps partners respond to COVID-19

Responding to the global coronavirus pandemic has dominated Konbit Sante's focus for much of 2020. We immediately set to work supporting the Haitian Ministry of Health and our partners in Greater Cap-Haitien to slow transmission of the virus and strengthen the ability of healthcare facilities to treat COVID-19 patients. As of this writing, we have:

- Conducted regular COVID-19 response meetings with Konbit Sante staff and board members, health-care partners, Ministry of Health officials, and representatives from other non-profit organizations
- Procured and coordinated the delivery of COVID-19 response materials and other supplies to partner sites designated coronavirus treatment facilities by the Ministry of Health
- Collaborated with the Haiti Medical Education Project to provide training sessions on management of COVID-19 patients to frontline workers
- Trained, equipped, and supported the salaries of 20 agents de santé (community health workers) to enable them to go door-to-door in communities to educate residents about COVID-19, deliver masks, distribute flyers with prevention tips, and maintain handwashing stations
- Distributed more than 6,000 locally-made masks to residential neighborhoods
- Provided more than 600 handwashing stations made from buckets with spigots, and supplied soap and chlorine for disinfection
- Purchased air time on local radio stations and paid sound trucks to distribute prerecorded prevention-oriented health messages to neighborhoods



- Purchased 10 large oxygen cylinders for Justinien University Hospital (JUH) in Cap-Haitien and paid for the preparation of a site for an oxygen generator given to the hospital by the Haitian government
- Provided funds for COVID-19 triage centers at JUH, the Fort St. Michel health center in Nord-Ouest, and the ULS health center in Bande du Nord

We are grateful to all whose support made it possible to respond early and robustly to this challenge, including the Dalton Foundation, Direct Relief, Hope International, Rise Against Hunger, Haiti Medical Education Project, Hope Health Action, Fort Lauderdale Sister Cities, and many others. We will continue working side-by-side with our partners in Haiti as they weather this pandemic while providing basic health care in their communities.





We Walk with Haiti raises more than \$67K

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated cancellation of the annual Maine Walks with Haiti 5K walk/run in Portland this year. We shifted to a virtual event that requested supporters create personal fundraising pages on our website during the month of June.

In the spirit of the annual 5K, we christened this virtual campaign We Walk with Haiti and encouraged fundraisers to raise money by doing something they enjoyed. People could also support us by donating directly.

Given that this was our first virtual fundraiser, we didn't know what to expect in terms of either participation or donations. We were ecstatic when we not only reached our goal of \$50,000, but exceeded it – as of this writing, we have raised more than \$67,000 and expanded our donor base in the U.S. and globally.

Thanks to your generosity, our healthcare partners in Haiti are better equipped to respond to the coronavirus pandemic while continuing to provide basic health care in their communities. *Mesi anpil!* (Many thanks!)

New hires join Konbit Sante senior staff

Konbit Sante has filled three key leadership positions since December. All three have proven to be valuable assets to the organization, and will play vital roles as we transition to a new dynamic following Executive Director Nate Nickerson's retirement this fall.



Hans-Michel Pierrot, MD, MPH, joined our staff in Cap-Haitien in December as program director overseeing the planning and operation of programs in Haiti. A native of Cap-Haitien, Hans-Michel worked with Doctors Without Borders on the 2010-11 cholera epidemic and spent several years working for the Ministry of Health. Before joining Konbit Sante, he was a health consultant for GROW Project Haiti and a clinical technical coordinator for a USAID-funded project by the Catholic Medical Mission Board. He has a medical degree from UNIBE School of Medicine and a master of public health degree from Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



Randall May, MSW, became Konbit Sante's Deputy Director in December. Operating out of the Maine office, Randall's responsibilities include supporting the executive director in advancing the mission of the organization and managing the operational aspects of the organization. Randall's

experience includes 13 years as director of programs for the Frannie Peabody Center in Portland, Maine, and 7 years with the National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) in Africa, including 3 years as director of international operations in South Africa. He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from DePauw University and a master's degree in social work from Washington University in St. Louis.



Rupal Ramesh Shah, MS, MPH, joined Konbit Sante in June as incoming executive director, and is scheduled to fully take over the position from Nate Nickerson in October. Originally from Tanzania, Rupal spent time at Kibong'oto Infectious Diseases Hospital in the Kilimanjaro region as an intern during her graduate studies. She worked at Boston Children's Hospital as a quality improvement consultant for almost 2 years, and at Harvard University as a research assistant and laboratory manager for almost 5 years. Prior to working for Konbit Sante, she lived and worked in Haiti in 2018-19, first as a tuberculosis laboratory consultant at Hôpital Universitaire de Mirebalais, a Partners in Health hospital, then as a grant manager at Saint Boniface Hospital. Rupal holds a bachelor of science degree in biology and a bachelor of arts degree in chemistry from Southern Wesleyan University, a master of science degree in microbiology from Clemson University, and a master of public health degree from Boston University.

Volunteers provide on-site training

Volunteerism in Haiti has been greatly curtailed since July 2019 due to political unrest and the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in strict travel restrictions. However, we were able to host a volunteer team from Connecticut Children's Medical Center in December 2019 that produced promising results.

Pediatrician Adam Silverman, MD (who is also on our board of directors) and Tracy Proulx, RN, a neonatal intensive care unit nurse and lactation consultant, provided training and consultation to strengthen the pediatric service at Justinien Hospital.

Focusing on issues identified from monthly mortality reviews, they conducted sessions on the use of breast pumps and manual expression of breast milk to provide milk to newborns who had been abandoned or whose mothers had died. They also provided training on the usage of electric infusion pumps for fluid management, ultrasound/echocardiography for diagnostics, and emergency medications for care management.



Konbit Sante

CAP-HAITIEN HEALTH PARTNERSHIP



"It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters in the end." — Ernest Hemingway

Dear Friends of Konbit Sante,

As many of you know, I will soon be transitioning out of my role as executive director for Konbit Sante. We are very pleased that our incoming executive director, Rupal Shah, will be ably taking over the responsibilities in October. We have all — staff, board, partners — been working very closely together to prepare for and ensure a smooth transition, and through our time together, I can see that Rupal is bringing a lot of new capacity to our organization to successfully lead it into its next chapters.

Given these imminent changes, I want to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to all of the people and partners in Haiti, the U.S., and beyond who have joined in this journey throughout these years and made this work possible. In addition to the actual work and programs that we have implemented to strengthen health systems in Cap-Haitien, it has truly been a journey of exploring how to build bridges of solidarity and an ongoing discovery of what creating a *konbit* — working together with respect toward a common purpose — can mean.

We have been through many challenges together over the years that have only deepened our relationships and resolve to see a better future for the people in this small part of the world. In these days of seemingly ubiquitous divisiveness and rancor, it has been a privilege to be part of something so focused on accompaniment and unity. From my vantage point, I have seen how we have grown and evolved in that direction while acknowledging that we still have much to learn to fully meet our highest aspirations. So, thankfully, the journey continues...

We will soon be entering our 20th year, and I plan to continue to be part of the Konbit Sante family, supporting the work in some fashion, as we embark on our third decade together. I invite your continued invaluable support for the work together. Thank you again!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Nate Nickerson".

Nate Nickerson
Executive Director