

— Hospital Sisters —
MISSION OUTREACH
— *A healing presence for the life of the world* —

January 13, 2010

Local response to Haiti earthquake

Springfield, IL - Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach, a not-for-profit corporation that collects and redistributes medical equipment and supplies, is preparing to respond to the needs of the earthquake victims in Haiti. According to Bruce Compton, Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach President and CEO, "I have learned from Marilyn Lowney, Executive Director of the Haitian Health Foundation (HHF), details regarding yesterday's earthquake in Haiti." "Marilyn has spoken with the HHF Public Health Director in Jeremie, Haiti, Dr. Bette Gebrian who reported that the earthquake impacted Jeremie and its surrounding area, even though it is about 100 miles from the epicenter. The limited reports thus far indicate that the HHF staff, volunteers, and patients were not hurt. In response, Mission Outreach is preparing items for shipment and planning for the long term relief efforts."

Dr. Gebrian stated that "the earth shook for at least 20 seconds in the town of Jeremie, and that some buildings and structures were damaged." She added that they are attempting to ascertain the condition of all staff, volunteers, and patients as well as further damage assessment of the buildings. Since HHF provides care to people in a very large and often challenging area—in remote mountain villages – communication and transportation ordinarily difficult is now extremely hindered.

Mission Outreach is responding to the crisis through its many long-term relationships with organizations including Food for the Poor, Catholic Relief Services, and the U.S. Military. Per the request of the relief workers, Mission Outreach is preparing blankets, hygiene kits and a few immediate medical supplies like bandages and first aid for shipment that will be sent by tomorrow morning to Haiti with the assistance of the Navy. Attention will then be turned to the need for larger supplies as requests are made. "As in many countries, our commitment is focused on the long-term medical needs of our partners in care. As hospitals and clinics are rebuilt in Haiti, we will be there to supply them with the items they need to begin treatment," Compton added.

Sister Jomary Trstensky, OSF, Provincial Superior of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, stated that "We are relieved that our Sister Maryann Berard was not injured in the 7.0-magnitude earthquake that ravaged Haiti last evening." Sister Maryann is the administrator of the HHF clinic in Jeremie and she, along with those with whom she serves, is assessing the damage in their communities as well as the impact on their volunteers and patients," said Sister Jomary.

Compton lived in Haiti for two years (2000-2002) and worked with HHF in Jeremie. Currently, he is collaborating with the Catholic Consortia for International Healthcare with hospitals in Port-au-Prince. He also collaborates with Hospital St. Joseph, the Haitian Development Fund, Hospital St. Frances De Salles, and the Catholic Relief Services – organizations with a presence in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Sisters from the American Province of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis have served in Jeremie with HHF for 20 years. The Hospital Sisters sponsor Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization focused on the recovery and responsible redistribution of healthcare equipment and supplies to developing countries including Haiti. HHF provides health care, development, relief, and the hope of a future to more than 225,000 of the poorest people in over 100 rural mountain villages in southwestern Haiti. If you would like to assist with relief efforts, please contact Mission Outreach. Monetary donations are being accepted to cover the costs of shipping the supplies. For more information, contact Pamela Perlmutter, Development and Public Relations Manager at 217-525-8843 ext. 181 or at pperlmutter@hsosf-usa.org.