

MHCN NETWORK

news & notes

MOBILE HEALTH CLINICS NETWORK - AUTUMN, 2009



Dr. Anthony Vavasis, Chair of the Mobile Health Clinics Network Advisory Board, speaking at a meeting in Mexico City on September 21.

A Bridge with Mexico's Las Caravanas de la Salud

Two years ago, the Health Ministry of Mexico unveiled Las Caravanas de la Salud, a nationally organized and administered mobile health program. It consists of 842 vehicles (and growing) of varying sizes that reach the most underserved populations throughout the country with much needed services including primary and preventive care, obstetrics, and dental care. Two main focuses of the program are maternal-fetal health and children's health. The Caravanas mission is to reach people in local communities for whom healthcare services are otherwise inaccessible. In its short life, Las Caravanas has already provided for countless people in need, and the government continues to work toward improving the program's efficacy in providing services.

In late September, Mexico's Health Ministry convened the second annual *Semana Internacional de Innovación y Calidad en Salud*, a national conference on the quality of healthcare

in Mexico. **Anthony Vavasis, MD**, MHCN's Advisory Board Chair, was invited to give a presentation focusing on future innovations in mobile health that contribute to improving the quality of healthcare. The presentation covered a number of important areas including specialty vehicle design, data management, and academic pursuits as they relate to mobile healthcare.

The most encouraging outcome of Anthony's presentation was the warm relationship that continues to develop between mobile healthcare providers in Mexico and the United States. Although our obstacles differ, our two countries have very similar goals in terms of reaching and serving people in need. In this regard, there is much we can teach and learn from each other. MHCN was honored to have representatives of Las Caravanas attend our 2008 Annual Forum in Seattle. Because of the H1N1 flu outbreak in Mexico City, however,

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Mammography Vans Offered Assistance in Washington

Mobile Health Clinics Network received an interesting and unexpected email in October from Amanda Walsh, assistant to Senator David Vitter (R-LA). Ms. Walsh informed us that the Senator "is planning on introducing a Senate version of the House Bill HR2964, the **Mobile Mammography Promotion Act of 2009.**" The Bill was originally introduced in the House by Representative Dean Heller (R-NV).

The proposed Bill will enable mammography vans to obtain refunds for Federal excise taxes on fuels used by the vehicles. Since many such vans need to run their engines continuously in order to provide generator power for lights and equipment, and heat for the interior, this tax break could mean considerable savings.

The email from Ms. Walsh went on to say: "We have spoken with **Dr. Jerry McLarty** from LSU Health Sciences Center. He is in charge of the mobile mammography unit run by LSU and the Feist-Weiller Cancer Center, and wrote us a letter of support for introduction of the Bill.... If you have an opportunity to take a look at the Bill, we would love to receive your support for this piece of legislation as well."

The staff at MHCN headquarters responded quickly and, with the help of **Melissa Lofton** at M.D. Cancer Center in Houston, wrote a letter of support for the Bill, signed by **Anthony Vavasis, MD, Darien DeLorenzo** and eight MHCN members representing mobile mammography and preventive care programs. Emphasis was made in the support letter encouraging that the Bill be extended to include all mobile health programs across the USA. According to a current email we

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Dr. Michele Simoneaux of Tulane University Medical School speaking to a patient outside Tulane's "On the Road" van, a member of the Greater New Orleans Mobile Unit Consortium.

MHCN Featured Affiliate

GREATER NEW ORLEANS MOBILE UNIT CONSORTIUM

The GNO Consortium mission is to share experiences, learn, and collaborate about the uniqueness of delivering care in a mobile setting in order to optimally address health disparities. The Consortium is comprised of twelve mobile health units with a common goal of providing high-quality health services to areas with limited access to care. The mobile units offer diverse services including: pre-natal care, dental care, primary care, behavioral health, fitness, and immunizations. Some units were in operation pre-Hurricane Katrina, however, many developed after the disaster to meet basic health needs.

The Consortium began informally in 2007 for providers and health leaders to network and share best practices. Now the Consortium meets monthly, hosts training sessions for mobile unit staff, and offers its own website. "Our meetings address the unique issues that mobile units encounter throughout greater New Orleans such as how to engage the target population, maintenance issues, new locations in need of services, and how units can collaborate to meet community needs," says **Leah Berger** from Tulane University School of Medicine who serves as Chair of the Consortium.

This past year, the Consortium for-

mally affiliated with the national Mobile Health Clinics Network, furthering the opportunity for collaboration with other programs around the nation. Stated Leah, "Consortium members are looking forward to hosting the 2010 national MHCN Annual Forum in New Orleans. The Forum is an important venue to collaborate and network and we are proud to be a part of it. We are also excited to showcase New Orleans and the great strides taken to use mobile units to increase access to health care."

For more information about the GNO Consortium, visit:

www.gnomobileunits.org

"The test of our progress is not whether we add to the abundance of those who have much. It is whether we provide enough to those who have little." Franklin D. Roosevelt

MOBILE BITS & PIECES

Awareness Dates

November – American Diabetes Month
December 1 – World AIDS Day
December – AIDS Month

For a list of important meetings, go to:

www.mobilehealthclinicsnetwork.org/meetings.html

Launching a Mobile Health Program?

If your organization plans to purchase a new custom built vehicle, consider working with MHCN corporate members – a listing of companies can be found at:

www.mobilehealthclinicsnetwork.org/corporate.html

Or consider purchasing a pre-owned vehicle from an MHCN provider member. For a current listing of vehicles for sale, go to:

www.mobilehealthclinicsnetwork.org/forsale.html

Recent MHCN members have said:

“It’s working out very well and I’m using the van in areas of town four days a week. I’ve been interviewed by the three local TV networks and in all the local papers since this is a big event in upstate New York.”

(Peter Rosenberger, DDS, Adirondack Hospital)

“Thank you for everything. MHCN has been, and continues to be a great resource for us.”

(Larry Seebinger, ACC Dental)

“We picked up the vehicle today and we are very happy.”

(Jared Rosenthal, Mobile Health Management Services)

“Thank you for all of your help during this purchase. MHCN has been very helpful.”

(Colleen Clutter, East Coast Mobile Health Services)

MHCN Introduces New Website Section

Cholesterol Screening & Education

Go to: www.mobilehealthclinicsnetwork.org

Welcome New MHCN Corporate Members!

Test Medical Symptoms @Home, Inc.

Portable cholesterol screening analyzer distributor

Email: sales@testsymptomsathome.com;

Ph: (888) 595-3136; Fax: (775) 703-6393

www.testsymptomsathome.com/fs_MHCN.asp

RV Basic Training, LLC

Providers of health specialty vehicle driver training

Email: gary.lewis@rvbasictraining.com; Ph: (866) 976-7878

www.rvbasictraining.com

Website of Interest

Public Health Information Network

Hosted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/phn/index.html

Newly Launched Affiliate

LACMMU (Los Angeles Coalition of Mobile Medical Units)

Contact: **Niel Nathason** at (213) 740-1523;

nathason@usc.edu

Want to get involved in or start a mobile health coalition in your region?

Contact: MHCN – (415) 863-2032;

mobilehealthcare@aol.com

Program Resources

Walmart Prescription Programs: Provides a 30-day supply for \$4 and a 90-day supply for \$10 of some covered generic drugs at commonly prescribed doses. If your clients are in need of assistance to purchase prescribed drugs, refer them to their local Walmart or Sam’s Club Pharmacist. For more details, go to:

<http://walmartstores.com/HealthWellness/8247.aspx>

PepsiCo Foundation: As PepsiCo's philanthropic anchor, PepsiCo Foundation is responsible for providing charitable contributions to eligible non-profit organizations. The Foundation is committed to developing sustainable partnerships and programs in underserved regions that provide opportunities for improved health, environment, and inclusion. Through grant-making, employee programs, and disaster response, the Foundation seeks to help the most impoverished people and communities in our backyard and around the world. For more details, go to:

<http://www.pbsg.com/Purpose/PepsiCo-Foundation.html>

VSP Eyes of Hope: VSP partners with communities near and far to help serve the more than one billion people globally who cannot afford or do not have access to eyewear. This program provides a simple way for communities to help make a difference by initiating a “donate eyeglasses” effort. VSP provides donation boxes to employers, doctor’s offices and clinics that request them. VSP will refurbish the glasses and send them throughout the world to people in need. To learn more, go to:

<http://www.vsp.com/community/html/eyewear-donation.jsp?WT.ac=leftnaveyesofhope>

VSP Mobile Eyes: This program began as an extension of relief efforts following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It allows VSP to respond to disasters immediately, including two mobile eyecare clinics and 10 sets of portable ophthalmic equipment. At 41 and 45 feet long, both mobile clinics feature two comprehensive-eye-exam rooms and a full dispensary to provide exams and materials. When not at disaster sites, the clinics travel to community events across the country and, in partnership with our VSP doctors, provide services to the underserved. Says MHCN member **Connie Vavrick**, “VSP welcomes the opportunity to partner with community organizations.” She can be contacted by phone at (916) 858-7445; or email connva@vsp.com

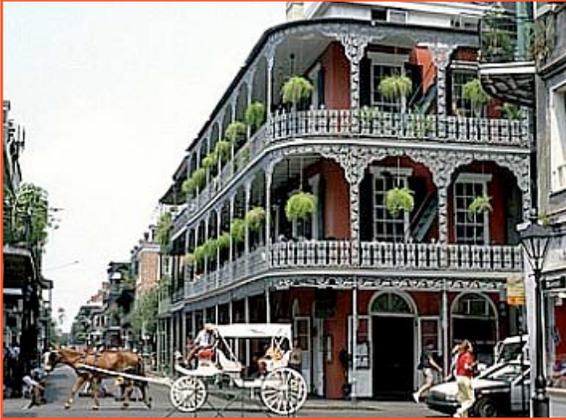
ANOTHER MEMBER BENEFIT: The Mobile Health Clinics Network has now become a subscriber to the **Foundation Center Grants Directory**, which means we can search for potential funders all across the USA. To take advantage of this benefit, please email **Brian Quinn** at brianquinnmhcn@gmail.com with information about your program and he will find possible local and national funders for you. Providing Brian with keywords about your organization will help him find better fits and, maybe, more funding.

2010 MHCN Forum Co-Chairs Named

We are honored to announce the following Co-Chairs for the 2010 Forum: **Jennifer Bennet**, Executive Director, The Family Van, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA; **James Comeaux**, LCSW, COO, St. Charles Community Health Center, Luling, LA; **Melissa Lofton**, Manager Mobile Mammography, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX; **Maryam Mohsenzadeh, DDS**, Dental Director, Queen of the Valley Medical Center, Napa, CA; **Larry Wolk, MD**, MSPH, Founder, Rocky Mountain Youth

Clinics, Denver, CO; International Co-Chair: **Jorge Valdez-Garcia, MD**, General Director, Health Planning & Development, Health Ministry of Mexico.

Watch for further Forum announcements: the Call for Abstracts, program topics and speakers, and how to register will be forthcoming by email, in the January issue of news & notes, and posted on the MHCN website (www.mobilehealthclinicsnetwork.org).



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Sixth Annual
MOBILE HEALTH CLINICS FORUM
 September 25 – 28, 2010
 New Orleans Hilton Riverside

MAMMOGRAPHY BILLS IN HOUSE AND SENATE

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received from Ms. Walsh, “The Bill probably won’t be voted on/passed by itself. Most likely we will attach our Bill to a larger Bill like a health care reform Bill. The (Senate) Bill number is S.2051. The Senate version of the Bill was referred to the Finance Committee. The House version was referred to the Ways and Means Committee. Senator Thad Cochran (R - MS) is our original cosponsor, however we can continually add other cosponsors to our Bill. I can keep you updated if we are able to get any other cosponsors. Thanks for keeping up with everything and again for your help! We have received a lot of positive support for the Bill. I will keep you updated if any new action occurs, but as always feel free to check in!” To track the status of both the House and Senate Bills, go to <http://www.thomas.gov>

MHCN in Mexico

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the invited speakers representing Las Caravanas were unable to attend our 2009 Forum this past April in Las Vegas. Says **Jorge Valdez Garcia, MD** (General Director, Planning & Development, Health Ministry of Mexico), “we are thrilled to accept your invitation to attend and present at next year’s Forum in New Orleans.”

In fostering continued communications and interaction with our healthcare colleagues in Mexico, we are building a bridge between our two countries that will allow us to impact the growth and improvement of mobile healthcare services in our respective countries and thus, enhance access to quality healthcare for populations most in need.



MHCNetwork news & notes

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by Mobile Health Clinics Network

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