

## SewHope Trip Report

Feb 10-March 3. Anne Ruch

Feb 24 – March 3. Randy Ruch

Arrived into Guatemala City on Feb 10 and spent the night at the Hostal Los Lagos.

Left for Flores the following morning on TAG airlines. TAG is now charging \$1 per pound for baggage so the price is getting to be so much that we have decided to fly through Belize in the future. Silvia and Mayra can pick us up at the airport. Apparently, they just have to get a special permit in order to bring the van into that country.

Upon arrival, Mayra had a meeting set up with the new Director of one of the 3 “Areas of Health” for Peten. They had expressed interest in working with us on the cervical cancer prevention project. Meeting lasted about 45 minutes and we explained everything we have been doing all these years and also how we have been collaborating with one of the other Areas of Health. He was very interested and set up a follow up meeting at our clinic with their other Directors on Feb 19. Also wants to send their cytologist to our clinic in November when I return with Chetti.

Later that afternoon, we had a meeting with Dr. Ania who is a doctor from Cuba who wants to work in our clinic. She married a Guatemalan and now lives in Santa Ana. She showed me her physician license in Cuba and her certificate from finishing a family practice residency in Cuba (3 years). She said that she cannot work in a government health clinic but can work in a private clinic like ours. I said we would have her do that while we are here and we would pay her what the patients pay (40Q per visit). However, when we had our meeting with Luckey and Tita, they said that she does not have a Guatemalan license and thus cannot work with us.

After that, we had a meeting with 2 leaders from a community called Nuevo Horizonte. This community was started after the war by the rebel Indigenous people who are looking for a better life. They have been in touch with Krista Dover from Clean Water for the World about getting a water filter. They actually did a 90 minute presentation for us about their plans to improve their water source. I had said that Randy could bring one down but in the end, Krista wanted to meet with them first. They also planned to set up a meeting with us with the “Casa Materna” that they have for delivering babies.

Got everything ready at the clinic for the coming weeks

Feb 12, 2021

Saw about 25 patients at the clinic – did a few procedures.

Feels like Guatemala is using the pandemic as an excuse for doing even less for the people than they did before. One patient of ours who I had told needed a hyst was not able to get it because of the “pandemia” and so she went to Honduras and got it!

Internet working very well! Able to use the Electronic Medical Record. Seiner says that many computers can be used at the same time with no problem.

In addition to Dr. Ania, there is a pediatrician who has been working here. He is probably around 60, seems to be very good at what he does. The patients like him. He is coming 3 mornings a week. He talked to me about going on some kind of contract where he could get "IGGS". We talked to Luckey about this and she is going to follow up with him.

Cleaned out the bodega in the afternoon. There were a lot of expired things in there and things we would never use. Elder made a great table out of the base of the old ultrasound!

Mayra and I had a long "zoom" meeting with Chetti talking about the Quality Improvement program with the 2 areas of health....also about how to best monitor what Mayra is doing. I am going to bring back 10% of the slides of the different health areas and also all slides which were read as abnormal.

40x objective lens on one of the microscopes was not working. Chetti said she would see if she could get one and sure enough, she did! Randy brought it with him when he came!

Early evening we got a call that Mayra's son, Julio had a serious allergic reaction to "chicken poop"! His whole face swelled up and we were concerned it might get worse. I called Dr. Dave who told me what to do. We drove to Mayra's house and gave him prednisone. Mayra and Silvia stayed with me at the hostel all the time until Randy got there.

2/14/21

Went to church with Mayra  
Got caught up on emails/etc

2/15/21

Went to Poptun and saw 83 patients

When we came back, we had a ZOOM meeting with Jonathan (the architect, Mayra and Camilo and Randy). There was confusion about the drawings for the school. Apparently, when Fito did the engineering drawings, he made some significant changes that no one realized. Jonathan was very helpful and we got it all figured out.....close call!!

2/16/21

Went to a remote village about 2 ½ hours away. Saw 80 patients. Most did not speak Spanish so communication was difficult. But many interesting stories. One woman had 2 children who died. She said that one died because they were in church one day and a man came in and kidnapped the pastor. The child became so upset that he swoll up and died 4 months later. Mayra said that these kinds of stories are common. Another 34 year old woman wanted to know if she had a uterus because she hadn't had a period in 4 years. When I asked if anything happened 4 years ago, she said that she had a C/S. Any problems I asked? Well I was in a coma

for 3 days after the C/S and they had to give me blood. When I examined her, there was no uterus. I guess it was an emergency hysterectomy because of the bleeding. But no one told her!!

2/17/21

Traveled to 2 different communities. About 60 patients. We are seeing less patients than usual. Apparently, many are afraid to come out because of COVID

Worked on the video with Julio in the evening.

2/18/21

Jornada in Chal – about 40 patients

After jornada, Mayra and I had a meeting with Aura who was one of the leaders of ALAVI which is the group that oversees the Casa Materna. It was disappointing. They have pretty much closed the casa materna and there were no births there last year. She has a million excuses as to why. We asked about getting back the water filter that we donated there but she said the kids at the local school would be using it when school reopens.

Meeting with staff about 2021 goals (see agenda and minutes from Annual meeting)

We repeated the devotional that Emily had done with our own Annual meeting in January. They really enjoyed that and talked about their spiritual gifts and what sometimes holds them back from using them.

We also about getting the vaccine. At first, none of them wanted it but in the end, they all agreed to getting it. It should be available this March.

2/19/21

Saw patients at our clinic. Did about 20 procedures (colpo, LEEP, biopsies, cryo)

First one of the morning had invasive cancer. Very, very sad. Spent a long time talking with her family. No possibility of hospice.

There were a total of 4 patients on this trip that had cervical cancer.

In late afternoon, we had a meeting with 8 administrative people from the Health Area of San Benito about collaborating with them on the paps. They are already sending us all their abnormal patients and they want to expand this. Actually, they sent me patients with abnormal results that were diagnosed 2 years ago and the patients weren't notified until last week because they had no where to send them!

2/20/21

More patients at our clinic and more procedures.

Had a follow-up meeting at Nuevo Horizonte about helping with the Casa maternal. We brought them a big box of the Vitamin Angels vitamins and also a suitcase full of infant clothes that were intended originally for our own Casa Materna.

Some of the male leaders of the community were supposed to attend but the ladies told us that they were drunk! It was 4 PM. Pretty disappointing!

2/21/20

Mayra had a big surprise and brought me and her mom and her family to this really cool spa about 1 ½ hours from Santa Ana. We had this awesome sauna and massage and then went out to lunch. Just a wonderful relaxing day with a lot of laughing!

2/22/21

Jornada in Las Cruces

Julio came with us to take videos.

Afterward had a meeting with Andres (the head cytologist there), Deysi (the Nursing Director) and Mayra about the Quality Control review that Chetti had done after my trip last February. We talked about the continuing problems with the nurses not getting good slides and issues with the stains for the paps. We came up with some solutions and Mayra will have a follow up with them after I come back.

Mayra found a terrific on-line cytology program called Citorush. Once completed, the person can get a full cytology certificate. Mayra has some ideas about someone who might be interested.

2/23/20

Went to a very remote community called El Pato. It is in a place where one of the world's largest African Palm tree companies work. Major deforestation and exploitation of the people and the land. Everyone there works for this awful company called REPSA. It was eye opening. I had read about the topic but to see it first hand was kind of gut wrenching.

Sometimes these jornadas require long drives but actually it's a great time for Mayra and I to talk about things and make plans for the future.

2/24/20

3 hour trip to Naranjo Frontera. Saw 50 patients

Randy arrived this evening. Yeah!!

2/25/20

Jornada in La Libertad (about 40 minutes from Santa Ana)

This is a pretty rundown area. There is a refinery here so it always smells. Lots of cancer here. We have had jornadas here every year for last 9 years. It has been a uphill battle to get the

“Centro de Salud” to cooperate with us but finally, they are extremely excited to have us come and they did a lot to prepare the place for our trip.

Funny story – I needed to write some prescriptions for patients and asked if they had any I could use. They brought in some pieces of paper with the stamp of the Health center on them. On the back, you could see that these were children’s book reports! I guess they don’t waste paper!

Took a video of a patient who came back after a couple of years. I had done a LEEP on her and she was grateful that now her problem was resolved. Gave it to Julio.

Had a long meeting with Seiner in the evening about the internet learning programs and some of the obstacles they are facing. Came up with some good solutions. I will follow up with Roxanne on these when I get back.

2/26/21

Jornada in Naranjo, Flores. Julio came with us to work on video.

Saw about 25 patients.

This is the community where Flori was from. Her mom and sister came and I met with them for a long time. A lot of tears. Julio video taped them.

2/27/21

Saw 20 patients in our clinic – all were procedures – colposcopies, LEEP conizations, Cryos – all from previous trip with patients who had abnormal. Also, some patients that the ministry of health is now sending to us for treatments

2/28/21

SewHope annual Guatemala meeting.

Lucky, Tita, Rudy, Tim, me, Randy – all via zoom.

Coral did not attend.

I will send minutes to everyone on our Board here

3/1/21

Went to Nuevo Horizonte to their Casa Materna – did a few paps and some ultrasounds of their pregnant patients.

Funny story – One young woman came in who thought she was 5 months pregnant. She even had her health center card that showed that she had been visiting the local health center every month. They had been documenting her uterine enlargement and fetal heart beat. She was actually not pregnant!

90 minute meeting with 70 plus moms of the students in our school. Seiner went over rules. I talked with them about our dreams for their children and our expectations from them. Mayra talked to them about benefits (water filters, stoves, solar lights, working in the vegetable

gardens) that they could get and what expectations would be. Discussed that now we have a pediatrician here and if there student is ill, then they can see him free of charge. All students are expected not to miss any time and not to be late.

We also had a long talk about the COVID vaccine. Most were very reluctant to get it at beginning of chat but I would say most were convinced by the end.

Miscellaneous thoughts

In the future, we are going to travel through Belize. Although it will mean 6 hours of driving for Mayra, the costs for TAG have become astronomical (\$250 round trip for each person and \$1 per pound of baggage. We had to pay almost \$400 for all the bags)

Decided not to keep Dr. Ania (the Cuban doctor). Luckey said that her license in Cuba is inadequate for working in Guatemala.

Overall, I once again saw how we are blessed with an incredible and cohesive staff dedicated to our mission.

Rudy is going to get more involved. Plan for our staff to visit him in coming months.

### **Randy's February 2021 Trip Report**

- Replaced two light sockets at the clinic
- Replaced two doorknob sets at the clinic
- Replaced sink faucets and shower heads in the hostel bathrooms
- Installed dark-activated lights on bodega, clinic, and pole in garden area
- Met with Elder and Marcelo and discussed issues with water piping to clinic; came up with plan to install new valves and lines
- Recorded public health video footage at the clinic and in community homes for the LEAP video; edited footage with Julio to final video
- Made several trips into San Benito to purchase supplies for above repairs, buy tools for Elder, buy groceries, and pick up stuff Mayra needed

