



Global Health Ministries

Newsletter

Because all people should have access to a healthy life.

Photo taken at Aira Hospital, Ethiopia. Measuring a patient's blood oxygen levels.

Breathing Room



"COVID has exposed one of the weaknesses of African mission hospitals: oxygen." These were the words of missionary Dr. Steve Swanson, sharing a fundamental challenge that GHM is seeing across the countries we serve.

It's easy to take oxygen for grant-

ed, and we often do. Until we can't "catch our breath" we rarely think about the air we breathe. Yet every breath we take relies on oxygen, and an oxygen shortage equals a crisis.

Just last month, Dr. Amon Marti, Medical Director at Selian Lutheran Hospital in Tanzania, sent this desperate report:

*"We are [facing] the third wave for COVID-19, with 12 patients now in the ward. Already received 30 patients. The mortality is high compared to the first and second wave. We are not sure if its Delta variance. We are saving people of God with minimal supplies we have with high cost for refilling oxygen cylinders. I am writing for follow up on availability of any
~ continued page 2*

"I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you - or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine."

~ Romans 1:11-12

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Hebrew for both
Breath and Spirit

~ continued from page 1

funds for Selian at GHM for poor patients and general operation.”



Oxygen at Ngaoundere, Cameroon

It is a privilege to be able to share timely and vital gifts. In response to COVID-19, GHM has directly supported oxygen supplies not only in Tanzania, but also in Liberia, Madagascar and South Sudan. In July the GHM Board of Directors took personal responsibility to sponsor three months of oxygen for our partner in South Sudan. That commitment is extending the clinic's supply at a critical time, enabling them to provide life-giving oxygen therapy through the end of the year.

COVID-19 has thrown the importance of oxygen into sharp relief, but oxygen is essential every day in many healthcare situations including surgery, pneumonia, obstetrics and neonatal care. Yet most of GHM's partners lack sufficient capacity to meet the oxygen needs of their patients. GHM's Shipping ministry helps relieve this "shortness of breath." From an oxygen generator as big as a 20' container to pulse oximeters that fit on the tip of a patient's finger, GHM has sent oxygen-related items to most of our overseas partners. Portable oxygen concentrators are one of the most frequently requested items from partner hospitals, who are not always able to buy medical-grade oxygen from local suppliers. Access to oxygen breathes life into these vital health centers even as it restores their patients' ability to breathe.



A waiting room in Juba, South Sudan

We share more than literal oxygen with our partners. Phone calls, email, Zoom meetings have brought mutual encouragement and inspiration through the past 18 months, even as we remained physically distant. Through communication across boundaries and nations, we give and receive breathing room together. We share with our partners a commitment to the most vulnerable, a call to justice in addressing health inequities stemming from social determinants that leave people without "room to breathe," or access to a healthy life. Thank you for your prayers. They are the spiritual gift that strengthens us, breathing life into this ministry.

Rev. Doug Cox, Executive Director

Answered Prayers

In May, after the sixth container of the year left GHM's warehouse, our inventory was so depleted we didn't have enough to continue with our shipping schedule for the rest of the year. In-kind donations from local health system partners had declined since the start of the pandemic and our attempts to find other sources weren't working. We were running out of options to fill the urgent equipment and supply needs of our partners. And then the phone rang. Sanford Health had 119 pallets of new face masks, face shields, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, isolation gowns, exam gloves ... could we use them? Yes, please! And then we received more phone calls. Almost 200 more pallets of vital supplies from M Health Fairview, General Mills, CentraCare, four Walmart locations ... it was a truly amazing outpouring of in-kind donations, quickly refilling our shelves and resuscitating our shipping capacity. Praise God for answered prayers, and God's active presence in our lives!

Scott Lien, Dir. of Operations



The second Tanzania container of the year left in August. Next up: Liberia!

Breathing Easier

*Carnac the Magnificent** Answer: NFL

The Question: What is a chronic condition among healthcare systems in low resource countries?

Nasty Financial Losses (NFL) are endemic in many LMIC (low- and middle-income country) healthcare systems, and Selian Lutheran Hospital (SLH) is not an exception. When the pandemic struck, financial fissures became fractures at SLH. Compounding this, travel to northern Tanzania was not an option for GHM's GHAP consultants. Undaunted, the GHAP team pivoted to a series of virtual interviews, conferences, research and analysis, collaborating with Dr. Amon and team to help stem the Major League Bleeding (MLB) of cash due to COVID-enhanced NFL. The team, Tanzanians and Americans alike, understand that unlike the American NFL and MLB references, this is no game: instead of wins and losses, lives are at stake.

The team identified that earning a higher level of accreditation was a key to greater sustainability for SLH. Achieving this requires investments to enhance services, but will result in a significantly higher level of reimbursement from the government. Through much of the pandemic, government officials were operating under a President who early on declared that Tanzania conquered COVID and declined vaccines from COVAX, the alliance that provides vaccines to LMICs. Since March 2021 the new President of Tanzania has been taking a different approach regarding COVID-19. The difference in collaboration for improved health with government officials under these two Presidents is dramatic.

SLH's case of NFL is less acute than it was before the diagnosis and before therapeutic treatment by GHAP consultants Ron Ommen and Magdeline Aagard, with counsel from Drs. Mark Jacobson and Ron Eggert, et.al. Like many chronic conditions, NFL *can* be managed for improved health and easier breathing – even while physically distancing.

* *With respect to Johnny Carson*



Selian Hospital Lab construction is underway. This is one piece of helping SLH achieve a higher level of accreditation.

Rob Thames, FACHE, FHFMA, Dir. of GHAP



What Will Last

I recently had a wonderful conversation with Dr. John Toso, one of GHM's founding members, a former medical missionary and current GHM volunteer. I asked him why he and his wife, Jan, continue to be involved with GHM even after 34 years, and have included GHM in their estate plans.

“GHM filled this niche before anyone else. No one understood our needs as missionary doctors in the 1980s until GHM was started and since then GHM has continued to do this work, and do it well. The gap in health equity around the world is huge and anything we can do to balance resources is important.

GHM continues to grow in line with the change from missionary support to empowering and supporting local professionals. Balancing priorities across maternal and child health, curative and community-based care is a real strength of GHM's. We still feel honored to be a part of this work.

It's been said, 'Only what's done for Christ will last!' The next stage for us was to give back what has so generously been given to us – an abundance of resources and the experience of much joy, joy we can share as GHM Legacy givers. I would like to challenge those who ask, 'When is it time to do this kind of planning?' by saying, 'It is never too early to do estate planning!' I believe anyone over 40 should start planning now. This COVID pandemic has brought our own mortality right to the front. In fact, my brother-in-law recently died of COVID in Tanzania at age 60. In an age of uncertainty, planning a legacy gift is an expression of our love and our values.”

Ceallaigh Anderson Smart, Dir. of Philanthropy

Legacy Events

GHM is hosting two different online Legacy gatherings in September. If you are already a Legacy Partner, having included GHM in your estate plans, thank you so much! We invite you to join us online on **Thursday, September 23, from 7pm - 8pm.**

If you're interested in hearing more about including GHM in your will, we invite you to join us for an estate planning session on **Wednesday, September 29th, from 12pm - 1pm.**

To receive the link, please email Ceallaigh at csmart@ghm.org, or call 763-586-9590.

GLOBAL HEALTH MINISTRIES

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October Symposium!

Join us for our annual conversation about global health. This year's theme:

**The Global Health Puzzle:
 How do we fit together now?**

Oct 6, 13, and 20

Online, 12 pm - 1 pm

Registration opens Sept 20 at www.ghm.org

Contact us at:

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Lentha



Lentha is one of the first nursing students to receive GHM scholarship assistance through the Dora Saga Memorial Foundation (DSMF), dedicated to strengthening the delivery of quality maternal and child healthcare in Lutheran health facilities in Iringa, Tanzania. Like most GHM partner countries, Tanzania has a fraction of the trained health workers needed for the

population. It's a huge gap, but we can make a difference. Last year, GHM's Medical Education Fund provided scholarships to nursing schools in Ethiopia, Madagascar and Tanzania for 142 nurses and midwives, including Lentha. After graduation she will help make quality healthcare accessible for hundreds of families. In addition to nurses and midwives, GHM supports training for hundreds of doctors, lab techs, pharmacists and community health workers in multiple countries every year. Your gifts to this fund breathe new life for those with a heart for healing, who dream of bringing skilled healthcare to their communities.