The tiny African nation of Malawi has only 43 surgeons in a country with 17 million men, women and children. At Physicians for Peace, we are helping relieve this health care shortage by sending International Medical Educators (IMEs), at the invitation of our partner, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital (QECH) in Blantyre, to work side by side with local health care providers and empower them through training and education.

Last month, Malawi celebrated the opening of the Mercy James Centre for Pediatric Surgery & Intensive Care at QECH in Blantyre. Physicians for Peace is proud to be one of the partner organizations working with QECH and Madonna’s Raising Malawi project that have brought this idea to reality. Our long standing partner, Professor Eric Borgstein, a pediatric surgeon working in Malawi since 1992, invited Physicians for Peace IMEs to work in concert with several academic organizations to train intensive care nurses for the newly established unit. Carolyn Ramwell, RN, MSN, PNP; one of our nurse educators from Virginia, used her wit and humor to train with both song and dance, including teaching CPR to the nursing staff to the tune of Stayin’ Alive from the Bee Gees!

With your support, Dr. Mark Asplund, a surgeon from Wisconsin, recently spent 3 months training surgery registrars and clinical officers at QECH. In addition to supporting surgeon educators and surgical trainees, Physicians for Peace provides funding for both staff and supplies for an operating theatre to ensure access for treatment and training.

I’d like to share a story Dr. Asplund told us:

When a patient with an aortic aneurysm arrived at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre, Malawi, Dr. Mark Asplund knew exactly what to do; he immediately coordinated a team to care for the patient. In the US, aortic aneurysms are dangerous but highly treatable, and so, after the surgery, Asplund was surprised to see the looks of disbelief on the faces of the local surgical team.

“They were shocked that we could save her.”

That story resonates with me, and also with you, I hope, to both reinforce the dire health needs and the significance of the work we are supporting in Malawi.

Next year we are excited to support an IME pediatric intensive care physician for a full year of service. The project will ensure that the sickest of children will receive the necessary post-operative care in the intensive care unit and that the education and training of local health care providers continues. These opportunities to serve those in need are made possible through the generosity of friends like you.

The needs in Malawi are many, and together, we are making a difference in the long-term sustainability of this country’s healthcare system while living out our mission to teach one, heal many. Will you join us to continue our mission?

Best regards,

Jamie

by James E. (Jamie) Morgan, CEO
Carolyn Ramwell, center, teaching pediatric nurses intensive care principles during her two weeks in country as a PFP IME.

Dr. Mark Asplund, IME from Wisconsin in Malawi. “Sometimes there are no scrub caps to wear during surgery, so I wear a baseball cap instead.”

Leslie Toledo, PFP Program Director; Professor Eric Borgstein; Kathleen Casey, MD, PFP Chief Medical Officer; visited QECH this June.

Professor Borgstein in front of the mural recognizing benefactors to the Mercy James Centre for Pediatric Surgery and Intensive Care at QECH, highlighting Physicians for Peace.

Carolyn Ramwell, center, teaching pediatric nurses intensive care principles during her two weeks in country as a PFP IME.