



THREADS

Innovation for healthcare textiles & EVS

COATS OF HONOR

Medline helps restore health and hope to a Haitian community



2018 ISSUE 7

Innovation in cubicle curtain management

The risks of home-laundered scrubs

Bottom-line benefits of an impact study

COATS OF HONOR

Collaborating to restore
health and hope to a Haitian
community

Gros Morne is a perpetually hot, humid and windy Haitian town with dirt roads and no public water supply. On most of us, a white lab coat wouldn't stay white for 10 minutes in those conditions. But the lab technicians and physicians at Hopital Alma Mater have kept their coats spotless for almost five years.

The lab coats – embroidered with the hospital logo – were gifted by Medline at the end of a community health and lab impact initiative conducted by a large health system in Colorado together with Project C.U.R.E., a non-profit that strives to build a healthcare infrastructure in resource-limited communities worldwide.

“The day lab professionals put on those coats was pure magic,” says Karla Prentiss, the former community health program manager and director of development at the large Colorado health system and current director of clinics and training for Project C.U.R.E. “The lab coats gave them a sense of pride that they were professionals and recognized as such.”

A global giving history

Medline’s involvement in the Hospital Alma Mater project is just one example of the company’s rich history with Project C.U.R.E. and other nonprofits.

Project C.U.R.E. engages hospitals, medical manufacturers, wholesale distributors and individual donors to donate medical supplies, equipment and training with the goal of providing a higher standard of care in developing countries.

For years, Medline has donated surplus supplies to help Project C.U.R.E.’s targeted communities, says Francesca Olivier, the company’s corporate social responsibility manager. Medline also donates its transportation network and warehouse space to pick up and store hospital-donated supplies, which Project C.U.R.E. uses efficiently.

“Project C.U.R.E. does a full needs assessment for every clinic they provide product to,” Olivier says. “They



customize containers for that facility so they get exactly the supplies they need to do their job. We partnered with Project C.U.R.E. because we wanted to make sure we weren’t donating supplies just to donate, but donating supplies to people who can use them.”

Because Project C.U.R.E. has such successful distribution and supply chain programs, Medline saw the organization as a natural choice for charitable giving.

“Project C.U.R.E. mirrors Medline as a best-in-class distribution company,” Olivier says. “Its U.S. logistics compliment ours. Medline has six distribution centers and nine small collection centers in our network. With 45 distribution centers across the country, they have a footprint that allows us to provide surplus product at minimal cost.”

In 2015, Medline donated 4,000 bottles of Sterillium surgical hand rub to healthcare workers in Kathmandu, Nepal, after the area experienced its worst earthquake in 80 years. Two years later, 18 Medline employees flew to El Crucero, Nicaragua, to deliver health education. The company partnered with Project C.U.R.E. for both these and similar projects,

helping build sustainability and supply ongoing resources and education to improve healthcare outcomes.

“Medline is such a great partner to Project C.U.R.E. and to people all over the world,” Prentiss says. “I was just in Nigeria and there were Medline products in every facility we visited: surgical drapes, blood pressure cuffs, beds. A mother was laboring in one of the beds and I thought, ‘She is having a much safer, healthier experience because she has access to these medical resources and supplies.’”

A unified front in Gros Morne

Haitians place importance on uniforms, says Sister Jacqueline Picard, a registered nurse by training, who serves as a member of the advisory team at Hopital Alma Mater. Every schoolchild, church group member and professional wears a uniform. Despite living under challenging conditions, they usually keep these uniforms spotless and perfectly pressed.

“For our doctors and lab technicians to continue to wear these lab coats on top of their scrubs and to be happy speaks a lot for what the coats mean to them,” Picard says. “It gives them a sense of identity. You see them as a unified front.”

The lab coats also indirectly made an impact on hospital productivity and patient satisfaction, she adds. Staff started wearing the coats at the end of the community health and lab impact initiative, which likely enhanced the benefits. The coats help keep morale high and convey a professional image. When hospital staff completes a certain type of training, they receive an embroidered logo or patch. This helps patients and staff identify and match doctors with patients.

“The ability to visibly see the work that others have put into their areas of expertise is important,” Medline’s Olivier says. “In clinics, there are tons of people and the doctors are busy, so it can be difficult to know who has the training that’s needed. The badges also give them the honor they deserve.”

With new systems in place to reduce wait times and keep patients comfortable, combined with professional-looking staff, patients reported an overall higher satisfaction with care. In Gros Morne, this means patients are more likely to visit the hospital – the only hospital for 145,000 people – when they need care, and they’re more likely to refer friends and family who may otherwise go without.

Improving efficiency and care

Hopital Alma Mater now provides quality care to more patients each day thanks to the foundation laid by Project C.U.R.E., Medline and the large health system in Colorado that initiated the Hopital Alma Mater project. The health system first sent a team to Alma Mater in 2011 to conduct a SWOT analysis of the facility, using the results to determine how its team



“We partnered with Project C.U.R.E. because we wanted to make sure we weren’t donating supplies just to donate, but donating supplies to people who can use them.”

– Francesca Olivier,
corporate social responsibility manager,
Medline Industries Inc.

could best use its strengths to improve Hopital Alma Mater’s processes.

“We took steps each year to focus on health system strengthening that could be longitudinally measured,” Prentiss says. “We didn’t want to be one of those health systems or programs that just drops in, drops out and makes empty promises. We wanted to make sure what we were doing would build infrastructure for years to come, even after the initial funding ran out.”

Project C.U.R.E. came on board, not only to help facilitate donated medical

supplies and equipment deliveries, but also to assist with developing or improving inventory systems, supply chain management and logistics as well as, offering biomedical education.

In the lab, Hopital Alma Mater had skilled, hardworking technicians, but an inefficient system. An Assistant administrator for the large health system in Colorado, noticed patients were waiting hours to get lab tests done. According to Prentiss, the administrator learned patients typically would stand and wait, get hot, get angry and cut line, which made other patients even angrier.

The health system's team developed a numbering system to eliminate line cutting. They engaged a local craftsman to build and install seating in the waiting area. To help determine the cause of the long wait times, they engaged quality improvement professionals to partner with local staff to find root causes.

One team member helped coordinate a more efficient flow within the lab. She also held several 5S workshops, which aim to remove waste from a work environment through cleanliness, workplace organization, standardization and visual communication.

With improved workflow and patient management, Hopital Alma Mater reduced wait times by 57 percent, Prentiss says.

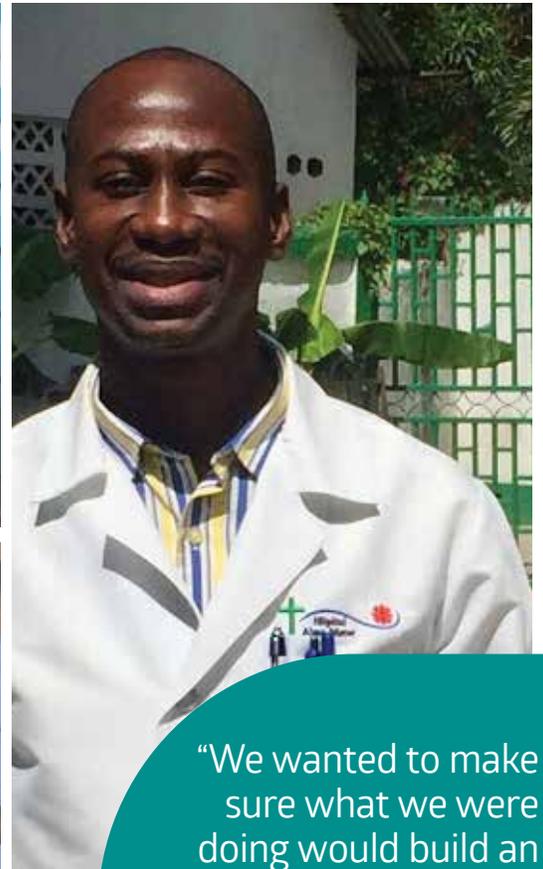
In addition, Project C.U.R.E. helped augment the Helping Babies Breathe (HBB) program in Gros Morne. Launched in 2010 by the American Association of Pediatricians (AAP) and adopted by Project C.U.R.E. in 2013, the HBB program teaches local nurses, midwives and birth attendants the most successful ways to save a newborn's life in the first minute after birth.

"In our upcoming trips, we are taking in NPs and L&D registered nurses to host refresher trainings," Prentiss says. "Project C.U.R.E. has shipped in HBB equipment to be disseminated following training."

"They hit a lot of the main areas where an underserved country struggles," Picard says.

Medline steps in

To celebrate the program's success, a Medline textile representative offered to donate lab coats for the Hopital Alma Mater technicians. The fitting session went so well, Medline agreed



"We wanted to make sure what we were doing would build an infrastructure for years to come, even after the initial funding ran out."

— Karla Prentiss, director of clinics and training, Project C.U.R.E.

to donate coats for all physicians and lab professionals.

"Before, medical professionals at the hospital had little access to professional lab coats," Prentiss explains. "By participating in this capacity-building project, the lab not only built its infrastructure but was able to extend impact to the physicians."

Because Hopital Alma Mater is funded by a charity, employee salaries aren't what they should be.

"We can't always pay staff what they deserve, so little things like lab coats go a long way toward boosting morale and keeping employees engaged," Picard says.

The hospital today

Hopital Alma Mater and its lab still operate using the systems provided by many partners, including Project C.U.R.E., says Brittany Galvin, a nurse practitioner at the facility. To better

cope with natural disasters, as well as a large patient population, the hospital is in the midst of a \$1.3 million expansion that will include an expanded emergency area, outpatient clinics and increased diagnostics and social services.

The hospital is continually looking for opportunities to build infrastructure and expand training to serve the community. Galvin says a group of Hopital Alma Mater doctors recently started ultrasound training. The Helping Babies Breathe program also continues, reducing the neonatal mortality rate.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Hospital and laundry professionals can help Project C.U.R.E. provide medical supplies, equipment and other services to resource-limited communities worldwide.

“We need your time in our warehouses, we need your energy and expertise, we need financial donations to continue to deliver health and hope,” says Karla Prentiss, director of clinics and training for Project C.U.R.E. “And then we need you to tell our story and invite others to join us.”

GROS MORNE, HAITI – a community recovering from disaster

On Oct. 6, 2018, at approximately 8:11 p.m., a magnitude 5.9 earthquake struck 19 kilometers northwest of Port-de-Paix, Haiti, killing 18 people and damaging homes and structures.

To assist in recovery from this devastating event, Project C.U.R.E. will send support to stand shoulder to shoulder with its Haitian counterparts. Biomedical professionals will be on-site to repair and deploy equipment, and nursing will organize the supply chain depot for easier access to supplies. The organization will enhance its abilities through education and bring in resources as identified by local partners. Each day brings opportunities for capacity building.

A Project C.U.R.E. team deployed Dec. 1, 2018, with additional multidisciplinary teams deploying March 23-30, 2019, and June 15-22, 2019.



WAYS TO GIVE

1. **Coordinate a medical supply drive.** Project C.U.R.E. accepts almost every type of medical item. For information and a general list, visit <https://projectcure.org/procure>.
2. **Make a financial donation.** Help spread health and hope with a financial gift. Please visit <https://goo.gl/rgT1ad>.
3. **Join Us and Volunteer.** Medical and non-medical professionals alike can volunteer for a weeklong C.U.R.E. Clinic. You'll provide medical support and education to people in need. For details, visit <https://projectcure.org/cureclinics>, or submit your application today at <https://projectcure.org/cure-clinics-participant-application>.

If you live near a Project C.U.R.E. distribution center, you can volunteer to help sort supplies, work in the warehouse, pick up supplies or manage the front desk. You can also sign up for a PhilanthroTravel journey. Learn more at <https://projectcure.org/volunteer>.

Since 2000, Project C.U.R.E. has donated more than \$19 million in medical supplies to Haiti. In June, the group shipped its third cargo container of supplies to Hopital Alma Mater.

“In an effort of responsible, sustainable, medical surplus delivery, Project C.U.R.E. is sending a team of multidisciplinary professionals to help sort, organize, repair and deploy equipment and consumables the hospital has

received,” Prentiss says. “Two subsequent trips will happen in 2019 to support HAM in their efforts.”

The team will visit both Hopital Alma Mater and rural sites, working with hospital staff to provide primary care, education and process improvement.

Medline’s involvement with Hopital Alma Mater catapulted impact both by helping the hospital acquire needed supplies and instilling in its medical

professionals a sense of pride and professionalism.

“In the U.S., we know lab coats are more than just a coat,” Olivier says. “They’re a symbol of all the hard work it takes to become a doctor. It should be no different in the developing world.” ■