

# Physicians on a Mission

by Erin Rogers, Marketing and Communications Specialist

When called to provide love and care for the sick-poor in Waco, the Daughters of Charity answered. Their labor of love is still present in our community as Providence continues to **provide spiritually centered holistic care, with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable**. And, through Providence's partnership with the Family Health Center's International Medicine Diploma Track, this calling has taken the Providence family beyond our local community, **providing access to care in some of the most underserved areas of the world**.

During college mission trips to underserved countries, Adam Flowers, MD, MPH, international medical director, Family Health Center, saw **how access to medical care could dramatically improve the quality of life in many outlying and rural areas**.

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"I SAW A NEED...I REALIZED THAT I WANTED TO HAVE THE PRACTICAL SKILL-SET TO SERVE THOSE IN UNDERSERVED AREAS," DR. FLOWERS SAID.

After several trips to Namibia to explore its medical landscape, Dr. Flowers and his family will soon be calling it "home." Namibia has one of the top five HIV rates, affecting one out of every six individuals. Dr. Flowers and a team of medical professionals will not only work to treat those affected, but also work to close racial and gender disparities through education—creating a high-impact change over the next five to 10 years.

*Pictured: Dr. Adam Flowers (L) and Dr. Michael Jahrmarkt (R) in front of the CDC office in Namibia*

With plans to pursue an international healthcare career, Dr. Flowers selected the Family Health Center residency program for its unparalleled reputation for offering a wide scope of training and its dedication to the medically underserved of Central Texas. Though he had a strong desire to immediately take his medical talents overseas after his 2008 graduation, Dr. Flowers continued to serve in the Waco community while he worked to pay off some medical debt. In 2011, he returned to the Family Health Center for a faculty position, where he collaborated with Dr. Nicholas Schwedock, sports medicine director and MS3 & MS4 curriculum director, who had begun laying the groundwork for overseas medicine. They worked together to develop the curriculum for an international medicine training program that would **provide physicians with the specialized training necessary to help them deliver care to the world's most poor and vulnerable**.

The International Medicine Diploma Track is an optional training path that offers broad-based training, supplemented with online training modules from the Institute for International Medicine (INMed), international medicine lectures, national conferences on international medicine or medical missions, and one, or preferably two, one-month international medical elective trips. Development of this program was made possible by generous donations from faculty, Providence and Hillcrest. Funds are used for text books and conferences, and also help residents offset the cost of their international medical training trips. **Fifteen of the 36 Family Health Center residents are currently enrolled in the program and the footprint of both current residents and graduates reaches nearly 40 countries.**



Dr. Celia Servin, third year resident, Family Health Center, recently traveled to Honduras where she volunteered her time and talent at Clinica Esperanza. For four weeks, she joined a team of student and professional volunteers who worked alongside local Honduran doctors to care for 80 to 90 patients per day. Clinic hours began at 7:30 a.m. with many people lined up at the door in hopes of receiving quality medical care they could trust. Medical conditions ranged from region-specific illnesses to more serious, life-threatening conditions...but regardless, the clinic did not close until every patient was seen.

"I RETURNED FEELING BLESSED AND HUMBLED FROM ALL THE EXPERIENCES AND LEARNING I ACQUIRED WORKING WITH THE LOCAL HONDURAN DOCTORS AT CLINICA ESPERANZA. THIS TRIP REINFORCED MY CALLING FOR MISSION WORK AND I CAN'T WAIT FOR MY NEXT TRIP ABROAD," Dr. Servin said.

Dr. Celia Servin, third year resident, opted to pursue the International Medicine Diploma Track to receive specialized training that will help her care for patients in underserved regions. Her Spanish language fluency was a tremendous asset in helping her provide care in Honduras.

Many physicians will answer their call to provide quality care by continuing to make routine trips abroad, and some, like Dr. Flowers, will make medically underserved areas their new home—Dr. Flowers and his family have plans to relocate to Namibia next spring. **Providence is proud to be a part of the international footprint these physicians are making, honored to support their calling to provide care for the poor and vulnerable.**