

Global Surgery Partnership: Hartford Hospital Division of Acute Care Surgery Surgery and Guatemala

Please help us in fundraising for important supplies for our upcoming Medical Mission Trip to Guatemala taking place in May of 2024! Your support will allow us to purchase the necessary medical equipment to support the effort to Stop the Bleed® among the agricultural workers of Guatemala. Please read on below for additional details!

Mission

The division of Acute Care Surgery at Hartford Healthcare is proudly driven by its core values: Caring, Equity, Excellence, Integrity, and Safety. These values and the underlying mission to “improve the health and healing of all” are undoubtedly the cornerstone of Hartford Healthcare’s success.

Guatemala

Guatemala is a small country between Mexico and El Salvador with a population of 17.9 million people, making it the most populous country in Central America. It is a poor country and struggles in the areas of health and development, malnutrition, child and maternal mortality, and education. Much of the population works in the agricultural or service industries because these are the main economic activities.

There are major healthcare challenges in Guatemala due to the low government investment in healthcare and poor physician density throughout. Currently, there are 1.24 physicians and 0.4 hospital beds per 1000 inhabitants. Additionally, Guatemala does not utilize many of the healthcare provider roles that are recognized by the United States (i.e. physician assistants, APRNs, etc.) contributing to the provider deficit.



Figure 1: Map of Guatemala



Figure 2: Roosevelt Hospital. One of the largest tertiary care centers in the city.



Figure 3: San Juan de Dios General Hospital Emergency Department. Busiest in the country.



Figure 4: Agricultural workers using machetes to cut down sugarcane. Machete injuries are some of the most frequent in the country's inland.

Since much of the labor force is focused on agriculture, there are dense population hubs in the country's inland, far from tertiary care centers. Guatemala does not have an instituted trauma system and the only emergency providers are firefighters, the majority of whom are volunteers. To address this, many fields and farms have Auxiliary Nurses who act as primary care providers for these workers. Although the exact numbers are poorly recorded, it is estimated that agricultural accidents result in a large number of annual deaths which may have been otherwise prevented with adequate bleeding control measures during the long transport time to a hospital.

Stop the Bleed®

Stop the Bleed® is the result of a collaborative effort led by the American College of Surgeon's Committee on Trauma (ACS COT) to bring knowledge of bleeding control to the public. The creation

of Stop the Bleed® was greatly influenced by world events, especially after the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Connecticut. At that time, Hartford Hospital's Dr. Lenworth Jacobs convened a panel of experts to evaluate and create a response to such emergencies.

Founded in Hartford, Stop the Bleed® has become a national public awareness campaign designed to empower bystanders to take life-saving action if quickly needed. In recent years, the course has been adapted during times of international emergency, translated to several languages including Ukrainian in support of the recent conflict. Since Stop the Bleed® was launched in 2017, there have been more than 3 million people trained and over 117,000 instructors worldwide.

Course Specifics (Stop the Bleed® and Supplemental Education)

A team of Hartford Hospital Trauma Surgeons and staff are travelling to Guatemala for a week long mission trip in May of 2024. The primary goal of the trip is to teach Stop the Bleed® through a series of simulation scenarios meant to train the learner in the basic management of hemorrhage. The basic skills acquired from this course are the ability to recognize life-threatening hemorrhage, basic interventions to control that hemorrhage, and the application of a tourniquet.

We have adapted the course lightly from the original version in order to alleviate the knowledge-gap regarding bleeding control in the country of Guatemala, specifically in support of the under-supported agricultural communities. We believe that with improved access to Stop the Bleed® and resources, Guatemalan lives can be saved by addressing life-threatening hemorrhage even in the face of inadequate prehospital care and long transport times.

We will deliver the course in phases to medical students, residents/trainees, prehospital providers and several Auxiliary Nurses in the countries inland. After the course is completed, participants will receive a Certificate of Completion issued by the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma and signed by the course instructor. Whenever possible, we will issue Stop the Bleed® Instructor status to the participants. Doing this will promote the trickle-down effect of the course well beyond our departure.

Necessary Fundraising

We are seeking funding to supply prehospital providers and Auxiliary Nurses with the equipment necessary to treat patients long after our departure. We will invest your donations in purchasing hemostatic gauze and tourniquets in order to support the care of patients across the country. Appropriate supplies along with the important Stop the Bleed® education will undoubtedly save Guatemalan lives in the case of life-threatening but treatable hemorrhage.