



Medicine
For Peace

Fall
2025

Assisting victims of war and poverty

A Letter From Our Director

Dear Friends of Medicine For Peace,

On Sunday, September 21 at around two pm, two dozen armed gang members attacked the town of Gros Morne, the base of Medicine For Peace's medical programs in Haiti. The local police were quick to respond, setting up road barriers to block the gang's entry into town, and a firefight followed. The gang members were fought off. However, the town of Gros Morne remains in a state of fear.

Medicine For Peace, with a long history in conflict zones, responded to the attack decisively. We protected our patients and staff from harm while providing health care to those in critical need. The following pages describe how the civil violence has affected every aspect of Haitian life, and how, in the midst of this, MFP continues to provide high quality health care to women and their families.

For more than twenty years, Medicine For Peace has stood alongside the people of Haiti, relieving pain and suffering for families who have few options. Thousands of women and their families now turn to us for care, advice, and to help them through this crisis. Our doors will remain open.

Delivering health care in Haiti has become hazardous and expensive. Please help us. You are the reason we are able to continue this life-saving work.

With peace and gratitude,

Michael Viola, M.D,



Police protecting Gros Morne, photo by Odelyn Joseph

Saving Lives Under the Threat of Gang Violence

Medicine For Peace has provided health care to more than twelve thousand women – through earthquakes, hurricanes, and cholera epidemics. Because of the collapse of the government and the violence of armed gangs, we now face new and unprecedented challenges.

We have adapted to the new reality in Haiti. We accompany ship containers holding our supplies until they reach Haitian ports. We then transport the supplies using circuitous routes over unpaved country roads to the hospital in Gros Morne. While we continue to deliver high quality care in our hospital clinic, we rely increasingly on monitoring

and treating patients in their communities.

Community health workers (CHW) are the bridge between primary care givers in our clinic and our patients in rural towns. Under our staff supervision, CHW visit households, counsel families, and provide critical health services. They ensure that patients who are terminally ill are free of pain and have adequate food. They often accompany ill patients to our clinic for follow-up visits.

The heroic work of our nurses and community health workers illustrates that even in a crisis it is possible to give patients personal, compassionate health care.

A New Challenge: Eradicating Newborn Deaths



A newborn at the Alma Mater Hospital

Jean Baptist's Story

In May of this year, Madame Lemonge was brought to the Alma Mater Hospital in Gros Morne in the early stages of labor. Madame was preterm (28 weeks) when she delivered a small child, Jean Baptiste, who weighed only 4.5 pounds. Because the child was in respiratory distress, the obstetrician decided to have the child transported to the nearest neonatal intensive care unit fifty miles away in San Marc. It was a difficult journey; much of the country road was unpaved and sections were unsafe because of armed gangs. The child died before arriving to the San Marc facility.

Jean Baptist's story is not unique. It has occurred repeatedly at the Alma Mater

Hospital and in many poorly equipped hospitals throughout Haiti. Inadequate health facilities, lack of trained personnel, and poor prenatal care coupled with financial and transportation barriers contribute to Haiti having the highest neonatal mortality rate in the Western hemisphere.

The administration of Alma Mater Hospital and Medicine For Peace have joined in a major initiative to develop a modern neonatal intensive care unit at the hospital in Gros Morne. Alma Mater Hospital has already established itself as a leader in women's health and in the care of AIDS patients. The new unit will have state-of-the-art incubators, advanced monitoring systems, as well as the necessary equipment to handle newborn respiratory and cardiac emergencies.

"The new neonatal unit at Alma Mater Hospital will make this facility the safest place to deliver a child in the whole region."

-Dr. Michael Viola

In many under resourced countries, neonatal care units have immediately improved the survival rates of newborns. In addition to the high quality of medical care, we envision women will be treated with dignity and respect, and their children nurtured by empathetic caregivers.



The Schoolroom: A Safe Place For Haitian Children

They're back! Unlike many schools in Haiti that were forced to close because of the escalating violence, the children at the Foni Bo School in Gros Morne returned to their classrooms on October 1

The Children's Scholarship Fund for Girls (CSFG), MFP's partner, has supported a cohort of girls through grammar school into high school. We are happy to report that **all girls in the school have passed the stringent State seventh and eighth grade exams.** This is an extraordinary achievement since UNICEF reports that only half the girls in Haiti complete fifth grade.

During these troubled times, Foni Bo provides a safe space for learning, recreation and psychological support. In addition, the hot lunch, made from locally grown produce, provides the only nutritious meal of the day for many students.

One of the keys to the success of the school is a social worker who detects psycho-emotional problems early and promotes high levels of school attendance. We are proud of the work of teachers and students at the school and we are committed to continue the CSFG support started by Kathleen Crane fifteen years ago.

