

## El Salvador Becoming Healthier, More Self-Sufficient

**Cleveland, Ohio** – Last week, 44 people traveled with MedWish International to Zaragoza, El Salvador to deliver medical supplies and host field clinics in the region. This year's travelers included about 20 volunteers with medical backgrounds, including emergency medicine physicians from 4M Emergency Services and retired nurse Kathy Holmgren, wife of Cleveland Browns president Mike Holmgren. Mrs. Holmgren has volunteered regularly at MedWish since moving to Cleveland.

MedWish brings volunteers to a developing country each year to deliver supplies and expertise while broadening the organization's understanding of local successes, challenges and future needs. This year marked MedWish's third trip to Zaragoza, and returning volunteers remarked on significant improvements since their visit in 2010.

"While we still saw a lot patients in need of medical treatment, it was obvious that the country's own health system has become better equipped to provide ongoing care to its citizens," said brigade co-chair Rob Namy. "We are proud of the small part MedWish has played, through shipments and past brigades, in supporting El Salvadorans while they build up their health infrastructure." Field clinic volunteers saw fewer instances of malnutrition and parasites than during past brigades.

"This trip has helped us gain new perspective in how we can help the El Salvadoran health system continue progress, primarily by offering expertise in use and maintenance of diagnostic biomedical equipment," said MedWish executive director Josh Kravitz.

Despite this observed progress, El Salvador continues to struggle with security threats and poverty. The brigade volunteers provided medical care to nearly 1,500 patients and afforded MedWish the opportunity to strengthen partnerships within Central America to improve health for its citizens.

### BRIGADE VOLUNTEERS

12 medical providers, including:

- **Ann Failinger, MD** a pediatrician practicing in Chardon, Ohio.
- **Amit Bhardwaj, PA; Jason Klein, DO; Robert Moosally Jr., MD; Joseph MacLellan, PA; Howard White, MD; Christi Woods, DO; Robert Zimmerman, MD**, of 4M Emergency Services, a Hudson-based medical service company that partners closely with University Hospitals to staff emergency departments.
- **Raymond Onders, MD**; chair of surgical innovation and director of minimally invasive surgery at University Hospitals Case Medical Center
- **Jeff Ponsky, MD**; department chair of surgery at University Hospitals Case Medical Center
- **Sheldon Rose, MD**; resident at University Hospitals
- **Harvey Tucker, MD**; an ear, nose and throat specialist in the Metro Health Medical System and professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine

Three nurses, including:

- **Kathy Holmgren, RN**; retired nurse, regular MedWish volunteer and wife of Cleveland Browns president Mike Holmgren
- **Cynthia Tucker, RN**; ear, nose and throat nurse at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center
- **Deborah Katz, RN**; ambulatory and urology nurse at the Glickman Urological Institute at the Cleveland Clinic

Students in the medical field from Kent State University, University of Cincinnati and the University of Akron, as well as a medical interpreter, a registered pharmacist, and 24 other volunteers with various skill sets.

### BY THE NUMBERS

- Three field clinics hosted over the course of three days (August 13 - 16), during which 1,473 patients were seen.
- Volunteers distributed 900 hygiene kits and 1,532 first aid kits to patients in the clinics. Cleveland supporters of MedWish donated and sorted the supplies to fill these kits.

### About MedWish International

*MedWish International is a non-profit organization that collects usable medical supplies and equipment from U.S. health systems and distributes it as humanitarian aid to developing countries. Since 2003, MedWish has kept more than 2.75 million pounds of medical surplus out of landfills and has sent much-needed supplies to more than 90 countries all over the world. MedWish was founded in 1993 in Cleveland, Ohio. For more information about MedWish, visit [www.medwish.org](http://www.medwish.org) or call (216) 692-1685.*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | NEWS RELEASE

August 23, 2012

**Media Contact:**

Reanna Karousis, Marketing & Communications Manager

216.692.1685 | [rkarousis@medwish.org](mailto:rkarousis@medwish.org)

[www.medwish.org/brigade](http://www.medwish.org/brigade)

## MEDIA RESOURCES

### Blogs from the brigade

MedWish Brigade Page | [www.medwish.org/brigade](http://www.medwish.org/brigade)

4M Emergency Services El Salvador Blog | <http://4melsalvador.blogspot.com>

### Photos

High-resolution photos with captions | [www.medwish.org/brigade-2012-multimedia](http://www.medwish.org/brigade-2012-multimedia)

### Video

Brigade 2012 videos on Youtube | <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLB3AA10A0660350BB>

### Background Information

MedWish Press Kit: [http://medwish.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/MedWish-Press-Kit\\_electronic.pdf](http://medwish.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/MedWish-Press-Kit_electronic.pdf)

###