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MedWish International Responds to Medical Needs in the Philippines

Medical Response Teams Encouraged to Request Supplies; Donations Needed

Cleveland, Ohio –Local humanitarian aid organization MedWish International has announced its long-term strategy for providing aid to support rebuilding efforts in the Philippines following the devastation caused last week by Typhoon Haiyan.

Well known in the community for its relief efforts to aid the people of Haiti in 2010, MedWish International is a Cleveland-based nonprofit that collects and distributes medical surplus to developing countries and areas of crisis.

“One thing we saw for certain during our disaster relief efforts for Haiti was that after something this devastating happens, the need for help is long-term. We are committed to supporting this need in the months and even years to come,” said Andres Perez-Charneco, programs director at MedWish International.

MedWish is collaborating with existing partners to assess immediate needs and identify the best ways to provide shipments of supplies moving forward. As roads, airports and seaports remain impassable and residents struggle with immediate survival, MedWish is prepared to provide medical supplies to be hand-carried by relief organizations traveling to provide emergency medical aid.

Yesterday, representatives from the Tugaoen Medical Mission Fund traveled from Columbus to MedWish in Cleveland to pack more than 100 pounds of medical supplies. This shipment will fuel response efforts of a group based out of Toledo, Ohio. Members of the group will spend 1-2 weeks in the Philippines providing emergency medical assistance, primarily treatment of wounds, trauma and infection, and will assess what next steps should be taken for a return trip.

“The group was planning a medical mission for the spring, but when this happened all plans changed,” said Dr. Jasmine Trouten, who works at the Veterans Administration hospital in Columbus, Ohio and has traveled to the Philippines with her family to provide medical care in the past. Dr. Trouten’s sisters, Dr. Jeanne Zuber and Dr. Joy Russ, and her brother Justin Tugaoen, an anesthesiologist, will also be traveling.

Dr. Trouten submitted an application for supplies and was able to pick them up within 24 hours to deliver to her family for this trip. This example illustrates MedWish’s greatest strength in providing Philippines disaster relief at this time: The organization can equip doctors, aid workers and nonprofit organizations traveling to provide emergency assistance with fairly short notice and in nearly any



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quantity. While the organization anticipates most responders will need to carry donations with them in travel, MedWish encourages those organizations with future plans for freight shipments to get in contact.

At this time, MedWish is not launching a public donation drive for medical supplies. Once its partners on the ground identify the most-needed items, MedWish may call for items that the general public can donate.

How You Can Help

Make a Gift

To support ongoing shipments, MedWish has begun to accept financial donations to aid to the Philippines. Those who wish to give can visit www.medwish.org/donate or call (216) 692-1685.

Request Supplies

Anyone planning to travel to the Philippines to provide relief efforts can request medical supplies via MedWish's online application at www.medwish.org/get or by calling Andres Perez-Charneco at (216) 692-1685. While MedWish generally requests that applications for hand-carried shipments be completed at least four weeks before travel, employees will make every effort to fulfill short-notice requests for the Philippines.

Volunteer

Thousands of volunteers sort and quality check donated medical supplies to fulfill shipments at MedWish each year. While the supplies you touch may eventually ship to any of the 90 countries MedWish serves, volunteers help ensure that supplies are available when they are urgently needed, especially in disaster relief shipments. Individuals and groups can register to volunteer at www.medwish.org/volunteer or by contacting David Cicerchi at (216) 692-1685.

About MedWish International

MedWish International is a Cleveland-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that recovers usable medical surplus from health care systems and distributes these vital supplies to doctors, nurses and humanitarians to improve health care around the world. Since its founding in 1993, MedWish has kept millions of pounds of medical surplus out of landfills and has sent much-needed supplies to 90 countries all over the world. For more information about MedWish, please visit www.medwish.org or call (216) 692-1685.

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