

You might be surprised to learn that as I type this, I am riding across the countryside of the Dominican Republic in a very crowded bus making my way to Santo Domingo for my flight out tomorrow. I had hoped to stay and help one more day, but that wouldn't have left me enough time to make my flight and I have to be back for work on Saturday. The Port au Prince airport is still closed to commercial flights, I couldn't find a missionary flight and the only other option was Santo Domingo. In the last 24 hours, several more medical professionals have arrived at Mathew 25, so there is a lot more help for the sick and injured there. That makes me feel a little better about leaving, though I still feel some sadness about it. We heard some great news today. You might remember me writing about the sweet little girl named Reginette who fought for her life on the dining room table at Mathew 25. Her mother came by to tell us that she survived her surgery at Sacre Coeur hospital, though they had to take her foot and part of her leg. Her mother's great relief was all over her face and she was very grateful for the way the team took care of her precious daughter. Her youngest child's lifeless body is still trapped under the wreckage of their home and I'm sure losing a second child would have been more than she could bear. Unfortunately, we also learned that Reginette was left lying on the ground in the courtyard of the hospital with little to eat or drink. The hospital needed space for incoming patients and was forced to put people out after surgery. As a result, Reginette had no way to get back to the soccer field at Mathew 25 (Like countless other people in Port au Prince, she no longer has a house to go home to). Our vehicles were either tied up transporting others or lacked fuel, but I managed to find transport for her from the International Red Cross. I wish I could have seen her make it back, but hopefully by now, she is with her mother. This is a huge problem in Port au Prince right now with an enormous number of injured people needing to get to medical facilities or get back to their families but no way to get there. I'm so glad that the Red Cross and other groups are addressing the problem. Our ace medical team once again split up and sent a group into Nan Citron - another of the endless number of tent cities strewn across the city. I went along to translate and handle crowd control. When we arrived, scores of people ran up to us, hoping that we had the food and water they so desperately needed. I had to explain that we were there for medical care only. They seemed satisfied with that and many of them thanked us for coming. Fortunately, unlike yesterday, no machetes were used in anger and after three hours of wound care and and sick babies, we packed seven patients with serious injuries or illness, along with several team members and all our gear into the pick-up and headed for home. The people there appreciated the care and it seemed to mean a lot to them that we came to were they were, whereas normally, poor Haitians have to go to great lengths to be seen by a doctor.

Jim and Barb continued to blow me away with their dedication, expertise and kindness. It's easy to see that these patients get into their hearts. They always go all-out to save lives and ease pain.

Jon Steele has been working hard every day to solve water problems. I spoke with him today and he was working in collaboration with others to get safe water to people in the outlying communities of the Port au Prince area.

I feel like I still have so much I want to say, so look for a final update later. I am now in Santo Domingo at a hotel (Thank you Christi Watts for finding me a nice place to lay my head at the last minute!) I see that the Haitian earthquake is still all over the TV. It's starting to hit me.

Mark Coughlin