Trip Report Visit to Health Facilities San Luis, Santa Barbara, Honduras April 3 – April 5, 2022

Summary: Ana Julia and Michael Maxey of the Marie Maxey Foundation met with local health officials and the mayor of San Luis, Santa Barbara on April 4 - 5, 2022. Accompanying the Maxeys was a local medical doctor, Dr. Judy Funes.¹ A list of the persons interviewed is attached. The purpose of the discussions was to assess the feasibility of starting a preventative healthcare program in San Luis aimed at identifying and helping people deal with hypertension. Local officials agreed that this type of program is needed and can facilitate ongoing healthcare programs in the municipality. The decision was made to develop a proposal to share with the foundation board and request approval of funding for a pilot preventative healthcare program in conjunction with Colleagues in Care (a U.S. based non-profit focused healthcare).

<u>Background</u>: San Luis is one of 28 municipalities in the department of Santa Barbara, Honduras, and is ranked as one of the poorest with an overall poverty rate of 60 percent. The municipality is comprised of 17 towns and 185 communities with a total population of 25,292 residents. The largest town is San Luis with a population of 6,929. Over 70 percent of the municipal population is classified as rural and are found in San Isidro (4,040), San Francisco (1,868) San Juan (1,592), La Union (1,197), Las Flores (1,102), and Tejutales (1,037). The primary economic activity is farming and coffee is the largest cash crop in the area. Health services are limited to a Ministry of Health clinic, a newly established municipal clinic, and a faith-based maternal clinic (Luz y Vida). The map below shows the approximate location of these clinics in San Luis.



¹ Judy Funes is a recent graduate of the Catholic University of Honduras. She completed her residency in Colinas, Santa Barbara and is licensed to practice medicine in Honduras. Dr. Funes currently resides in San Luis, Santa Barbara and her CV is attached to this report.

Meeting with Mr. Jose Ronmel Rivera, Mayor of San Luis

A meeting was held with the Mayor of San Luis, Jose Ronmel Rivera, who was recently elected and is in the process of developing plans to improve municipal services. He provided an overview of the issues facing San Luis that included the need to improve schools and resume classes for young people, the lack of a municipal wastewater treatment plant, poor road infrastructure, and the lack of adequate healthcare facilities. The Mayor indicated that he was open to any proposal that would improve healthcare in San Luis. At the conclusion of the meeting, he gave our group a tour of the municipal health clinic that was recently opened.





Frank Toro, Ana Maxey, Mayor Ronmel Rivera



Nurse at
Municipal
Clinic
explaining the
health
recordkeeping
system.

In the discussions with the Mayor, he indicated that the Municipal Clinic could cooperate with the Marie Maxey Foundation and Colleagues in Care to establish a pilot hypertension monitoring and treatment program. While specifics of how a program would be established were not discussed, Mayor Rivera made clear that he was ready to help publicize the program and guarantee cooperation from both the Municipal Clinic and the Ministry of Health Public Clinic. At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed that a proposal would be drafted for a three-month pilot effort in San Luis and that funding would be requested from the Marie Maxey Foundation to establish and operate the pilot program which would include providing (1) a local doctor's services in training and coordination, (2) blood pressure measuring equipment, (3) public outreach material, and (4) a recordkeeping collection and analysis system. While there was no guarantee of anything further than the pilot effort, it was agreed that this type of initiative was a necessary first step to request public and private sector funding in both Honduras and the United States.

Meeting with Dr. Maribeth Sabillon Alvarado and Dr. Arnulfo Martinez Zavala

A meeting was held with Dr. Sabillon and Dr. Martinez at the Ministry of Health Clinic in San Luis. This is the primary healthcare facility with residents coming here from San Luis and other communities in the municipality. The recordkeeping system is done primarily by filling out files and classifying patient records by the community in which the patient resides. There is no emergency transportation system for the municipality and the health clinic appears to need funding for medicines, equipment and training. (Note: It was mentioned that the clinic does have an ultrasound but does not have anyone that is trained to use it.)

A tour was provided of the health clinic. We observed the waiting room area and recordkeeping section. The staff provided an overview of the reception process and explained what types of actions could be taken at the clinic. The level of care that could be provided was primarily focused on assessing and treating symptoms. There was not a surgery unit and the staff explained that more complicated or serious cases were referred to Clinica Luz y Vida or to the hospital in Santa Bárbara or in San Pedro Sula. In terms of communication with other medical facilities we asked about internet access and we were told that the clinic does not have internet access.







Meeting with Maribel Aguilar & Tour of Clinica Luz y Vida

Dr. Judy Funes, Ana Maxey and Michael Maxey visited Clinic Luz y Vida and were given a tour by Maribel Aguilar who is a senior nurse at the clinic. Ms. Aguilar provided an overview of how patients are received, the types of services provided, and the fees charged for services. The facilities in the clinic consist of delivery rooms, operating facilities, a laboratory and different types of equipment including a ultrasound machine. The clinic appears well stocked with medicine and supplies. Basic medical services are provided and periodic medical missions provide surgeries. A new wing to the clinic was recently completed and it is being equipped to expand operating facilities, to provide dental care, and other services.



The clinic was started in 1978 and has been expanded over the years.

Approximately 25 people per day are attended to in the clinic. A fee is charged for all service and medicine provided (while greatly reduced from what would be charged in San Pedro Sula, the fees help fund the continuation of services). We saw two women leaving the clinic after having given birth earlier in the day.











The clinic has modern facilities to host medical missions to provide surgeries, eye care and other types of medical services. There are also lodging facilities for medical mission staff.

Persons Interviewed:

1. Hon. Jose Ronmel Rivera, Mayor of San Luis, Santa Bárbara.

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- Maribel Aguilar, a senior nurse at Clinica Luz Y Vida, San Luis, was interviewed during our trip. A previous meeting held with the director of the clinic, Daniel Melton, via Zoom.
- 3. <u>Dr. Maribeth Sabillon Alvarado</u>, Director of Ministry of Health, Public Clinic, San Luis. Email: dr.charysabillon@gmail.com
- 4. **Dr. Arnulfo Martinez Zavala**, ex -Director of Ministry of Health, Public Clinic, San Luis. Email: martineznufo@hotmail.com

Judy Funes CV

Colinas



San Luis, Santa Bárbara, Honduras



