FDI, FOLA and DTI launch campaign for Haitian dentists

Javier M. de Bison
DT Latin America

PANAMA CITY, Panama: The president of the Haitian Dental Association Dr. Samuel Prophet has told Dental Tribune Latin America that he and several colleagues he was able to contact in Port-au-Prince were fine after the devastating earthquake in his country. “So far, we only have reports of two missing dentists”, Prophet wrote in an email.

The recent earthquake not only devastated Haiti’s meager health resources, but also most dental practices. In a country where there were only 500 dentists for nine million people before January 12th, the extent of the devastation has affected regular people and dental professionals alike.

The president of the Latin American Dental Federation (FOLA), Dr. Adolfo Rodriguez, launched a campaign immediately after the quake to help both the general population and dental professionals in Haiti. Dr. Rodriguez, who’s also the president of the Dominican Dental Association (AOP), is asking companies and dental professionals to donate dental instruments, materials, and equipment. He’s organizing the campaign for Haiti with the help of FDI World Dental Federation, and Dental Tribune International.

In addition, Dr. Rodriguez is putting together teams of dental volunteers to travel to Haiti once the major health and humanitarian crisis are under control or at least manageable, to attend to the dental needs of the population. The hub for this effort would be the headquarters of AOP in Santo Domingo.

“We also need to show our support for our colleagues in Haiti, most of whom have lost everything,” Rodriguez said. “We need to get them back on their feet by helping them to rebuild their practices.”

Lost Practices

Dr. Prophet said in his email that “many of our colleagues have lost their practices and we were thinking about how to help them. It’s very good news to know that FOLA, FDI and Dental Tribune are trying to help Haitian dentists.” If dentists know “that help is on the way they can have hope!” Dental Tribune will publicize in its worldwide print and online editions the campaign for Haiti.

At a meeting in Panama, Dr. Rodriguez of FOLA received the support of the presidents of Central American dental associations, and made an emotional appeal to dental manufacturers to donate much needed supplies. He said Colgate has already agreed to donate brushes and toothpaste, and that he intended to meet with KaVo do Brasil in the
upcoming CIOPS meeting in Sao Paulo to ask for donations of new and used dental units.

Dr. Rodríguez added that it was moving to witness dental professionals from countries with little resources such as Honduras, Nicaragua or El Salvador, say that they will collect funds from their members, second hand equipment and dental supplies to help their Haitian colleagues.

Some prominent Latin American dental professionals from Brazil, Uruguay and Costa Rica among others have already expressed their interest in participating in dental teams to help the most urgent needs of the Haitian population. Conditions on the ground seem to indicate that these teams would operate in mobile units at the Dominican-Haiti border, once the most pressing health emergencies and needs are somewhat controlled.

The reason for this is that most of Port-au-Prince is in ruins, and the Dominican government has moved the majority of its mobile health resources to the border in an effort to treat Haitians, and avoid a migratory exodus.

The president of FOLA said that this tragedy "is also an opportunity to build a public health service that includes dental care. We have asked the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), FDI, all Latin American dental associations, companies and other institutions for help in putting together teams of dental professionals to travel to Haiti and start working there, and leave in place basic dental treatment centers." Dr. Rodriguez said that this will be a long-term programme that includes rebuilding the dental school at the university, as well as private practices. It also will take some time to start, and he said that the priorities would be treating children and pregnant women.

The Latin American dental leader said he has also asked for funding from the government of Dominican Republic. Companies and dentists interested in helping Haiti should contact Dr. Rodriguez at arn@codetel.net.do or by phone at +809 519-0789.

Survey finds hygienist among best jobs in 2010

By Daniel Zimmermann
Group Editor DTI

Dental hygienists are in position No. 10 among the top 10 jobs in 2010, a new survey has found. According to CareerCast.com, a job search site based in Carlsbad, Calif., hiring outlooks for dental assistants were even better than those for other jobs in the top 10 list, including accountants or computer analysts. Dental technicians ranked 72 in the survey, while orthodontists ranked 94.

The report analyzed 200 jobs in North America based on a set of criteria, such as work environment, income, outlook, stress and physical demands. According to Tony Lee, publisher of the CareerCast.com 2010 Jobs Rated Report, the jobs that ranked near the top not only pay well, but also have the greatest potential for growth as the economy rebounds. "Conversely, [the job of] roustabout is a difficult and dangerous job working on an oil rig with a salary of about $31,000 per year, high unemployment and a negative outlook for growth, which is why it's ranked as the nation's worst job," explained Lee.

He added that some white-collar jobs didn't make the top of the list once other aspects of the position were factored in. "Surgeon, which is the highest-paying job, ranked toward the bottom of the list when you evaluate the profession's stress levels, physical demands and work environment," he said. To view the entire top 10 list, please visit, www.CareerCast.com.