



The Wisconsin Medical Project

December 2021

NEWSLETTER

Our 1st September Shipment

Côte d'Ivoire this time

I had the good fortune to interview Yacouba Traoré this go-round per the latest shipment of medical supplies to the West African nation of Côte d'Ivoire. Mr. Traoré is involved with a Kickstarter initiated NGO, Union Fraternal des Ivoriens, whose members mostly live in the American Midwest: Wisconsin, Chicago, Minnesota, and work with a NGO that works with a regional health director in Côte d'Ivoire.

The shipment left on September 11th, and arrived at Abidjan. From there, the goods are bound for the city of Gagnoa in the district (like states in the U.S.) of Gôh-Djiboua, a largely agricultural area in the southern part of the country. Its chief products are cacao and coffee. Ultimately, the medical supplies - beds, gurneys, wheel chairs, canes, diapers are distributed to small clinics and a regional hospital which serves up to 60,000 persons.

How big is Gôh-Djiboua? About the size of Oshkosh. The chief ethnic group is the Bété people, who are mostly subsistence farmers.

The Wisconsin Medical Project is honored to work with Mr. Traoré and his group. – John Elliott



Making a Difference for Women in Sierra Leone



Sierra Leone National media interviewing John Brewah at Aberdeen Women's Clinic

On Thursday, September 30th, medical supplies rolled away from the Wisconsin Medical Project warehouse, bound for Sierra Leone, located on the southwest coast of Africa, and John Brewah is the one-man NGO behind it.

Mr. Brewah is from Sierra Leone, but came to the United States to further his education. By day, he's an accounting and tax guy, like one you might know somewhere in your neighborhood. In addition, Mr. Brewah is instrumental in shipping containers medical goods from Madison to Sierra Leone. He not only sees to it that the containers are shipped off, he then travels to Sierra Leone, where he rents a truck, and delivers these supplies himself, wherever they are needed.

Now, some background...

The current state of health care in Sierra Leone? Poor. After the British left, the health care system collapsed, so medical care is really not accessible, and many doctors, hospitals and clinics are out of reach for many citizens. The average life expectancy, according the CIA Factbook, is 57. Maternal mortality rate? The world's third highest.

Sierra Leone also had a devastating civil war in the 1980's, one which left rural areas destroyed.

And here is where Mr. Brewah comes in. He knows people who run hospitals, clinics, and people in the health care system know him. He finds the hospitals and clinics that need supplies, and then delivers the goods.

And it was through this network of his that he met Ms. Haja Hawa Turay. Ms. Turay is instrumental in setting up a clinic, the Haikal Community Health Center in the

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Clinic staff unpacking supplies from WMP

A Message from the President

We are very pleased to have just received authorization to ship another container to Cuba and anticipate that it will be sent in early 2022. We know from friends in Camagüey that supplies are short and that our donations will help people there. A shipment to Senegal left on November 19th under the auspices of our friend "Pape" Samb of the NGO Jamerak. They will see to its distribution to places of need. While the pandemic has had a significant effect on nonprofits such as the WMP, we have been fortunate that donations have continued to come in regularly. Volunteers have packed a record number of cartons and a large amount of equipment has been donated as well. We are very pleased that we have been able to send everything within six months of receiving it. From January to October, we sent 3½ containers to Africa and one to Cuba. This volume is important since Africa is having a difficult time with the pandemic and we've sent a large amount of personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves, gowns and other items to protect health care workers. Excess equipment in this country can help African nations deal with the high incidence of COVID19. We appreciate your

interest in the Wisconsin Medical Project and are grateful for the financial donations that keep it going. Your contributions do reach across the globe.

Thank You.

Bernie Micke, M.D.

Making a Difference *Cont'd. from p. 1*

town of Bo, for women suffering from fistula. These women tend to be from rural areas and had no medical care while pregnant or while giving birth. Fistula is caused by obstructed labor that leaves abnormal openings between the rectum and vagina. Without repair women suffering from it end up being social outcasts. Ms. Turay brings in volunteer surgeons from Europe and America to treat these women. Ms. Turay also has educational programs for the women, ones that can help them gain life skills. Like Mr. Brewah, she does this all on her own. We are particularly happy to help their efforts.

News from the Warehouse

- We have packed a record number of cartons – 3000 this calendar year
- We have also sent 4½ containers since January – another record for WMP – to Ghana, Cuba, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone (half), and Senegal
- We maintain sensible Covid precautions and have fewer volunteers working at any one time. The warehouse has the space for us to spread out.
- After various delays with container shortages, we have two additional shipments scheduled for November to Senegal and December to Ivory Coast
- We are planning shipments to Senegal and Cuba in early 2022
- Our sources for donations continue to keep us supplied with equipment and patient care materials
- Our turn around time for getting donations out the door is 6 months
- Individual donors have found us through the website and brought in wheel chairs and other things they no longer need.

The Wisconsin Medical Project is a 100% volunteer operated organization. All of your gift goes toward fulfilling our mission. You can read more about our on-going work in this newsletter and on our website.

Please consider supporting our work.

- **Checks may be mailed in the enclosed envelope to:**
Wisconsin Medical Project
26 N. Prospect Avenue
Madison, WI 53726
- **Donate on-line at our website:**
<https://wismedproject.org/>

A BIG THANK YOU FOR YOUR PAST AND CONTINUING SUPPORT!