



# The Wisconsin Medical Project

Spring 2022

## NEWSLETTER

### HELLO GOODBYE OUSMANE DIALLO



A key member of our organization, Dr. Ousmane Diallo, is departing Madison to go back home, to Senegal. He's been a source for contacts/connections with that country, an interesting raconteur - especially with anything per the culture and politics of West Africa, a topic of which most Americans are totally ignorant, a source of enthusiasm and energy, and fun person to be around.

He was born in the bustling port city of Dakar, and, by his own admission, he's a "product of public schools" - pre-school to college, specifically the Université Cheikh Anta Diop - The University of Dakar, and, for his M.D., The Faculty of Medicine, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, both institutions in Dakar.

He wanted to go on to a medical specialty, but the IMF had other plans, when it imposed its "Sound monetary policy," which translated to "less investment in education." I.e., it wanted the country to go more "free market."

He then landed in New York City, where he helped a friend out with a business, something Dr. Diallo described as "hustling." However, he did take the Medical Boards in New York, but couldn't get a residency.

*Cont'd. on p. 2*

### SEWING MACHINE MAESTRO

Do you have an old sewing machine that isn't working very well and you haven't used in years? Karen Cornwell can give it new life. Karen repairs almost any machine – the older the better. The well-stocked workroom in her Madison house has all kinds of machines in various states of repair

with parts organized in special drawers, new motors, and the foot controls that can make them hum. Friends and family have found machines by the side of the road, and no matter how dirty or uncared for she has been able to get them working again. Karen will use a machine for a month or so to make sure



*From the left:*

- Ready to pack with new 220v motor
- Karen working on a newer machine
- Storage for repair parts

*Cont'd. on p. 3*

## DIALLO from p. 1

Undeterred, he then went to Georgia, where he met his wife; then to St. Louis, Missouri, where he got a Masters in Public Health. From there, he ended up in Des Moines, Iowa, where he completed a PhD and worked at the Iowa Department of Public Health. There, he worked on topics such as bioterrorism, preparation for SARS, mass casualty events.

After that, he moved to Madison, where he became the Chief Epidemiologist for the Wisconsin Department of Health, where he focused on surveillance of epidemics, and worked with researchers and public health professionals. With the last two years, the focus has been on Covid-19.

He got involved with the Wisconsin Medical Project via a friend, but as he confided, he was reticent at first. He wanted nothing to do with organizations that would ship broken, inferior, equipment to developing countries, and related a horror story about a defective pre-mature baby incubator that killed an infant, this in Senegal.

That proved to not be the case with the Wisconsin Medical Project, and he noted that the group's quality medical equipment has gone to three hospitals in Senegal: Dakar Hospital, FANN, which specializes in infectious diseases and neurology; the main hospital in St. Louis, and one in the southern, rural, part of the country, in Touba.

Dr. Diallo's motivation to move back home are twofold: He wants to be with his 96 year old father, and he wants to get into politics, which translates to running to be a député in the National Assembly, or L'Assemblée nationale.

He's running on two positions. One, to eliminate the prerequisite that the President must speak and write French, the other is to fight corruption.

First, Senegal's relation with France. To put it bluntly, it's not good. Per Dr. Diallo, there's too much French influence in the country, and the relationship between Senegal and France can only be described as neo-colonial.

For example, Dr. Diallo wants the country to have its own currency. Currently, France backs the currency, but at a steep price, which translates to France holding a whopping 60% of Senegal's assets in the Banque de France. Senegal's military is overseen by French generals. And on, and on.

Corruption? It's a huge problem in Senegal. Currently, politicians can get an 10% cut on all foreign contracts, which can turn common politicians into millionaires overnight. Apparently, that practice is tolerated.

I asked Dr. Diallo, visa vie, western politics, what does he consider himself? A conservative. That said, he's certainly not in the free market, neoconservative, mold. He wants to conserve the country's African heritage, move away from western individualism and consumerism, bring back ethics. His seems to be a movement of reform for social development.

The election is in July.

With a wry smile, Dr. Diallo noted that one day, when he's President, he'll address the United Nations in his native language, Wolof.

*Dr. Diallo returned to Senegal in January and will be available to expedite receipt of the container that left the warehouse on March 25<sup>th</sup> for Dakar.*

## SEWING MACHINES from p. 1

that all the parts work – even the button hole attachment and an occasional special ruffler-maker foot.

Karen has been repairing sewing machines for about ten years and has certificates from two of Ray White's hands-on, professional repair classes. The first year she gave away one machine; the next year five as she became more skillful, and most recently, 42 were donated to various non-profits. She always includes a new pair of scissors, spools of thread, needles and bobbins, and garment lengths of fabric along with some fancy trim pieces. The person who gets the sewing machine can sit down and immediately get started on a project. Jewish Social Service is distributing machines to Afghan refugees here in Wisconsin. The Medical Project has sent machines in containers to Cuba and Africa. The machines going abroad are well padded with usable fabric. She finds cases for many, or uses a suitcase and includes directions in Spanish, French or English as appropriate with pictures of how to thread, etc.

Karen matches the machines to the needs of the people who get them. More modern, electronic machines, and ones with plastic coverings, go to the Habitat Restore. If she can get a light-weight machine, she will give it to the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. RSVP meets in various locations to sew for charitable projects so the lighter machines make moving them around easier. Many older machines with interchangeable parts, and sturdy ones with parts that are easy to get, go to the Medical Project for Africa and Cuba. For those going to Africa, Karen buys new 220-volt motors to put on the machines which avoids the need for an expensive converter. Cuba uses 110 current like the US so they get the same motor we use. A functioning sewing machine creates job opportunities for people, and also makes it possible for hospitals and clinics to repair gowns, and make other items for patients. The Medical Project is pleased to have Karen as a partner in our efforts.

Dear Friends,

**Connect with us at our newly updated website:  
<https://wismedproject.org/>**

We are a 100% volunteer operated organization. All of your gift goes toward fulfilling our mission.

- Our primary expense is the warehouse rent at \$1200 per month
- Shipping costs per container can be \$5000 to \$6000, occasionally shared by sponsoring groups

Please consider supporting our work.

- Checks may be mailed to:  
The 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!***

Karen welcomes donations:

- sewing machines
- fabric
- scissors
- thread and trim material.

Contact her at

[KarenLCornwell@gmail.com](mailto:KarenLCornwell@gmail.com)

OR

Leave a sewing machine or donations at the WMP Warehouse - 810 West Badger Road - on Tuesdays between 9 a.m. and noon and we will get it to her.

## A Message from the President

*The old adage "the fourth time is a charm" came true on Wednesday, February 16, as we finally received a container for our shipment to Cuba. This, after three cancellations due to lack of shipping equipment.*

*We had submitted the request for authorization from Cuba to send a container in the summer of 2021. We received that permission in November. From then until now we have been dealing with the steamship line and truckers to make this happen.*

*We are happy to say that the shipment contained much of what we had been asked for in the past by our good friend Doctora Nacyra Bonet at the Health Department. She pointed out the need for wheelchairs and walkers and other mobility devices for the aging population.*

*The other focus has been on collecting and sending protective gear such as masks, gloves, and gowns to help their medical personnel deal with Covid-19. There was a large amount of respiratory equipment like nebulizers and CPAPs for the treatment of Covid patients. Also included was the usual hospital equipment: gurneys, EKG machines, and centrifuges for the lab. There were four microscopes as well, one with a camera and monitor for projecting pathology slides to teach students at the medical school. We feel good about this container and thank our donors of equipment, our packers and loaders as well as you, our contributors, for the shipping cost. Our export license to Cuba remains in effect through 2023 and we hope to keep helping our long-terms friends in Camaguey.*

*With the war in Ukraine we've been asked about helping people there with donations. At this point, we do not have the connections that would be able to expedite sending a shipment and getting it distributed. Check the website for any new information about our activities.*

***Bernie Micke M.D.***



## COLLABORATING WITH OTHERS IN WISCONSIN

The Wisconsin Medical Project connected with fellow Wisconsin nonprofits in March. WMP volunteers delivered manual and electric wheelchairs to the Mobility 4 Vets (<https://www.mobility4vets.com>) organization in Waupaca. Mobility 4 Vets provides and services mobility equipment such as walkers, wheelchairs, scooters, etc. to veterans and non-veterans. The volunteers also picked up medical

supplies from the Goodwill processing center in Appleton. Goodwill received the medical supplies as donations, but they were unable to sell them so we were happy to accept them. The medical supplies will be included in one of our future shipments abroad.