

IOP – Giving the Gift of Advanced Medical Training
by Dr. Grace White

Medical education in Guyana can be described as still being in its fledgling stages. Although the University Of Guyana School Of Medicine put out its first graduates in 1992, and has continued to produce many of the country's doctors over the years, higher levels of training such as residency and fellowship training are very recent developments. One example of this is the department of Internal Medicine at Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) the nation's largest hospital and its only tertiary care and referral center as well as the nidus of academic medical activity. The Internal Medicine (IM) Department commenced its residency program in 2013.

Through partnership with the International Outreach Program, this first batch of IM specialists (of which I am thrilled to be a part) is being further equipped to be the leaders of a revolution in Internal Medicine in Guyana both in terms of raising up the next generation of high quality Internists but also in advancing more excellent standards of care. The IOP has extended the "hand of fellowship", figuratively and literally as my colleagues and I are now gaining advanced competencies in various aspects of Internal Medicine through McMaster's Clinical Fellowships. This exposure to some of the best in the various fields and to the gamut of evidenced based medicine will undoubtedly and immeasurably impact the landscape of medicine in Guyana. The people of Guyana will definitely stand to benefit.

For instance, the Internal Medicine Chronic Disease Outpatient Clinic can, in the foreseeable future, realize its potential to be a state of the art, well run tertiary facility. With the exposure to proven models of clinic administration as well as to advanced training in addressing complex medical issues I will have a gift to give back to the population as I passionately pursue the transformation of the GPHC medical clinic. My training and exposure here in Canada will also allow me to up my game as I continue to contribute to teaching Medical Students and Residents and to various national commissions and decision making forums.

Moreover, the benefit of these training opportunities will be felt exponentially as clinical fellows continue to be trained in nephrology, hematology, anesthesia and various medical and surgical disciplines. We envision decrease in morbidity and mortality as more evidenced based practices are introduced and better skilled practitioners are available. The people of Guyana will definitely be very grateful as we lessen the number of treatments and procedures which cannot be accessed at home, thus incurring grave costs to those desperately seeking to be cured or relieved. The government and people stand to benefit in the long term as the burden of disease is reduced due to better care and more efficient systems. There is an added benefit as confidence in our quality of medicine grows and more persons seek either training or care on our shores.

I echo the sentiments of my colleagues as we thank the IOP for this selfless gift to present and future generations of Guyanese. What a better time to say thanks than at Christmas when we reflect on the selfless gift of Christ. It is our hope and prayer that the life and light that shone on that first Christmas will continue to radiate through the work of the IOP as they touch the nations with the precious gift of advancing medical education and training.