



Remote Area Medical
2009 End-of-Year Report
December 29, 2009

The year 2009 has been packed with new venues, new patients and new equipment to improve and expand treatment.

While Congress and the White House debate the issue of health care reform, RAM volunteers are out there delivering the care and staying out of the political argument. Despite our neutrality, the world media continues to besiege our medical events with uninvited attendance and subsequent analysis of the problems facing underserved Americans. Some of that analysis is good, and I am glad to say that one aspect of the media focus has been particularly beneficial. As many of you know, Tennessee is the only state in the country with an open door policy allowing practitioners of all healing arts to come here on a temporary volunteer basis to provide free care for the underserved. The only requirement is to hold a valid license in their medical specialty in one of the 50 United States.

The Tennessee law should be implemented nationally. If such legislation included protection for volunteers against malpractice lawsuits, it would start an avalanche of "RAM-type" events all over this country. Thousands of willing volunteers are standing by from Maine to California and millions of underserved Americans would benefit at no cost to the government or taxpayer

There have been 27 RAM expeditions this year, as well as 365 days of operation in Guyana, South America, with our free air ambulance service and cervical cancer program among the remote Indian villages. This year saw our return to service among the Native Americans here in the U. S., and a drama-filled expedition to Los Angeles, California.

The L. A. event involved moving tons of equipment across the country from RAM headquarters in Knoxville, Tennessee, by a convoy of vehicles led by our 70-foot long Reach Across America tractor trailer unit recently acquired through the generous donations of many of you reading this report. After 4 days of travel, we set up 100 dental chairs, 20 lanes of eye examination equipment, and numerous private areas for general medical treatment on the floor of The Forum at Inglewood sports stadium. Various groups with mobile units worked outside in the parking lot. After 8 days, we had treated 6,344 patients, extracted 2,274 painful teeth and filled another 5,438, made 1,984 pairs of prescription eyeglasses, performed hundreds of women's health exams and offered a host of other procedures for \$2,822,508 worth of free care. Sadly, thousands of people were turned away. There simply were not enough California licensed practitioners to handle the demand and the State of California steadfastly refused to accept hundreds of volunteers with valid medical licenses in other states who wanted to help! All California licensed volunteers who did attend deserve the utmost praise. They simply were overwhelmed by the numbers.

From Los Angeles, we moved a smaller team to the Ute Native American reservation at Fort Duchesne, Utah. In 5 days, we treated 708 patients, 41.7 % of them children. Thanks to Dr. Larry Zubel of the Indian Health Service, Government paperwork to credential the volunteer practitioners was kept to a minimum. As a result, more visits to our Native American friends are under discussion.

I am rather optimistic that with the help of concerned citizens like you, the Government - be it State by State or at the Federal level - will allow this country truly to be a place where volunteer doctors have no borders and do not face the threat of frivolous lawsuits. Then, millions of our nation's medically underserved will benefit.

Many of you have urged us to hold a RAM free medical event in the Nation's capitol, Washington D.C.. The need there is great and we have actually been working on such an event for ten years or so, but have been prevented from holding it because of licensure restrictions imposed on practitioners who are willing to volunteer their services but do not hold a license in the District of Columbia. I am pleased to report that in November 2009 we received permission from the various health boards to allow us to bring in practitioners from outside the District so long as certain requirements were followed. Serious plans are now underway on a daily basis, led by RAM volunteers in Washington D.C., and we expect to hold that event early in 2010. Please stay tuned for more information on the RAM website as progress is made.

Thank you all for your support.

Stan Brock, Volunteer Director of Operations

Remote Area Medical Volunteer Corps

The Remote Area Medical® (RAM) Volunteer Corps is a non-profit, volunteer, airborne relief corps dedicated to serving mankind by providing free health care, dental care, eye care, veterinary services, and technical and educational assistance to people in remote areas of the United States and the world.

Please visit our website for more information and to review our schedule of upcoming expeditions.

<http://www.ramusa.org>

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