

By Lou Ann York

MediSend's Global Mission

Nonprofit organization brings medical equipment and repair expertise, as well as supplies, to needy providers throughout the world

MediSend International is a nonprofit humanitarian organization with a global footprint committed to making a difference in the lives of families around the world. Relying on strategic partnerships to forward its mission, MediSend employs a multi-dimensional approach that incorporates education, training, technical support, and management technologies in biomedical equipment repair together with the distribution of medical supplies and biomedical equipment.

MediSend relies upon healthcare systems and their facilities, manufacturers and suppliers, distributors and group purchasing organizations to assure that medical supplies and equipment as well as biomedical equipment can be redeployed to hospitals in developing countries where populations are in the greatest need. In response to a worldwide deficiency of skilled technicians to work on this equipment, MediSend, through a comprehensive six-month Biomedical Repair Training Program, trains students from partnering hospitals so that they may return as professional, skilled biomedical repair technicians.

The Global Education Center, located in MediSend's Dallas, Texas, headquarters, houses a modern biomedical repair training laboratory. Initially funded by ExxonMobil, the training lab contains multiple units of the basic biomedical equipment found in a hospital, as well as test, repair and calibration equipment. Since 2007, the MediSend Biomedical Repair Training Program has returned over 40 qualified professional biomedical technicians to developing hospital

systems. To assist in their success, each trainee's hospital receives the MediSend Mobile Biomedical Equipment Test and Repair Kit™ containing laboratory repair tools, supply items, and state-of-the-art test and calibration devices with the capacity to repair and maintain approximately 80 percent of all basic biomedical equipment used in a developing country's hospitals.

"We are not only providing essential equipment but the means to see it is properly installed, repaired, maintained, and operated. Our trainees return to the hospitals to dramatically improve healthcare conditions in their communities," says Nick Hallack, president and CEO of MediSend. "Generous partners and donors are fueling this progress."

Helping hands

One example of a working partnership is the relationship between MediSend and Broadlane based on a memo-of-understanding signed in 2008. Broadlane actively works with its suppliers and clients to donate new medical supplies, equipment, and biomedical equipment to MediSend's global healthcare initiatives. Thanks

to Broadlane, Safety 1st Medical Inc. recently sent a shipment of over 1 million surplus syringes that have now been distributed to provide life-saving inoculations to children and adults worldwide.

David Ricker, president and chief executive officer of Broadlane, states, "We are happy to aid MediSend in their efforts to obtain supplies and biomedical equipment



The MediSend International facility in Dallas, Texas, houses the Biomedical Training Laboratory and School as well as warehouse/shipping and administrative offices.

for disadvantaged clinics and hospitals outside the United States to help provide quality patient care. Since the inception of our relationship with MediSend, we've had several generous donations from our suppliers and hospital clients, and we continue to promote our relationship with MediSend to current and potential clients."

Organizations such as Philips, Kimberly Clark, Bon Secours Health System Inc., Medtronic, DuoPross Meditech Corp. and Owens & Minor have all donated supplies and equipment to MediSend. Henry Schein Inc. is also a consistent resource.

In 2008, Tenet Healthcare Corp. agreed to provide 1,000 Hill-Rom beds, both adult and pediatric, which have been distributed to many of the hospitals in which MediSend is working. The beds were refurbished and customized in MediSend's own biomedical repair laboratory in order to meet the recipient countries' electrical resource standards.

"MediSend's humanitarian programs in undeveloped countries allow equipment that we are cycling out of our system to have continued value and to provide ongoing relief to healthcare systems in desperate need," says Steve Brown, CIO of Tenet Healthcare Corp. "In addition, MediSend has streamlined the decommissioning process and given it accountability. We can track and monitor the movement of every piece of donated equipment from our hospitals to the receiving hospital or clinic in a developing country."

Under Hallack's direction, MediSend has endeavored to use supply chain management technology to improve the business model for distributing humanitarian aid. The organization has received the venerable CIO 100 Award for three consecutive years for demonstrating innovative application of technology in forwarding its mission. Hallack and his IT team have developed business process management applications that simplify the process of donating supplies and equipment, as well as the ordering, delivering, and tracking of medical aid to hospitals and organizations in developing countries.

Another important part of the ongoing technical support provided by MediSend is the hosting of Phoenix Data System's Asset Information Management System (AIMS.NET), Web-based medical equipment management software, for partnering hospitals in developing countries.

MediSend has formed partnerships that convenience



Each trainee's hospital receives the MediSend Biomedical Equipment Test and Repair Kit™.

donors. For instance, NFI has long transported donations from hospitals in the Southwest to MediSend's facilities and is working to secure similar logistics assistance throughout their national system. According to Hallack, this relationship has saved thousands of dollars for MediSend while offering a convenience to regional donors.

"It is a privilege to be able to utilize NFI's expertise in the swift, efficient transport of essential goods and services to support the efforts of MediSend," says Ike Brown, vice chairman of NFI and president of the company's Intermodal division. "It's an honor to contribute our knowledge to MediSend's noble cause."

Other partnerships have produced innovative programs. Baylor Health Care System, for example, conducts



Medisend relies upon healthcare systems and their facilities, manufacturers and suppliers, distributors and group purchasing organizations to provide desperately needed supplies and equipment for developing country hospitals.



The Global Education Center houses a state-of-the-art biomedical repair training laboratory containing multiple units of all of the basic biomedical equipment found in a hospital, as well as all the latest technology in test, repair and calibration equipment.

an internship program for Medisend's biomedical repair trainees in several of its hospitals. As a result, trainees have the opportunity to work in a professional hospital environment and to experience U.S. standards of healthcare.


Recently invited to join the Clinton Global Initiative, Medisend International is looking forward to substantial growth in order to meet worldwide healthcare challenges. Medisend currently works in Angola, Bangladesh, Chad,

Columbia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, India, Kazakhstan, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. While regular shipments are scheduled for partnering hospitals, Medisend also participates in emergency relief programs, supporting areas suffering such disasters as the 2005 earthquakes in Pakistan, the horrific tsunami in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, the strife in Lebanon, and the devastating floods in Bangladesh.

"We are proud to be so positively recognized for our work in improving healthcare in developing countries, but along with this recognition comes greater demand," says Hallack. "We need partners to augment the Biomedical

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Repair Training Program with the latest biomedical equipment. We have long-term commitments to partnering hospitals for which we need a steady stream of equipment and supplies, and there are often emergency situations. Our inventory is consistently taxed. Even with the wonderful support Medisend receives, we are always in need."

To learn more about Medisend International, go to www.medisend.org. To donate, contact Tauane Araujo at (214) 575-5006, extension 139. 

Editor's Note: *Medisend International is supported by the Health Industry Group Purchasing Association and a number of its members, and was scheduled to exhibit at the 2009 HIGPA International Expo, Oct. 21-23, 2009, in Washington D.C. The author, Lou Ann York is president of Lou Ann Robins York Public Relations.*