A 7.0 earthquake devastated Haiti on January 12, 2010 and over 200,000 inhabitants perished. The Pan-American Association of Ophthalmology (PAAO) held an emergency executive meeting to organize support for the Haitian ophthalmologists. Cristian Luco MD, President of the PAAO and Nelson Marques, Chairman of the Board of the Pan-American Ophthalmological Foundation (PAOF), pledged $10,000 to begin a fund raising campaign to help the ophthalmologists in Haiti. Natalio Izquierdo MD, of Puerto Rico, was nominated project chair for the Pan-American Haiti Relief Project.

An appeal was made to national societies and individuals alike. The first national society to answer the call was the Ophthalmological Society of the West Indies. Other supranational, national and subspecialty organizations have donated generously to the Pan-American Haiti Relief Fund, such as the International Council of Ophthalmology, the European Society of Ophthalmology, ALACCSA, the Colombian Society of Ophthalmology, the Peruvian Society of Ophthalmology, the Salvadorian Association of Ophthalmology and the Swedish Society of Ophthalmology. Since then, dozens of ophthalmologists and other individuals have generously donated from around the world.

Under the guidance of Michael W. Brennan, MD, PAAO Vice President, and Dr. Izquierdo, the Pan-American has sent food, water and equipment. They collaborated with the Dominican Society of Ophthalmology to help get the food and water across the border. Mr. Marques has been working closely with international industry that have provided eye drops and equipment for the Haitian ophthalmologists.

The Pan-American has developed a partnership project to work with the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Bascom Palmer Eye Institute to continue sending support and aid to the Haitian Society of Ophthalmology. If you would like to volunteer your services or time, please contact the American Academy’s website registry at http://www.aao.org/haiti/haiti-volunteer-registry.cfm. The Volunteer Registry is intended to coordinate the deployment of ophthalmologists willing to volunteer with federal and private sector response organizations to respond to the Haiti earthquake and its aftermath.

Please do not forget about our colleagues in Haiti. Media coverage is ending but the need has not. 100% of your donation will be dedicated to the Pan-American Haiti Relief Project. We still need more donations! For more information http://www.paaao.org/donateforhaiti.html.

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