

# Internationally

## Minded

### HOW IS THE COLLEGE ASSESSING AND AIDING RADIOLOGY ABROAD?

By Alyssa Martino

**T**he challenge that Helmut Diefenthal, M.D., Ph.D., from the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center in Moshi, Tanzania, posed to the ACR was not an easy one. Expanding the College's international outreach efforts would require resources, time, and careful planning.

Thankfully, these obstacles didn't prevent Diefenthal from issuing a call to action when accepting his honorary ACR fellowship in 2003. In the past seven years, his words have inspired many of the College's members to give back to radiology facilities abroad.

After James P. Borgstede, M.D., FACR, from Colorado Springs, Colo., became chair of the ACR Board of Chancellors (BOC) in 2004, international outreach became a priority. Now, with support from current BOC Chair John A. Patti, M.D., FACR, from Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, members are involved in myriad service projects around the globe. Still, the greatest obstacle ahead may be discovering how to best fulfill the immediate needs of communities in the developing world.



James P. Borgstede, M.D., FACR, currently chairs the International Outreach Committee.



Brad Short, ACR senior director of member services, helped oversee a needs assessment survey of 175 radiology facilities abroad.



As current BOC chair, John A. Patti, M.D., FACR, is leading the College's increasing commitment to radiology in developing countries.



With a dedication to radiology abroad, Barry B. Goldberg, M.D., FACR, hopes to donate ultrasound units to Port-au-Prince hospitals in Haiti.

## Surveying the Specialty

To determine the gaps in radiologic equipment and training around the world, the ACR sent a “needs assessment” survey to 175 radiology facilities in 73 countries. This effort was spearheaded in early 2010 by the ACR Foundation’s International Outreach Committee, along with ACR Senior Director of Member Services Brad Short

and Member Services Associate Virginia Dawson.

“The work of the ACR Foundation International Outreach Committee is vital to establishing the ACR’s position as a world-leading radiology organization,” says Patti. (For more on Patti’s vision, as well as the announcement of a new Commission on International Relations, see “From the Chair” on page 2.)

The survey was sent, both electronically and via mail, to countries on a list obtained from the former Radiology Outreach Foundation, whose resources were obtained by the ACR Foundation in 2008. “The form asks basic questions about how sophisticated and mature imaging is in the areas requesting assistance,” adds Borgstede, who chairs the International Outreach Committee.

## LAUNCHING INTO ACTION

In this Q&A, trailblazers in radiology, such as William M. Marks, M.D., FACR, from RADIA in Everett, Wash., and Robert D. Harris, M.D., M.P.H., FACR, from Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H., share their international accomplishments and offer tips on how to start your own outreach adventure.

**Q:** *What international outreach activities are you currently involved in?*

**Marks:** I’ve been helping donate portable ultrasound machines to small villages in Tanzania, Kenya, and Mali. I’ve also been training nonphysicians in those countries to use the machines to examine pregnant women in the villages to determine if they need to deliver in a hospital.

**Harris:** In 2009, I went to Sierra Leone and donated a compact ultrasound machine. While I was there, I trained some physicians in ultrasound.

**Q:** *Why do you volunteer your time?*

**Harris:** It’s a chance to give back to the world and make a little difference for those who don’t have sophisticated medical care.

**Q:** *How can radiologists interested in volunteering internationally get started?*

**Marks:** Investigate areas of need but wait to select a geographic location until you find an activity and area that speak to you. You can use ACRIVS and research the many nonprofit [organizations] that are devoted to international aid.



In Sierra Leone, Robert D. Harris, M.D., M.P.H., FACR, scans a patient while a translator observes.

Courtesy Robert Harris



In Yalla, Kenya, William M. Marks, M.D., FACR, demonstrates the use of ultrasound on a doll.

Courtesy William Marks

The questions will help determine the number and quality of equipment, educational resources and training efforts, infrastructure capability (including computer hardware, software, and Internet access), and personnel dedicated to radiology, as well as any ongoing volunteer efforts or needs. “What we’re eventually going to do is develop a profile for each facility that contains what their needs are in very specific terms,” explains Short.

Additionally, a request form was included with each mailing, which will allow the facilities to ask for learning materials donated by the ACR, RSNA, or the Education Symposium Inc. So far, more than 40 surveys have been returned.

“In each country, there’s a different health system and varying diseases,” explains Barry B. Goldberg, M.D., FACR, from Thomas Jefferson Hospital in Philadelphia, who is an active committee member. “The worst thing to do is go into a country without first assessing what they have and need,” he continues. “It’d be like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.”

### Strategic Planning in Haiti

One way the committee is putting this information to use and exploring specific radiologic needs abroad is through the 2010 ACR Haiti Relief Fund. Since the fund’s creation, the ACR has raised more than \$12,000 to help rebuild radiologic services in Haiti. (See “The Value of Viral,” July/August 2010 *ACR Bulletin*.) “We have been able to make connections with appropriate organizations and evaluate needs where imaging can play an important role in recovery efforts,” explains Goldberg.

However, more work remains, and assessing Haiti’s overall needs will play an important role in this process. Short and several committee members plan to travel to Haiti in early winter of 2011 so they can make informed decisions about how to help General Hospital and Grace Children’s Hospital in Port-au-Prince.

Before the trip, Short hopes to secure a portable X-ray unit for the hospital from a vendor or member’s practice. Goldberg

is also president of the Global Ultrasound Equipment Donation Foundation, a nonprofit organization that plans to send one ultrasound unit to each of the Port-au-Prince hospitals.

Looking ahead, the committee also would like to provide surge protectors, voltage regulators, and, hopefully, at some point, a digital X-ray unit. If you would like to contribute any equipment, please contact Short at [bshort@acr.org](mailto:bshort@acr.org).

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**— Barry B. Goldberg, M.D., FACR**

Members also plan to establish a strategic three- to five-year plan to assist in training radiologists and supporting radiographers, sonographers, and attending physicians in Haiti. These long-term efforts will likely include more on-the-ground training, and, potentially, the construction of an education center in Port-au-Prince to enhance instruction for Haitian radiologists.

“From the leadership standpoint, this is the first time the ACR has really done anything like this,” emphasizes Short.

### Dedication to Service

With new projects like the Haiti Relief Fund, the College’s involvement in international service is growing and evolving. Short shares that applications for the Goldberg-Reeder Travel Grant, which provides \$1,500 for two residents to volunteer in a developing country for one month, have been steadily increasing since the program’s introduction in 2008. “I think the program’s success is largely

due to our ability to get the word out there,” he notes.

Those interested in applying for the grant should visit the ACR International Volunteer System (ACRIVS) website (<https://internationalservice.acr.org>). The site provides a streamlined way for members to search for volunteer opportunities, as well as donate equipment or educational materials. The ACRIVS newsletter, *Interlink*, has been valuable



in promoting other efforts, such as the ACR/RSNA Iraqi-Observership program (see “Growing Global Ties,” September 2010 *ACR Bulletin*). And if you’re looking for inspiration to get involved, see the sidebar, “Launching Into Action.”

Another reason the ACR’s service efforts have been successful is the willingness among the community — from other radiology organizations, such as RSNA and the Society of Radiologists in Ultrasound, to nonprofit groups like RAD-AID International — to publicize these opportunities. “The international radiology community is collaborating more each year, and the value ACR can add to that collaboration is enormous,” explains Patti.

“It’s a very collegial effort,” adds Borgstede. “There are no turf or territorial distinctions here. The only real goal is to help patients overseas through imaging.” With this positive attitude and a continuing dedication to international service, the College is undoubtedly living up to Diefenthal’s original challenge. //