

Guatemala
April 7, 2008

Global Links' seventh container of the year is off to rural western Guatemala, where it will benefit a 90-bed hospital and two nearby health centers in the department of Totonicapán.

One of the health centers, which is about an hour and a half from the nearest hospital, is in Momostenango, which the Guatemalan Ministry of Health identified as a critical municipality in which to focus on improving maternal care. Momostenango has a population of approximately 113,000, which is 98% indigenous, and had 10 maternal deaths last year. PAHO built a maternity clinic beside the health center, and incorporated aspects of indigenous culture and traditional medicine to make it more inviting to local women, such as building a temazcal, a traditional sauna bath for after delivery. The Ministry has contracted with four doctors who will work in the maternity clinic, but they are still in need of furnishings and other items to make the clinic fully functional.

On this shipment, Global Links was able to include a Steris Converge gurney (which is specifically for ob-gyn purposes), 4 manual crank beds for pre- and post-partum, some overbed tables, IV poles, gynecological exam tables, and a refrigerator to properly store vaccines. They will also receive 132 boxes of medical supplies.

One of the top priorities for the hospital of Totonicapán was to improve their operating rooms. This hospital performs around 2,000 surgeries a month and has seven surgeons on staff. Global Links was able to include four sets of Amsco Polaris O.R. lights to equip their four operating rooms, which did not have functioning lights during the assessment visit. They will also receive an operating room table to replace one of their

tables that no longer moved up or down or properly changed positions. The new table will allow them to perform safer surgeries. Additionally, they will receive a box of suture which includes many sutures specific to orthopedic surgeries, a particular need they indicated.

Both the Guatemalan PAHO office and the Guatemalan Ministry of Health have written to Program Officer Patti Skillin to say how pleased they are with our growing relationship and how quickly and efficiently we work. We hope to send four more containers to Guatemala later this year.