

LIVES SAVED IN ASE FOUNDATION MISSION TO ARGENTINA

Philips Ultrasound Provides Support of its Ultrasound Systems

Morrisville, NC, August 27, 2015 – A small hand clutched her mother's for the four-hour transport to remove fluid from around her heart at the hospital in Salta, Argentina – a long way from her family's home on the Pilcomayo River, both geographically and culturally. After this first day of patient outreach to the indigenous communities living in the Chaco jungle near Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay, the word that this life-saving treatment had been successful was profoundly moving to the volunteers assembled together in Tartagal, Argentina. These medical workers gathered, August 9-14, 2015, to give their time and expertise light years away from their normal practices in primarily academic medical centers in the U.S. and South America. Thus energized, this humanitarian mission involving more than 30 volunteer sonographers and physicians from the U.S., Argentina, and Brazil, eventually served 653 patients. This event was jointly planned and executed by the American Society of Echocardiography Foundation (ASEF) and the Argentina Federation of Cardiology (FAC). Philips Ultrasound was chosen as the partner for the mission because of its comprehensive and sophisticated echocardiography solutions and its wide presence in South America.

Many of the patients came from up to 50 miles away to receive treatment. And, due to their remote location in Chaco, this outreach was the first time that most of these patients had seen a doctor. The event was a success in many ways, not the least of which was saving lives, but also providing dignified care to this underserved population. The Wichi, Guaraní, Toba, Chorote, Tapiete, Chane, and Chulupi ethnic groups receive visits from healthcare agents, who are part of these communities and are trained for basic health services. But access to high tech medical resources and technology is limited; as a result, their ability to reach a diagnosis and treatment for cardiovascular disease is very poor. Roberto M. Lang, MD, FASE, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, who volunteered for this mission and is a global expert in 3D interpretation, noted that having high-end ultrasound equipment - which included EpiQ, Affiniti, HE3, and Sparq machines- enabled complex diagnoses by the medical team that ultimately saved lives. Beyond the equipment and its transport to the remote location near the Bolivian border, Philips and its South American distributor, Agimed, also provided invaluable onsite staffing to keep the equipment in premium condition for use by the medical team.

Outreach to these populations is rare due to the remote area and the reluctance of the ethnic groups to participate in mainstream activities. The ASEF's mission was thoughtfully planned well before the group of volunteers arrived in August. The outreach to this community began in September 2014, when representatives of ASEF and FAC had a preliminary meeting in Tartagal, Argentina with 27 leaders of the region's ethnic groups to test their level of acceptance for a medical event with their communities. In addition, the logistical possibilities for medical work were studied, as well as safety, transportation, and lodging options for the volunteers involved in the



medical tasks. Following enthusiastic support for the event by the leaders of the ethnic groups, and their promise to get the appropriate community members to the activity, planning began in earnest with the assistance of a cultural anthropologist, Leda Kantor, who has had the distinction of working with these ethnic groups for 25+ years, and under the leadership of Dr. Lang, Ricardo E. Ronderos, MD, PhD, FASE, Instituto de Cardiologia, La Plata, Argentina, and Federico M. Asch, MD, FASE, MedStar/Washington Hospital Center, Washington, DC.

"On behalf of everyone involved with the ASE Education and Research Foundation, we thank the Philips team and all the volunteers for their generous support for ASEF's mission which allowed us to provide world-class care and positively impact the lives of so many individuals," said Susan Wieggers, MD, FASE, Temple University School of Medicine's Senior Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs, and President of the ASE. "This mission allowed us to spotlight the versatility and adaptability of cardiovascular ultrasound, while working side by side with our South American counterparts and members to improve patient care worldwide."

Dr. Asch, summed up the mission experience eloquently, "we went in looking for hearts in trouble...we found friends and hearts full of love."

As the largest global organization for cardiovascular ultrasound imaging, the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) is the leader and advocate, setting practice standards and guidelines. Comprised of more than 16,000 physicians, sonographers, nurses, and scientists, ASE is a strong voice providing guidance, expertise, and education to its members. The Society has a commitment to improving the practice of ultrasound and imaging of the heart and cardiovascular system for better patient outcomes. For more information about ASE, visit www.asecho.org or for the ASE Foundation, visit www.asefoundation.org.

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