



For a [WEB EXTRA](#) with links to a photo gallery and more on the Haiti response, see dartmed.dartmouth.edu/sp10/we06.

LEFT: JAMES GEILING / RIGHT: JOSEPH MEHLING

On the left, DHMC nurses Carol Rittenhouse (left) and Jennifer Clark (right) tend to an injured Haitian in Port-au-Prince. At right, Dartmouth nephrologist Brian Remillard prepares to take off for Haiti, on a plane packed with donated medical supplies.

Dartmouth commits to the earthquake relief effort in Haiti

Dr. James Geiling knows more than most people about responding to disasters. Even so, as he prepared to lead a team of Dartmouth medical personnel to help out in earthquake-ravaged Haiti in mid-January, he was apprehensive.

Wounds: More than eight years after coordinating the emergency response at the Pentagon following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the former Army colonel wondered how well his team of eight nurses would handle what they'd soon face: tens of thousands of dead and hundreds of thousands more struggling to survive broken bones, emotional wounds, and shortages of food, water, and sanitation.

Geiling soon put his qualms to rest. A total of 25 Dartmouth clinicians on three separate teams provided thousands of treatments on the ground in Haiti, while students, faculty, and staff back home donated hundreds of thousands of dollars

and sent more than 18 tons of emergency supplies.

"For an organization that is not operational by design, Dartmouth did an amazing job," says Geiling, an associate professor of medicine. "Although we were at the tip of the spear in Port-au-Prince, it was our families who supported us, coworkers who covered for us, leaders who backed us, and [people in the Emergency Operations Center] who made it happen."

Teams: "It" started happening on January 14, the day Dartmouth's president, Dr. Jim Yong Kim, called together DMS and DHMC leaders. He asked them to assemble medical teams to work with his former colleagues at Partners in Health (PIH), a nonprofit group whose staff and facilities in rural Haiti mostly withstood the earthquake.

"I'd like you to carry the Dartmouth flag here," the president

told the gathering. "We'll get you in and get people working right away."

Less than 48 hours after the president's call to action, a team of nine volunteers under the leadership of Dr. Rajan Gupta, a trauma surgeon, was flying out of the Lebanon, N.H., airport, with nearly a ton of supplies.

On January 19, the nurses led by Geiling flew south with more supplies and expertise. (Dartmouth alumni and parents donated most of the flights that carried Dartmouth volunteers and supplies to Haiti.)

Following them over the ensuing weeks were Dr. Brian Remillard, a kidney specialist, and Dr. Peter Wright, an infectious-disease specialist and pediatrician with decades of experience in Haiti.

Response: "I am so impressed with the DMS/DHMC/VA/DC response," Dr. Joseph O'Donnell,

DMS's director of community programs, wrote a week into the effort. "This tragedy is bringing out the best in people."

A number of as-yet-uncounted alumni helped out, too. Dr. Dan Kairys, DMS '97, a surgeon in Florida, labored at a triage center in Port-au-Prince. Dr. Scott Early, DMS '86, left his family practice in Lawrence, Mass., for the northern Haiti city of Milot. And Dr. Jon Keeve, DMS '81, an orthopaedic surgeon in Spokane, Wash., volunteered on the Navy medical-relief vessel *Comfort*.

Relief: On the home front, the student-led DMS Committee for Haitian Relief collected and packed medical supplies and beat the fund-raising drums. Through the third week of February, Dartmouth officials estimated support in money, supplies, and relief flights at more than \$1 million—nearly \$200,000 of which was raised for PIH by the undergraduate-led Students at Dartmouth for Haiti Relief.

Wrapping up the first wave of relief efforts, a five-member team of Dartmouth-Hitchcock specialists in rehabilitation medicine provided physical and occupational therapy for earthquake survivors, among whom are many amputees.

The group also assessed long-term needs in Haiti. "You really cannot rebuild," says DHMC nurse-anesthetist Michael Hawkins. "You have to create a new environment. Nobody can do this alone. It's not something we can think in terms of a six-month or nine-month effort."

DAVID CORRIVEAU