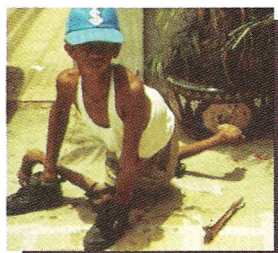


# Teamwork



## Aids Professional Growth; Benefits Patients in Third World...continued from page 1

In no other context is the failure of the clinical team to function more critical than in undeveloped nations. Too often lack of a clinical infrastructure, let alone health care in any form, leaves practitioners of all specialties with little option but to function blindly in providing services. The provision of orthotic and prosthetic care, independent of other clinical specialties, is grossly limited in its capacity to completely rehabilitate patients in the vacuum of the Third World. Any effort to build and promote a competent orthotic and prosthetic program must then, by definition, encourage and sponsor other clinical team specialties for the general and rehabilitative welfare of patients. An opportunity for the orthotist-prosthetist to serve as the initiator of the clinical team becomes available in this context. Even in Western and other developed nations, the private practitioner is often in a position to pull other specialties together in the formation of clinics surrounding his or her practice. This elevates the position of the practitioner on the clinical team, and positively affects the direction and level of all services provided.

The Hanger Orthopedic Group has long been committed to a balanced, ethical and complete form of rehabilitation in overseas endeavors. For many years it has supported Rehabilitation Engineering, Inc. in Tallahassee, Florida and its Adopt-A-Village Missions program. What REI began as an orthotic/prosthetic initiative has expanded into a full component medical clinic offering primary medical care to villagers and their children. Interest in this concept is expanding throughout the State of Florida with other communities participating in the support of the Adopt-A-Village project.

In September of this year, a medical-rehabilitation team will evaluate three separate regions of Haiti. The team will include therapists interested in developing an "Adopt-A-Village" model for physical and occupational therapy in developing nations. Representatives of the Florida Governor's office will investigate the feasibility of a manufacturing incentive linked to a primitive health care system for its workers. This link between economic development and humanitarian relief represents an innovative approach to "building in" sustainability of the Adopt-A-Village concept.



From April 29 through May 14 an evaluation team sponsored by Rehabilitation Engineering, Inc. toured Hanoi, Vietnam and Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The development of a humanitarian program related to orthotics, prosthetics, medical equipment, and supplies was investigated. The clinical team approach was expanded to include a broad range of professional skills that relate indirectly to health care.

Professor Robert Bledsoe, Chairman of the Political Science Department at the University of Central Florida, was included to research computer links offering Internet capabilities to the Hanoi

Medical College and area hospitals. The need to expand medical libraries is critical, but the cost of procuring and shipping books, journals and other library hardware is prohibitive. The use of computers affords developing nations an opportunity to sidestep traditional library development. Professor Bledsoe represented the Florida university system toward assessing educational links to update information available to Vietnam in critical areas of medicine and rehabilitation.



Dr. David Kahn (family practice), Dr. Meredith McKinney (plastic surgery) and Madonna Elliott (attorney) represented COSHARE: Collection of Surgical, Health and Rehabilitation Equipment. COSHARE seeks to encourage a new direction for humanitarian policy initiatives. The notion of community-to-community, or person-to-person, aid is not new. However, the potential for a community-to-community link in terms of guaranteeing accountability and effectiveness cannot be overstated.

COSHARE is a not-for-profit organization that seeks to link the medical and rehabilitation community of Tallahassee with cities like Hanoi and Phnom Penh. Unused medical supplies and equipment are transported to appropriate hospitals and clinics free of charge. COSHARE insists on accuracy in determining what supplies are appropriate. It also stresses accountability regarding how supplies are delivered and utilized by indigenous medical and rehabilitation professionals. The COSHARE team transported approximately \$30,000 of specifically requested supplies in trunks via the airlines. This represented a small percentage of the amount in the warehouses presently filled with supplies in Tallahassee. All supplies are donated free of charge.

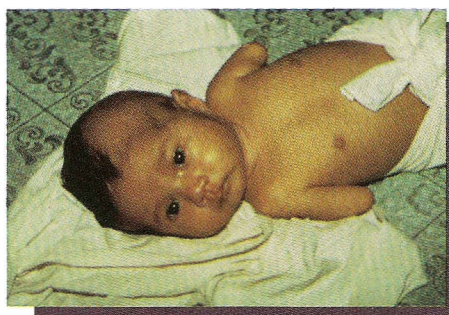
A representative from the State of Florida investigated possible collaboration between Enterprise Florida and the business community of Hanoi. Once again, this proposition was developed through the clinical team model. To the extent that business and logistical concerns can be developed, the potential for sustainability of all aspects of medicine and rehabilitation will be sponsored and maintained. State Deputy Comptroller Tom McGurk researched the availability of government or Air Force transport of medical supplies. Certainly Denton Amendment shipping (offers space available movement for approved privately

donated cargo on U.S. military transport to foreign countries at no cost to the donor) remains a possibility; however, other more direct means of transport are being investigated to ensure in-date delivery of pharmaceuticals. In addition, Mr. McGurk represents an initiative sponsored by Florida State Representative Janegale Boyd, who has worked with COSHARE representatives in Asia. She has secured a donation of computers by the State of Florida that can be used to further develop Hanoi's Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program—an effort to link rural areas with urban medical centers throughout the country.

The success of our April/May team visit was a great encouragement to team members. This represented our ninth initiative to Hanoi. The eagerness of Vietnamese physicians and professionals to work with us was evident.

The link between our two communities is promising in its scope.

In Phnom Penh, we met with members of Cambodian Trust (CT), a large English non-governmental organization (NGO) that provides orthotic and prosthetic services to land mine victims. Their approach is enlightened with regard to the need to include medical services along with orthotic/prosthetic rehabilitation. Cambodian Trust has agreed to act as a recipient for medical supplies shipped by COSHARE. Mr. Dudley Turner, Manager and Chief Prosthetist/Orthotist for CT, will direct them to appropriate clinics and insist on accountability. This will enable CT to better serve its orthotic and prosthetic patients and upgrade all rehabilitation services offered. In addition, the Hanger Orthopedic Group has agreed to promote a Paralympic team of (land mine) amputee runners for the 2000 Olympics. A solid tie between Hanger Orthopedic Group, COSHARE and Cambodian Trust was formed and represents the type of association needed between Western corporations, not-for-profit organizations and NGOs. A focus on cooperation and maximizing



continued on page 24

# Teamwork

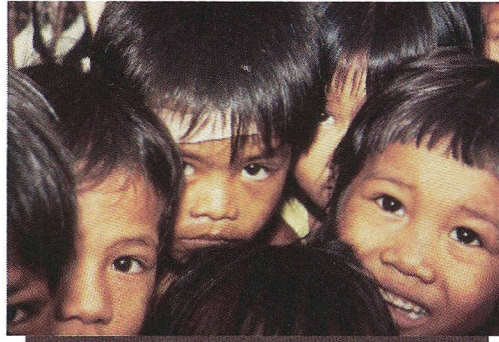
**Aids Professional Growth;  
Benefits Patients in Third World...**...continued from page 23



resources, rather than competition, will net healthy benefits for the people of Cambodia.

The Hanger Orthopedic Group remains steadfastly committed to continuing to sponsor cutting edge clinical programs in the United States and in developing nations. Often these require services beyond our scope as orthotists/prosthetists. It is in the creative capacity of clinical initiator and manager that we see our own profession growing into new dimensions. Unfortunately this coincides with the erosion of our services to other specialties on the clinical team.

The vacuum in which many rehabilitation programs operate in developing nations is an ideal environment in which O & P practitioners can exert expertise and elevate their positions on the clinical team. The orthotist/prosthetist is, after all, much more than a technician. To the extent that we focus our clinical capabilities on a holistic

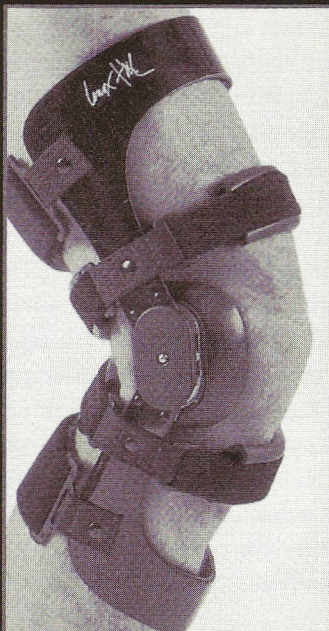


approach to serving patients, we simultaneously guarantee our position on the clinical team and usefulness within the context of the same. *Developing nations and programs within them afford the orthotist/prosthetist an ideal forum to illustrate professionalism, capability, dedication to the well-being of patients and an interest in community. These are attributes that build more positive relationships within our own practices, and increase the stature and professional esteem of practitioners within our field here at home.*

If you would be interested in sponsoring an Adopt-A-Village program in your community, or becoming involved with one of our ongoing COSHARE initiatives, please contact Jeff Fredrick at Rehabilitation Engineering, Inc., 1719 Mahan Drive, Tallahassee, Florida, 32308; (904) 878-1108; fax: (904) 656-6240.

## Lenox Hill Precision Lite

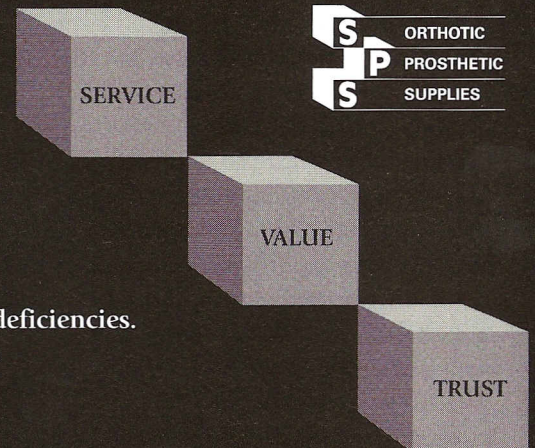
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