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Newsletter November 2025

We have just completed our eight Aid Via Action Short Mission Trip (8th AVASMT) since our organization was founded in April 2021. Our trajectory is now in an upward hyperbolic curve. I am proud to announce the following exciting news that took place during this the 8th AVASMT:

1. This was a record week for the number of cases we have ever been able to accomplish.
2. Our urology program continues to gain strength.
3. A surgery resident had a successful week during the 8th AVASMT.
4. We have started a pediatric surgery program.

THE TEAM FOR THE 8TH AVASMT



We again had my good friend Dr. Carol Kashefi who made the trip from Southern California to Guatemala, this marked Dr. Kashefi's third trip to HNSB. We also had Dr. Kolosseus from the Rio Grand Urology Group in Texas. This was Dr. Kolosseus second trip. We were fortunate to have a new urologist with us. Dr. Affan Zafar from my

home institution also came to help with the urology cases for this trip. In all, 11 urology cases were performed during the week with a wide degree of complexity.



We had two anesthesiologists and one CRNA that made a dream anesthesiology team. We performed cases under general, regional, and local anesthesia. We also had six pediatric cases. For this trip, we were entirely unassisted by the local anesthesiologists. The anesthesia team (as usual) was simply wonderful! Dr. Johnson was at HNSB for the 4th time. Dr. Johnson's experience with the site was pivotal for the entire group. Johana del Busto, a CRNA, from Miami participated for her second time, and as usual she constantly brought a wonderful smile to the entire group with her presence. Further, we had a new addition to our group, Dr. Denar Ovando Jr. participated in the 8th AVASMT. Dr. Ovando was a medical student that I had the privilege of mentoring at my home institution. He then completed a residency program in anesthesiology. He is currently in private practice in Texas. The addition of Dr. Ovando to our group

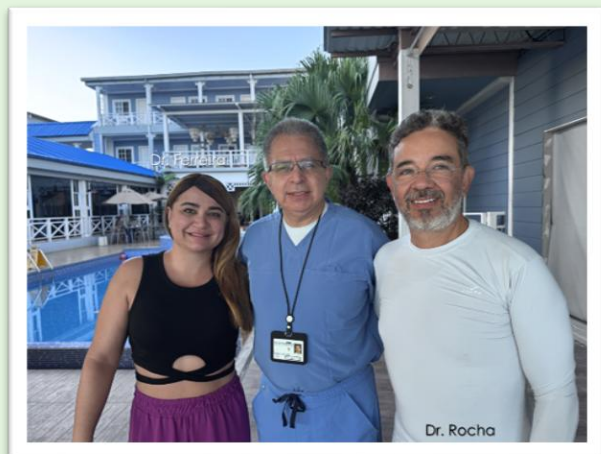
this time was phenomenal as we needed someone with experience delivering anesthesia to children. While the entire group could do it, Dr. Ovando had the most experience with this group, and he was up to the task.



Another anesthesiologist assisted (a local anesthesia provider) on this trip (S. Huerta).



My good friend Dr. Luis Rocha was again able to join us this time with his friend Dr. Joyce Ferreira all the way from Brazil. Dr. Rocha has been at HNSB three times



with AVA. He is the epitome of a general surgeon. In Brazil, he does just about any operation: parotid tumors, chest operations for trauma, pancreaticoduodenectomies, ventral wall reconstruction, some urology cases, and even some gynecology cases. He mirrored his practice in Brazil during this trip and assisted with several operations including a left colectomy for the management of a large bowel obstruction, likely from adenocarcinoma of the colon.

This year, I was also fortunate that Dr. Jenny Li (my wife) was able to join us. Jenny was busy with the urology team serving as an interpreter. Everyone was quick to mention that her Spanish was much better than mine.

THE CASES

	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday	Total
UROLOGY	4	3	0	4	11
Pediatric Cases	0	0	6	0	6
Inguinal Hernia	4	0	3	0	7
Lap Chole	3	2	2	0	7
Open Chole	1	4	0	0	5
Umbilical Hernia	2	0	3	0	5
Lipoma	0	1	0	0	1
Partial Mastectomy	0	1	0	0	1
Exploratory			1		1
Laparotomy	0	0	1	0	1
Open Appendectomy	0	0	1	0	1
Total					45

For this trip, we had a record of cases performed at HNSB on any of the mission trips since we started.

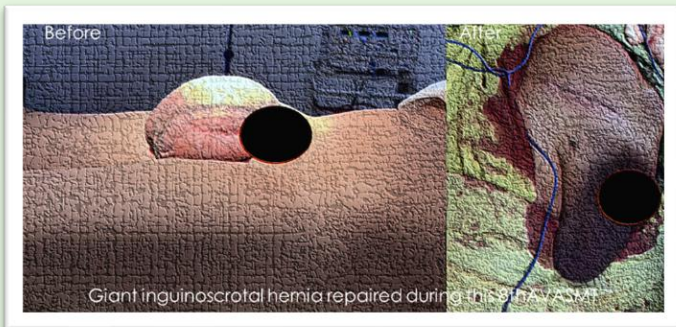
Jornada	Ing. Hernia	Lap Chole	Open Chole	UH	Ventral Hernia	Lipoma	Other	UROLOGY	PEDIATRIC	TOTAL
1 Jan-23	11	10	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	29
2 Nov-23	11	8	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	25
3 Jan-24	7	6	4	3	0	2	0	0	0	22
4 Jun-24	11	7	5	4	0	2	2	8	0	39
5 Nov-24	10	10	5	2	2	2	2	6	0	39
6 Jan-25	12	8	3	2	1	0	0	12	0	38
7 Jun-25	7	9	4	1	0	1	2	11	0	35
3 Nov-25	7	7	5	5	0	1	3	11	6	45
	76	65	37	18	3	10	9	48	6	272

Over the week, we were able to complete 45 cases in four days of operations. We were able to do six more cases than in the past.



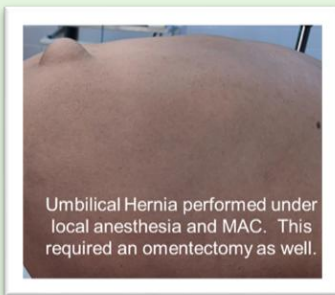
Cholecystectomies performed during a laparoscopic and an open approach

While six additional cases might seem trivial, we have increased the complexity of cases and started a unique pediatric surgery program as well. Amongst many difficult cases, there were two cholecystectomies that were highly complex. Two



Giant inguinoscrotal hernia repaired during this trip

giant inguinoscrotal hernias were also performed during this week. The turnover time of the cases from one to the other was about 10 minutes. Which made it possible to perform all these cases in only four days.



Umbilical Hernia performed under local anesthesia and MAC. This required an omentectomy as well.

THE UROLOGY PROGRAM

Our urology program continues to gain tremendous strength thanks to all the urologists who took time from their busy practice to come and volunteer with the group. Notably, for this mission trip, we were able to run two urology rooms simultaneously. This was possible by Chirs Cole who has been tremendously pivotal in this endeavor. For this trip, he brought a second generator for the hospital. The hospital now has two

laparoscopic towers and two generators. All of this equipment is now part of the urology program at HNSB. During this trip, Chris was unfortunately stopped at customs in Guatemala while bringing a generator. He was asked to pay \$300.00 to customs. He also missed his flight and had to stay in Guatemala an extra night as well as having to pay an extra fee for the flight change. Chris took it all in strides and simply said that it was worth it.

During this trip, Dr. Zafar was seeing a patient in Texas who was from Guatemala. His daughter lives in Dallas and was flying her father occasionally for urology care from Guatemala City to Dr. Zafar's practice in Texas. However, when it came down to surgical intervention, the patient's family expressed that the cost of the operation would be prohibitive. Coincidentally, Dr. Zafar was committed to come to Guatemala during this trip, and we arranged for the family to come to El Peten such that Dr. Zafar could perform the operation at HNSB. He had an uneventful operation under Dr. Zafar's care.



Chris Cole

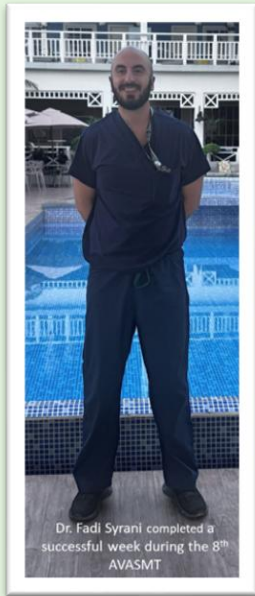
In total, eleven urology procedures were performed during this trip. In one case, an octogenarian patient presented with urinary obstruction. During cystoscopy, multiple stones were identified. Thus, an open cystostomy was performed to extract the stones.



All these stones were extracted from the same patient who presented with urinary obstruction

RESIDENT JOINING THE 8TH AVASMT

During this trip, we were all very happy to welcome a third-year surgery resident joining us to assist with this mission. Dr. Fadi Syrani was a busy surgeon operating both at HNSB and assisting the busy surgeons in private practice. Such that he was able to complete 21 cases in three days.



Dr. Fadi commented that he had performed two open cholecystectomies during his entire residency program. In three days during this trip, he performed six open cholecystectomies. He also assisted with six pediatric surgery cases and even a parotidectomy in private practice.

Everyone was very happy to work with Dr. Syrani as he added an excellent component of tremendous energy to the group. His presence for the 8th AVASMT is pivotal to the educational goals of the organization. Our entire board of directors was very happy to learn about his participation and the successful week. Our board of directors was also pleased to learn that another resident (Dr. Jonathan Allotey) will be joining the group in the upcoming 9th AVASMT in January.

Cases performed by Dr. Syrani during the 8 th AVASMT		Monday	Tuesday	Thursday
HNSB	Inguinal Hernia	4	0	0
	Umbilical Hernia	1	0	1
	Open Chole	1	4	0
	Pediatric Cases	0	0	6
	Total at HNSB	6	4	7
Private practice	Open Chole	1	0	0
	Lap Chole	1	0	0
	Parotid	0	0	1
	Lap Appy	0	0	1
	Total in PP	2	0	2
Total	8	4	9	
ALL			21	

It was not only work. Dr. Syrani swam 250 meters (0.15 miles) in the magnificent Peten Itza

lake. The next day, along with the entire group, Dr. Syrani visited the amazingly beautiful Maya ruins of Tikal. No one should ever come to Flores and not visit this breathtaking site. Tikal is 30 miles from Flores, which is a distance that I typically run in the morning while the group gets ready for breakfast in the morning at the La Casona del Lago hotel and travels with a tour guide for all to Tikal. Of all the ancient ruins including Monte Alban (Oaxaca, Mexico), Machu Picchu (Peru) and Masada (Israel), Tikal remains one of my favorite sites.



THE BEGINNING OF A PEDIATRIC SURGERY PROGRAM

During the first symposium of surgery and anesthesia in El Peten, I was fortunate to meet Dr. Raul Sosa. Dr. Sosa is a pediatric surgeon from Guatemala City. Once he learned about AVA, he immediately asked to be part of the mission. We remained in touch during the year, and he expressed his interest in joining the 8th AVASMT. Thus, Dr. Ortiz had a few pediatric cases for him. Further, Dr. Sosa is a well-known and respected pediatric surgeon in Guatemala. He receives many consultations from all pediatricians in the country. Thus, when the pediatricians of El Peten learned that Dr. Sosa was coming to HNSB, they were equally enthusiastic about the pediatric surgery program and referred a few complex cases to the hospital, which Dr. Ortiz quickly accommodated.

This concept of pediatric surgeons and pediatricians becoming involved with the AVA's

mission is at the core of the vision of our organization in global health. We can only be successful when the community becomes engaged.



Drs. Raul Sosa [(Left) Pediatric Surgeon, Guatemala City] and Cesar Ortiz [(Right) General Director HNSB]

We have shown now that with pediatric surgery; this is not only a vision but a reality that has started to take place. This is also a vision that we hope to accomplish with the urology program.

In one day, Dr. Sosa performed six cases, in which he was assisted by our resident Dr. Syrani. As Dr. Syrani has expressed an interest in pursuing a pediatric surgery fellowship, he was extremely excited to assist Dr. Sosa with these cases.

Inguinal Hernia	1
Orchiopexy	2
Circumcision	2
EUA for Rectal Prolapse	1
Total	6

Drs. Sosa and Syrani also explored the idea for Dr. Syrani to perform pediatric surgery cases in Guatemala City for a month. This will have to occur when Dr. Syrani has time from his busy schedule in his general surgery residency program. While a great deal of logistics will need to be implemented for this to occur, these initial talks are very promising in the commitment of the local surgeons

in the bidirectional educational goals of one of the core mission of AVA.



An orchiopexy performed by Dr. Sosa During this trip.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Dr. Ortiz and I start working on these SMTs a few months prior to the event. But we could not do any of this without a tremendous number of individuals that work very hard to make this possible. I am extremely thankful to the AVA Board of Directors.



I am especially thankful to Lic. Caleb Rodriguez, who works extremely hard to ensure that all AVA members have adequate transportation, are properly fed and that all the little details of the trip go according to plan.



Lic. Caleb Rodriguez

I have known Dr. Anny Ochoa for over a decade. She has always been magnificent helping me with anything I need in Guatemala. Before AVA was formed, she was pivotal in helping me with medical students visiting HSNB. For the AVASMTs, she initially reviews all the charts prior to our arrival, she then volunteers to perform cases at HNSB during the week. Dr. Ochoa and her family are family to us in Guatemala.



Dr. Anny Ochoa with her husband Dr. Rudy Cardona and her two kids Marco (left) and Andy (right)

We could not do this without the support of the local surgeons and for this Drs. Quinonez and Corzo were extraordinary help. They are also the ones that provide adequate follow up to all the patients including urology. Additionally, we had the assistance of Dr. Karina Mazariegos who performed several operations with me.

We also had an excellent set of medical students who assisted in the operating room and helped write notes and oriented AVA members to the logistics of the hospital. They were also helpful



Medical students from three different medical schools in El Peten. I delivered to talks to them and they did fantastically well.

in the urology room, changing fluids and helping with all patient-related activities.

We continue to make history in El Petén. This AVASMT was no exception. The ability to run two urology rooms simultaneously, the start of a pediatric surgery program, and the participation of a resident who successfully completed 21 cases made this trip especially memorable.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Once again, for this trip, there was also a press conference that we held on Sunday prior orientation. We had four members of the press who had an opportunity to ask questions. Most of the questions centered on issues related to letting patients know about our participation in the mission trips. AVA is familiar with members of the press and most of them know about what we have been doing during the past three years with each mission trip. They have been aware of the urology program that was initiated at the hospital.



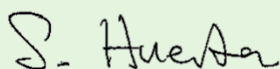
However, during this press conference, I was interested in inquiring from the press about their knowledge of the impact that AVA has had in the community, in the country, and overall. I was humbled by the responses. A few of them went back to a presentation that I had for them indicating the number of operations that we had performed since we initiated the AVA trips. They said, without hesitation, that these were lives saved. That these were patients who were able to go back to work or enjoy their lives. One of them mentioned that he

had an operation at the hospital and indicated how pivotal AVA has been in helping the infrastructure of El Petén, and of HNSB.

There is a palpable sense that Aid Via Action Inc. continues to generate an exponential presence in Guatemala. This is not by coincidence nor by accident. There are a tremendous number of people who work very hard to make this a success. I am extremely grateful to all who contribute to continue to make this a tremendous success.

I am extremely grateful to all the people of Guatemala. I think Dr. Ortiz and I are doing something positive, but we could not possibly do this alone.

THANK YOU ALL!



Sergio Huerta, M.D., F.A.C.S., HEC-C
Aid Via Action Inc.
President & CEO

We are grateful to all our Donors for the 3rd Annual AVA 5K run. We had a great number of participants, and our donors made a magnificent difference:

- **Uzziel Valdiviezo** with Personal Connection Realty Group
- **Jujala Sundeep** with the Dallas Renal Group
- **Lynn Dental**
- **Tom Brashear** with Preston Capital Management
- **Dyan Tarepe** with Medical Sphere Hive
- **Felicia Jones** with Massage Envy
- **Barry Rosen** with Little Greek Fesh Grill
- **Jenniffer Mathwig** with First City Grill Preston Hollow
- **Rebecca Hilton** with Shake Shack
- **Tana Hunter** with People Newspapers
- **Jessica Jenkins** with Campisi's Restaurants
- **Stephanie Crites** with Rex's Seafood and Market and Taquera La Ventana

Our 4th Annual AVA 5K run will take place Saturday September 19, 2026 @ 8:00 am at Bachman Lake. Registration for the race is already open.

[Please register](#)

I will see you all there!

4th Annual AVA 5K.

[Register HERE](#)

