

## FORWARD IN HEALTH – RESTORING HEALTH AND DIGNITY IN HAITI

*“The poverty and need in Haiti is astounding. While Forward in Health has led medical missions to Les Cayes, Haiti for seven years; and while we bring medicines and medical supplies for pediatric clinics and for a home for the elderly; and while we provide treatment to the poor, our few weeks each year don’t even begin to impact the profound need there. What’s needed is a permanent solution and our answer is to build a medical clinic - one that will provide ongoing services to 15,000 of Haiti’s poorest. That’s Forward in Health’s new goal.” Dr. John Mulqueen*

### I. THE CLINIC – FORWARD IN HEALTH’S REASONING

For seven years, Dr. John Mulqueen and Forward in Health have been hosting annual missions to Haiti. They’ve provided health care to the poor in a community that has limited to no local access to medical care. They’ve brought medicine, basic medical supplies and for a nursing home. Volunteers have held and comforted orphans that might not be held otherwise, they’ve sanded and refinished beds for nursing homes and they’ve made lasting relationships with residents. However, those visits, which provide some relief for a short period of time, are makeshift at best. **The decision to build a clinic is to provide a permanent medical presence to a community that does not have any medical care, clean drinking water or preventive health education.**

- The clinic will be situated on four acres of land and will have a total of 20 rooms in close to 10,000 square feet of space. It will house pediatric and prenatal clinics and a general adult screening facility. Construction began in November 2007.
- The first floor, 5,460 square feet, will have three exam rooms for doctors; a nurses’ station, lab, radiology, pharmacy and conference/education rooms
- The second floor, with 4,260 square feet, will include a kitchen, director’s suite and 7 rooms which will accommodate sleeping for 16 guests
- It will have a well to provide clean drinking water to residents
- Building costs-\$350,000
- Will provide services for 15,000 Haitians

**The benefits, Dr. Mulqueen believes, will be dramatic.** The clinic will provide much needed education on food preparation to prevent food-borne illnesses, it will provide clean water for residents; it will provide day-to-day medical services and improve the poverty level of residents. The clinic will eventually be staffed entirely by Haitians and is expected to bring commerce to the area thus improving economic conditions. One important medical service is to interrupt the transmission of the HIV virus to newborns by providing prenatal care to expectant mothers that includes screening for the virus. This one program alone protects a new generation from HIV and AIDS which is so prevalent in Haiti today.

*The Clinic-Forward in Health’s Reasoning continued*

### II. BUILDING THE DREAM

Building costs are projected at \$350,000 and the fundraising effort is managed totally by volunteers. They are making slow but steady progress toward their goal. Naming rights are being offered to businesses and individuals that donate \$5,000 and more. To-date Fusaro, Altomare & Ermilio, a Worcester law firm has donated \$9,000 to purchase the land; Family Pharmacies-with

businesses in five local communities, the McCaie family, owners of Superior Kitchen Design in Gardner and Dr. & Mrs. Skrzypczak have donated \$5,000 each. Gerry McGuire, a software engineer and board member, created the initial design and TRO Jung Brannen, a prominent Boston designer of hospitals, has donated the final design.

It's hard not to get caught up with Dr. Mulqueen and the board of director's excitement and determination to build the clinic; fundraising activities have accelerated in the hopes that they can break ground before year's end.

### **III. FORWARD IN HEALTH - A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Forward in Health is a nonprofit volunteer organization. Headed by Dr. John Mulqueen its mission is to "improve the health conditions and dignity of the people around Les Cayes, Haiti."

The origins of the organization go back seven years as a result of a visit to Haiti by Sister Theresita from the Diocese of Worcester's Haitian Apostolate. Dr. Mulqueen and volunteers first visited Les Cayes to provide medical care that year. When the Haitian Apostolate subsequently changed its mission several years ago, Dr. Mulqueen and Paula Mulqueen, his wife, took up the cause and changed its name to Forward in Health. The organization's Board of Directors includes:

John Mulqueen, MD - President  
John Altomare, Esquire - Treasurer  
Edward Blanchard  
Lori Butler, RN  
Wes Daniels, Esquire  
John Gardella  
Michael Gaudet, MD  
John Harrington, MD – Chairman of the Medical Committee  
Lois Kolofsky  
Gerry Mc Guire – Director of Information  
Paula Mulqueen – Travel Coordinator, Liaison with Haiti, Outreach Director

## ABOUT DR. JOHN MULQUEEN

### I. John Mulqueen on Haiti

“Haiti was hemorrhaging and all that we had was a band aid”

Dr. John Mulqueen is an uncommon pediatrician –one with a successful pediatric business and one who travels regularly to Haiti, with his wife Paula and a core of medical and professional volunteers, to provide medical care. When he first traveled to Haiti to conduct a ten day pediatric clinic he was totally unprepared for the level of poverty and need that he found there. “I discovered the sights, sounds and smells of poverty.” On his return home to Gardner, MA he was still in such an emotional state of shock that he thought it would take a few years to recover.

But, the Haitian people were constantly on his mind. After seeing such extreme poverty and lack of basic healthcare he began to wonder how he, a doctor-trained to heal, could close his eyes to such need. The medical infrastructure in Haiti: doctors, medicines, clinics, hospitals, laboratories, X-rays and the like, is almost non-existent. “Haiti was hemorrhaging and all we had was a band aid.” So he became committed to returning there to help **but also to finding a more permanent solution to the problems that he encountered.**

Dr. Mulqueen founded Forward in Health a nonprofit organization located in Gardner, MA. to bring ongoing help to Haiti and ultimately to build a medical clinic in Fonde Fred, next to Les Cayes, that will eventually bring adult, pediatric and prenatal care to 15,000 people living in that area. The will is there, the volunteers are in place; **all that is missing is the financial support.** Forward in Health is now in a fundraising campaign phase to raise \$350,000 to build the clinic. In fact construction has already begun thanks to several lead benefactors.

### II Dr. John Mulqueen-His Credentials

#### Education

BS Boston College-magna cum laude  
University of Massachusetts Medical School  
Pediatric Residency-Maine Medical Center, Portland, ME

#### Practice

Solo Pediatric Practice – Gardner, MA

#### Professional Certification

1989-present Instructor of Neonatal Resuscitation Fellow American Academy of Pediatrics  
1989-present Fellow American Academy of Pediatrics-Board Certified in Pediatrics  
1989-present Preceptor-first, second and third-year medical students from UMASS Medical School 1994-2004 Fellow American Academy of pediatrics

*About Dr. John Mulqueen continued*

1994-2004 Appointed to Faculty of Department of Pediatrics-University of Massachusetts Medical School

#### Heywood Hospital, Gardner, MA, Appointments

1989-present Pediatric Staff  
1995-1996 President of Medical Staff  
1993-1994 Vice President of Medical Staff

1991-1992 Secretary/Treasurer Medical Staff

Awards

University of Massachusetts  
Medical School 1997

Award of Excellence Outstanding  
Primary Care Educator

Tufts Health Plan 1998 and 2002`

Top 20 Physicians for Tufts Health  
Plan- Member Satisfaction

Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce 2004

Community Service Award

ProMutual Group 2005

Annual Report Feature: "An  
Extraordinary Policyholder"

Diocese of Worcester and The St. Luke  
Society

Recognition for Medical Work  
Award

Gardner High School 2007

Hall of Fame-Outstanding Alumnus

Community Service

Current

Founder and president of Forward in  
Health, a nonprofit organization  
providing healthcare

2001 to present

Travel and conduct ongoing pediatric  
clinics in Haiti

Personal

Married to Paula Beer  
Children-Christopher and Conor

## **FROM BABY STEPS TO BIG STEPS, PEDIATRICIAN DETERMINED TO BUILD MEDICAL CLINIC IN HAITI**

Gardner, MA, January 13, 2008 --- Dr. John Mulqueen, Gardner pediatrician, is a driven and determined man. He wants to build a medical clinic near Les Cayes, Haiti. He wants to provide a permanent medical presence in a community that has no available medical care, clean drinking water or preventive health education. But, he needs help. Corporate and individual donations will pave the way to change the lives for over 15,000 people living there. Dr. Mulqueen founded Forward in Health, a nonprofit organization, to help him help Haitians.

For seven years, Dr. Mulqueen, Paula Mulqueen and Forward in Health volunteers have conducted annual missions to Haiti. "When I returned from my first ten day trip to Haiti I was in shock. I was totally unprepared for the level of poverty and need that I found there. **I discovered the sights, sounds and the smells of poverty. Emotionally spent, I wondered if I could ever return,**" Dr. Mulqueen said. **"I'm trained to heal and yet I quickly came to grips with my limitations as a physician helping in Haiti: Haiti was hemorrhaging and all I had was a band aid. So, I started my journey with baby steps-traveling there on medical missions and treating one patient at a time. Even if I could not cure, I could care."**

**Today, Dr. Mulqueen is ready for the big step-**to build a medical clinic near Les Cayes.

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*From baby steps to big steps- continued.*

In fact, thanks to several lead corporate donors preliminary work is already in progress. That clinic will provide a much needed permanent medical presence.

- The clinic will be situated on four acres of land and will have a total of 20 rooms in close to 10,000 square feet of space. It will house pediatric and prenatal clinics and a general adult screening facility. Construction began in November 2007.
- The first floor, 5,460 square feet, will have three exam rooms for doctors; a nurses' station, lab, radiology, pharmacy and conference/education rooms

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**The benefits, Dr. Mulqueen believes, will be dramatic.** The clinic will provide much needed education on food preparation to prevent food-borne illnesses, it will provide clean water for residents; it will provide day-to-day medical services and improve the poverty level of residents. The clinic will eventually be staffed entirely by Haitians and is expected to bring commerce to the area thus improving economic conditions. Importantly, the medical services will interrupt the transmission of the HIV virus to newborns by providing prenatal care to expectant mothers that includes screening for the virus. This one program alone will protect a new generation from HIV and AIDS which is so prevalent in Haiti today.

Dr. Mulqueen often wonders if Forward in Health's annual visits make a difference but he and volunteers have learned that curing a child's ear pain, relieving nights of crying, pain and parental frustration with simple antibiotics and Tylenol has had a positive impact. Discovering a child with Tuberculosis or malaria and finding treatments for them has merit. **Colleen Poulin, of Gardner, MA, a student intern, traveled to Haiti with Forward in Health in July.** Talking about her experience she says "Not only did our team work in the medical clinic, the student interns sandpapered iron beds in a nursing home and painted them white. We visited an orphanage for disabled and terminally ill children. I held a severely disabled little boy in my arms

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*From baby steps to big steps-continued*

and he just kept hugging me back. I held him and I rubbed his back; the bones in his back felt like mountains with deep valleys, he was that mangled and twisted. Yet, when I looked into his eyes I could see his smile from within. I think that what Forward in Health is doing in Haiti is extraordinary and any support people can give will most appreciated. Forward in Health offers a glimmer of hope for better living conditions and healthcare; I am lucky to have had a part in that."

“I was profoundly impacted by the poverty in Haiti and the total lack of the most fundamental medical care and education. Such terrible poverty in a nation so closely situated to the U.S., the richest nation in the world, is unconscionable,” states Attorney John Altomare, of Fusaro, Altomare & Ermilio, a Worcester law firm. He now serves on Forward in Health’s Board of Directors and his firm has donated the land for the clinic.

Forward in Health is now in fundraising mode according to Dr. Mulqueen. They need \$350,000 to build the clinic to help the 15,000 Haitians that so direly need our help. Naming rights for individual rooms in the clinic are available to those persons or businesses that donate \$5,000 or more. To donate or to find out more about Forward in Health in Haiti please visit [www.forwardinhealth.org](http://www.forwardinhealth.org) or contact Dr.Mulqueen at 978-632-7846.

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*Forward in Health is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the health conditions of people around Les Cayes, Haiti. Projects include annual medical visits and ongoing donations of medical supplies throughout the year. Forward in Health is currently gearing up to build a medical clinic in Haiti.*

## CONDITIONS IN HAITI –FACTS

“I was profoundly impacted by the poverty in Haiti and the total lack of the most fundamental medical care and education. Such terrible poverty in a nation so closely situated to the U.S., the richest nation in the world, is unconscionable.” Attorney John Altomare, of Worcester, on his observations of Haiti.

**Infant Mortality Rate** – The number of deaths of infants under one year old in a given year per 1,000 live births in the same year. The rate is often used as an indicator of the level of health in a country.

Source – CIA World Factbook July 2005

Haiti – 74.38 29<sup>th</sup> worst in the world, worst in the Western Hemisphere

**Maternal mortality** – Maternal deaths during labor reported per 100,000 births.

Source - UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund) 2002

Haiti – 520/100,000 22<sup>nd</sup> worst in the world, worst in the Western Hemisphere

**Probability of not reaching 40**

Source – UN 2001

Haiti – 31.6% - 35<sup>th</sup> worst in the world, worst in the Western Hemisphere

**Percent of population using adequate sanitation facilities**

Source – UNICEF 2000

Haiti – 28% 11<sup>th</sup> worst in the world, worst in the Western Hemisphere

**Percent of population using improved drinking water sources**

Source – UNICEF – 2000

Haiti – 46% 14<sup>th</sup> worst in the world, worst in the Western Hemisphere

**HIV AIDS > Adult prevalence rate by country** – An estimate of the percentage of adults (aged 15-49) living with HIV/AIDS. The adult prevalence rate is calculated by dividing the estimated number of adults living with HIV/AIDS at yearend by the total adult population at yearend.

Source - CIA World Factbook June 2007

Haiti – 5.6% 20<sup>th</sup> worst in the world, worst in the Western Hemisphere

**Life expectancy at birth** - The average number of years to be lived by a group of people born in the same year, if mortality at each age remains constant in the future. Life expectancy at birth is also a measure of overall quality of life in a country and summarizes the mortality at all ages. It can also be thought of as indicating the potential return on investment in human capital and is necessary for the calculation of various actual measures.

Source – CIA World Factbook June 2007

Haiti – 57.3 years 42<sup>nd</sup> worst in the world, worst in the Western Hemisphere

*Conditions in Haiti continued*

**Population below the poverty line** – National estimates of the percentage of the population lying below the poverty line are based on surveys of sub-groups, with the results weighted by the number of people in each group. Definitions of poverty vary considerably among nations. For example, rich nations generally employ more generous standards of poverty than poor nations.

Source - CIA World Factbook June 2007

Haiti – 80% 5<sup>th</sup> worst in the world, worst in the Western Hemisphere

**Unemployment rate** – The percent of the labor force that is without jobs.

Source – CIA World Factbook June 2007

Haiti - 67%

According to Dr. John Mulqueen, “while there is healthcare in Haiti, it is limited to the few who can afford it. In a Haitian hospital patients are expected to pay the doctor, buy medication and medical supplies, and arrange to have their own food brought in. For the average Haitian going to a hospital is a luxury they simply cannot afford. Life in Haiti is bleak.”

Some of the major findings contained in a 2004 report produced *Alarm Bells for Haiti as Report Shows Deepening Poverty*, published on [www.OneWorld.net](http://www.OneWorld.net) include:

### **Halving Extreme Poverty**

- 76 percent of Haitians live on less than US\$2 per day, while 55 percent live on less than US\$1 per day.
- In 25 years Haiti has not known a single period of lasting economic growth and has sustained a yearly decrease of –2 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2002 the GDP hardly represented 61 percent of its value in 1980.
- Food supply covers only 55 percent of the population and daily food insecurity affects 40 percent of Haitian homes.
- Haiti ranks along with Afghanistan and Somalia as one three countries of the world with the worst daily caloric deficit per inhabitant and 2.4 million Haitians cannot afford the minimum 2,240 daily calories recommended by the World Health Organization.
- The effect is particularly critical on children: 42 percent of those below age 5 are malnourished and easily preventable maladies like malnutrition and diarrhea kill 28 percent and 20 percent of children age 0-5 respectively.

### **Tuberculosis**

The incidence of Tuberculosis is endemic and today is the sixth largest cause of death in Haiti

### **Education**

- More than 21 percent of children ages 6-9 do not go to school at all – they are deemed too young to walk alone the distances of several kilometers to and from school.
- More children ages 10-14 attend school than those 6-9 years of age. Such late entry has negative effects on the system and explains the presence of older-than- school appropriate aged students in primary school.
- There are 4 percent more girls attending school than boys, but they quit school on average twice as early as boys.
- Only 15 percent of teachers meet the academic requirements to teach.

## STUDENTS EXPERIENCE HAITI

**Colleen Poulin** and **Jeff Anderson** both of Gardner, MA are two of a group of student interns who accompanied Dr. John Mulqueen and the Forward in Health medical team on a mission to Haiti in 2007. They signed on as seniors in High School and are now college students.

### **I. Colleen Poulin in Her own Words: “It was my first visit and I am positive it won’t be my last.”**

“Dr. Mulqueen and Paula Mulqueen, his wife, belong to the same church that I do and that’s where I first heard about Forward in Health’s (FIH) work in Haiti and about its internship program. Once I heard them talk about FIH’s work in Haiti I was sold. I promised myself that one day I’d go on one of their trips and do what I could to help out. I had been looking forward to the trip for so long, I was surprised when I got there to see how bad the conditions are that Haitians face everyday.

“When I left for Haiti, I expected to work in the clinic and to help people of Les Cayes with medical care. What I did not expect was that I’d bond with people who don’t speak my language and who don’t have the luxuries in life that I have. That week-I realized that we are all the same and that they deserve a fair chance at healthcare and better living-just like Americans do.

“Driving through Haiti and seeing the country was a shock. I had never seen houses like the ones they live in or such extreme poverty. It was life-changing to walk into a home that was no bigger than my living room and where seven people lived. There were rows and rows of houses just like this. I take so much for granted-running water, sewage and sanitation. To paint a clear picture Haitians just don’t have any of that. And yet, they are lively and gracious people

“Not only did our team work in the medical clinic, the student interns sandpapered iron beds in a nursing home and painted them white. We visited an orphanage for disabled and terminally ill children. I held a severely disabled little boy in my arms and he just kept hugging me back. I held him and I rubbed his back; the bones in his back felt like mountains with deep valleys, he was that mangled and twisted. Yet, when I looked into his eyes I could see his smile from within.

My heart broke when we visited the terminally ill children. I could see one little girl in the back of the room that no one had held yet. She was around two years old and looked shy and so lonely. So, I went over to her crib and picked her up. **Feeling her hold on to me the way she did will stay with me forever.** I would try to hold her up so I could look at her and interact with her. But, she just held on tight letting me know that she just wanted to be held closely and to be loved. I held her like that for a very long time. Eventually she loosened her grip and let me play with her. She would put her forehead close to mine and just stare into my eyes. She was just precious. When I put her down she started to cry but I kissed her and told her it was okay. I waved goodbye

*Colleen Poulin & Jeff Anderson -Students Experience Haiti continued*

to her and she smiled ear-to-ear. I wish that I could have frozen that moment in time-I’ll always remember it.

“I’m amazed at how much we did that week in Haiti; we also got to work with a youth group. They taught us about their culture and we spent one evening, 30 of us in a small room, learning Haitian dances and teaching them American dances. It was so much fun to connect in that way.

**“I made many friends on the trip-we all have a special bond that can’t be explained or interpreted.** I’ve learned to appreciate everything I have and to not take anything for granted. I also learned that the little things in life are what matter the most. When I talk to people about my experience, I remind them that everyone can do their part to help those people. I think that what Forward in Health is doing in Haiti is extraordinary and any support people can give will most appreciated. Forward in Health offers a glimmer of hope for better living conditions and healthcare; I am lucky to have had a part in that.”

Colleen is currently a student at Framingham State College.

## **II. Jeff Anderson Talks about His Experience: “The trip to Haiti was definitely the most amazing and influential experience of my life.”**

“Ever since I can remember I’ve wanted to be in the Peace Corps and when I heard Dr. John Mulqueen speak about Forward in Health at my school, I thought going to Haiti with him would be a good start. However, I had to weigh the cost of an internship with FIH against college expenses –because I’d be starting college in the fall. After meeting Dr. Mulqueen a second time I was won over by his passion for helping make a difference in Haiti. I worked hard to raise the \$1,250 and got donations from friends, families and businesses that covered almost 95 percent of the trip. Now, I was ready for the experience of a lifetime.

“First came the preparation phase- you don’t just hop a plane and fly off to Haiti with Forward in Health. Dr. Mulqueen and Paula Mulqueen held three informational sessions at their home. They explained the cultural differences, the dangers about the mission-and they basically helped us gear up for the trip.

“Our team stayed at a mission house just outside Les Cayes. It was a three story building with small rooms that slept two people. There were no electrical outlets in our rooms and we all shared just two bathrooms. **Compared to Haitian living conditions -we were in the lap of luxury.** When we came through the city, I could see open sewers and garbage everywhere. Hygiene is a huge problem. Rural areas are a bit, but not much, cleaner. Houses there are concrete rooms that just manage to keep rain out; in others walls are built out of banana palms and patched with cardboard.

“Haitian people and families literally have nothing-maybe a cup and bowl yet, I was touched by their vitality, their good attitude and the fact they are just happy to be alive. I was blown-away by that.

“The medical clinics were awesome. For three days we saw patients, over 100 children each day from infancy to age 14. We saw a girl with TB and spina bifida, a boy whose brain is not developed and who cannot speak. A young girl walked in to our clinic. Last year she could not even walk because of the pain from arthritis; now, because she received Motrin for pain she was walking again. Think of it-had she been American she would have been diagnosed and treated immediately. In Haiti she was at the mercy of someone-from somewhere to help. If FIH had not been there she might still not be able to walk.

*Colleen Poulin & Jeff Anderson - Students Experience Haiti continued*

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“Our tour guide hooked us up with a Haitian Youth Group. In spite of the language barrier (some speak Creole and others Spanish) we went to a nursing home and together scraped and painted

old iron beds for the elderly. Music broke the barrier for us. We all got together and shared our music. We sang, we danced and we laughed. It was fun.

“My most memorable experience came at the orphanage run by nuns. It was also difficult to see. About six nuns care for 100 children whose parents can no longer care for them. Some are mentally retarded others have HIV/AIDS. All are in cribs and the saddest thing is that they lack touch from another human being. I walked around to each and tried to talk to them or rub their arms. One young boy was totally out of it but, if you touched him he lit up and his laugh was just so infectious.

“We visited a long time in the AIDS room. Nancy, a nurse with our team, handed me a little boy. I could only hold him for a short time because he was screaming to go back to Nancy, but holding him was sobering and healing at the same time. I have such a greater appreciation for what I have and I’m convinced that if Americans would only sacrifice even a little it could make a big difference.

“Will I ever go back? Yes. I learned so much from my visit and am thankful to Dr. Mulqueen and Forward in Health. But, I believe the experience should be open to new and more people who hopefully will get a movement going to help out.

**“The need is so great in Haiti and the best that I can do now is to get the word out. I’ve started an advocacy club on campus to build awareness of the terrible need and to get funding for the people there.”**

Jeff Anderson is a student at Providence College.