

FMS Program Graduates Doctors Senpasert and Douangta; and UC Faculty Doctors Greg McKinnon, Jane Lemaire and Chris Brown at Khongsedone District Hospital November 2016



LIFE LONG LEARNING FOR FAMILY MEDICINE SPECIALISTS IN LAOS

Improving Rural Health, A Lao PDR and University of Calgary Collaboration

*Did you know?
There are more than 175 graduates of the two-year Family Medicine Specialist Program and 28 new Laos doctors have entered the program this year.*

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Adopt-a-Region

What is Adopt-a-Region?

Medical educators from the University of Calgary have adopted specific regions within Laos where they travel to, at least annually, developing long-standing, collaborative relationships with their Lao colleagues. The objective is to develop and support **Family Medicine Specialist** training sites at provincial and district hospitals at these "adopted" areas using a collaborative mentorship model between Lao PDR University Health Sciences (UHS) and University of Calgary (UC) physicians.

The Family Medicine Specialist training program, implemented in 2005, was developed by UC and UHS Faculty to improve the training of front line, family medicine doctors working mainly in remote and rural areas.

Four provincial hospitals and their associated district hospitals are now formal training centers for Lao Family Medicine Specialist (FMS) physicians (refer to map).

The training sites are:

- Maria Theresa Provincial Hospital in Vientiane Province (located near Vientiane City)
- Khammouan Provincial Hospital (located in Thakhek City)
- Savannakhet Provincial Hospital (located in Savannakhet City)
- Champasak Provincial Hospital (located in Pakse City)

Observing Adopt-a-Region in Action

By Laurie Manion, volunteer, Lao Project

It was my great pleasure to travel to Laos recently and observe UC and Lao PDR doctors conducting workshops together in Champasak Province, southern Laos.

Doctors Lemaire, Brown and McKinnon from UC and Dr Senpasert, a FMS graduate, conducted training workshops for Laos Family Medicine Specialists and their colleagues; as well as for Laos medical educators. Based in Pakse, team members travelled south to Don Khong District Hospital (on an island of the Mekong River near the Cambodian border); north to Khongsedone District Hospital (on the west bank of the Sedone River), south to the Don Talad District Hospital, and east to Sekong Provincial Hospital. The physicians conducted workshops on teamwork and professionalism at these hospital sites. The group also conducted Medical Education workshops for Laos physician medical educators at the Champasak Provincial Hospital in Pakse.



What struck me the most is how well entrenched the UC Faculty members are in the Laos community. The Laos and UC physicians have become **trusted colleagues and friends with a history of successful collaboration**. This has resulted from having the same UC faculty members travelling to the same area annually for many years.

A further observation is the Family Medicine Specialist graduates have **become leaders in their hospitals and in their communities**. This speaks to the quality of the two-year post graduate training program that was collaboratively established and continues to be supported by UC, Lao PDR UHS, and the Lao Ministry of Health.

Moving Forward

FMS physicians have asked for continued training on the following topics:

- Quality Improvement
- Teamwork
- Maternal and Newborn Health
- Pediatrics
- Surgery
- Obstetrics and Gynecology

Within the next six months, twelve UC faculty medical educators are scheduled to travel to various locations within Laos to address the training needs at District and Provincial Hospitals; as well as to support the Continuing Medical Education Forum. (details below).

The 8th Annual Continuing Medical Education Forum is January 16, 17, 18 2017 in Vientiane. More than 150 graduates of the Family Medicine Specialist (FMS) program are expected to attend.

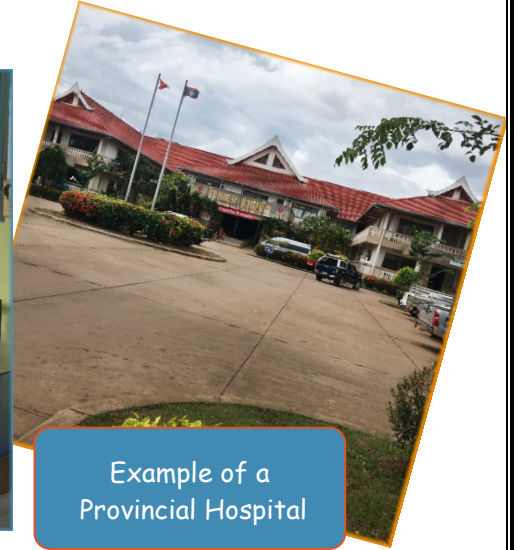
FMS graduates work mainly in rural areas throughout Laos fulfilling a huge role in health care through patient care, ongoing medical education, and leadership.

Thank you to **Rotary International** for support of the CME; providing an opportunity for FMS doctors to update skills and interact with peers to exchange knowledge and share ideas.

Laos Pictures



Examples of a District Hospital



Example of a Provincial Hospital



Rural Life



The Mekong River

Laos National Flower
- The Champa



Laos National Animal
- The Asian Elephant