

# The “Adopt-A-Region” Initiative: A Collaborative Mentorship Approach to Developing Community-Based Academic Medical Education Training Centers in Lao PDR

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## Background/Rationale:

- Lao PDR seeks to improve healthcare to its predominantly rural inhabitants
- The single medical school is in the capital city Vientiane
- In collaboration with the University of Calgary (UC), a Family Medicine Specialist (FMS) training program was created
- Graduates are targeted to work at smaller provincial and district hospitals
- No hospitals outside Vientiane were formally equipped for physician training



## Objective:

- To aid the development of provincial and district hospitals as sites for FMS training using a collaborative mentorship model between Lao PDR and UC physicians



## Methods:

- Lao medical education leaders targeted specific provincial and district hospitals to serve as FMS training sites
- Local physicians were engaged and FMS training program coordinators were assigned at each site
- UC Lao project leaders assigned experienced UC project members to “adopt” a region containing a target site

## The “Adopt-A-Region” Approach:

- UC faculty returning to the same region at least annually
- Developing collegial relationships
- Delivering faculty development workshops with local faculty
- Role modeling patient care and medical education methods focused on “learning by doing” with acquisition of practical knowledge and skills for learners
- Introducing systematic trainee evaluation
- Gaining Lao faculty guidance around local and cultural needs



## Results:

- Four provincial hospitals and their associated district hospitals are now formal training centers for FMS learners
- These sites also provide increased training capacity for medical students, new physician graduates not enrolled in post-graduate programs, and physician assistants
- UC “Adopt-A-Region” faculty also support FMS graduates working in small district hospitals through on-site visits and co-development of education events



## Discussion/Conclusions:

- “Adopt-A-Region” proves an effective model for developing community-based academic training centers for FMS using a collaborative mentoring approach
- UC faculty mentors were able to build relationships, interact directly with their target stakeholders and obtain first-hand knowledge of local needs, enhance their credibility as invested collaborators, develop cultural sensitivity, and build on previous work
- Lao faculty mentors were able to enhance their medical expert knowledge, education, and leadership skills, showcase their remarkable accomplishments, and serve as expert guides to their UC colleagues
- “Adopt-A-Region” provides a solid foundation for sustainable collaboration and mutual mentorship