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# First respiratory therapy study-abroad programme being hosted in Guyana

Jan 03, 2018 # Government, Ministry of Public Health, News

DPI, Guyana, Wednesday, January 3, 2018

Guyana has been the first South American country identified to facilitate the Texas State University in its first study-abroad programme in respiratory therapy.



The group from the Texas State University flanked by representatives of the Bridges Global Medical Mission and Ministry of Public Health's International Desk Co-Ordinator, Glenroy Tudor.

The programme is a collaboration between Texas State University and the Bridges Global Medical Mission, made possible through the Ministry of Public Health's International Desk. Ten students from the Texas State University following their orientation will be working in Regions Four and Ten from January 3 to 14.

The team consists of five respiratory care students who will be conducting the respiratory study programme in Guyana and five mass

communication students who will be detailing and reporting on every step of the team's journey in Guyana.

Medical Director of the Bridges Global Medical Mission, Dr. Claudette Heyligar-Thomas said that the Texas State University is "really trying to expand their study abroad programme and so for these students, this is a historic event for them and for us. For Texas State, this is the first time they will have a footprint in South America and they have chosen Guyana to start that footprint and for us or course, this is the first time we a have a respiratory study abroad programme."

According to Dr. Heyligar-Thomas, the team will be based mainly at Linden Hospital Complex and the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. She added that they will also "be providing asthma screening to the students of the McKenzie High School."

Additionally, Linden has been earmarked as one of the target areas since we are concerned that maybe there is a lot of asthma and COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) because of the bauxite that is out there so we would like to just check," Dr. Heyligar-Thomas explained.

The Medical Director also underscored the importance of this much-needed programme in Guyana. "Some people may not know what Respiratory Therapists do but their role is varied; they handle ventilators, they take care of tracheostomy sites, they intubate, they help with care, they do blood gases and they are there to assist the physicians and the nurses in the care of patients."

Clinical Education Professor, Sharon Armstead, of the Texas State University, who is also a Guyanese native from Region 10, is spearheading the team. "We are here to show what the profession of respiratory care does and that Guyanese health care will see the benefits of having respiratory therapy as a profession, as an allied health profession as part of their health care system," Armstead explained.

The mission of the Texas State Study Abroad programme is to provide safe, accessible, academically rigorous, geographically diverse, and culturally enriching global educational experiences to our students.

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to provide medical care in the local practice settings, recognising that the physical and mental health needs of the surrounding community and region are immense.



Professor Sharon Armstead, Clinical Education Professor, Texas State University and Respiratory Therapist.

By: Delicia Haynes

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