

FAMU Sends Aid Team to Haiti

Contributed by Nicole Brooks -- Black College Wire
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Dean and faculty members head to earthquake-torn nation

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Florida A&M University will become the first HBCU to send a team to Haiti, when a group leaves this week on behalf of the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Henry Lewis, dean of the college, will be traveling to Haiti along with three or four pharmacy faculty members and two nurse practitioners from the School of Nursing. The team intends to provide medication, medical supplies and pharmaceutical care services for earthquake victims in Haiti. Due to liability concerns, senior doctoral pharmacy students are unable to take the trip. The team will set up three tents with computers and generators and help assist with the other clinics in passing out prescriptions.

Approximately \$50,000 in medical supplies will be taken over to Haiti.

"We have received contributions from different organizations here in Tallahassee," said Lewis. Leon County Sheriff Larry Campbell, the Leon County Court Clerk Bob Inzer and others donated medical supplies.

The team plans to leave on Feb. 13, with the approval of The Board of Governors of the state university system of Florida. With their approval, the team will establish a rotation schedule consisting of approximately three months for the continuity of pharmacy services. Lewis said funding for the trip is already taken care of.

Raymond Joseph, the U.S. ambassador to Haiti, will make the arrangements for the team to travel directly to Haiti.

"I met with Joseph in Washington D.C. and he was absolutely thrilled to receive us as we are the first historically black college to approach them about any cure to the country of Haiti," Lewis said.

Due to the extensive damage to hotels in Haiti, Lewis said he is uncertain about room and board for the team as of right now.

"We are going prepared to rough it," said Lewis. "I think that everyone is going to realize that we aren't going to Miami."

The college of pharmacy is used to helping in efforts related to natural disasters. When Hurricane Charlie made landfall in 2004, four FAMU pharmacy students assisted in the Bradenton/Sarasota area with relief efforts.

"We are replicating what we did during the time of the hurricane in 2004," said Lewis. Some of the pharmacists and practitioners on the relief team consist of Haitians and people fluent in Creole.

"I think that traveling to Haiti is a wonderful idea," said Kenneth Joseph, a second year pre-professional pharmacy student from Palm Beach.

Joseph said the Haiti relief effort that the pharmacy school is initializing would give FAMU positive recognition.

"I have family over there and I wouldn't mind traveling over as a translator and also as a student willing to help."

President Ammons has appointed a Haiti relief team at FAMU to maintain the efforts of the students and community.

"We know we will be staying for a while for the continuity," said Lewis.

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