KRB Update #2191 – Patient Selection

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Greetings from the hospital ship, *Africa Mercy*. I sincerely thank you all who prayed for our surgical screening/patient selection on the 28th of August at a local high school here in Pointe-Noire. As in previous years, I served at the main gate and had the wonderful opportunity to hand out tickets and to greet almost every potential patient/caregiver coming into the compound (see photo). I practiced my limited French with '*Bon jour*' et '*Bienvenue*' and a few phrases in Kituba, the primary local language in the southern parts of Congo. For example, '*Mbot*é*', 'Wa fa So'*, and then if they responded with '*Ka Bien'* I knew they understood me. For the toddlers, I would knell down to greet them and see if they would shake my hand, for some of the small ones they may never have interacted with a mundelli '*white person'* before. For the adults, I tried to look them in the eyes one at a time. I got excited when I saw cleft lip children and others with visible maxillofacial tumors. I look forward to welcoming many onto the ship when they come for their surgeries. Plus through befriend-a-patient, I will have the great opportunity of starting and building relationships with the Congolese patients.

Statistics: estimated over 7,300 came for the screening, some left the line outside as they had a problem we are not able to assist with and then 4,236 potential patients plus another 2,118 caregivers came inside the compound. Almost 1,000 were potential eye patients and the others for our surgical specialties. After the nurse pre-screening, 1,326 potential patients continued through the process. Hundreds were scheduled for surgery and hundreds of others were scheduled for a surgeon screening (when the surgeons for that specialty arrive in country) and for overflow screening as we ran out of day light and time on Wednesday. Later on, I will have more exact numbers as one of my responsibilities is tracking our statistics for our activities – each number representing an individual. Our managing director shared that this was one of our finest moments in Mercy Ships screening and that "*We made history on Wednesday. We broke all of our Selection Day records – it was a remarkable day for Mercy Ships and for Congo-Brazzaville. It could not have happened without the continued support of our donors, volunteers and local partners like FELBO."* This day is one our highlights of the entire field service with over 340 crew members involved, over 100 local workers, government officials and local partners. Praise to our Great God!!!

More about the Republic of Congo – Healthcare Structure - CHU – top hospital located in the capitol and then four general hospitals, two are here in Pointe-Noire – Adolphe Sice and Loandjili. We are working with both for patient referral and our healthcare education mentoring and courses and then Base Hospitals and then the lowest level is Integrated Health Centers which you see throughout the nation. During our screening in the interior, we will work with the government base hospitals in Oyo and Ouesso. They have various medical specialties in Congo – oncology, cardiology, pediatrics, OB/GYN and general, but for maxillofacial, trauma, orthopaedics, eyes, fistulas and plastics reconstructive their surgeons go overseas for training. Regretfully in Congo, infant mortality has increased in the last twenty years to over 80 per 1,000 births. Maternal mortality also increased to almost 600 per 100,000 live births.

Please pray *Our hospital staff as they care for our patients *All of our patients with appointments come and receive their healing *For the continued efforts with screening and patient selection in the interior including the capitol city of Brazzaville. *My better understanding of their culture and language

Serving Together, *Keith*
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