

IHPME CONNECT 01.2017

SPOTLIGHT ON ALUMNI

EYE OF THE STORM — LEADING DISASTER RESPONSE IN HURRICANE MATTHEW

Between September and October 2016, Hurricane Matthew hit numerous Caribbean nations including Haiti, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Cuba, as well as the south-east coast of the U.S. In Haiti alone, the storm took an estimated 546 lives, with 28 persons still missing [1].

IHPME Alumni [Dr. Gustavo Mery](#), MD, MBA, PhD is an Advisor in Health Systems and Services with the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) for the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands, and was head of the organization's office in the Bahamas during and after the storm.

How badly was the Bahamas impacted by Hurricane Matthew?

It was registered as a Category 3-4 storm on the Saffir-Simpson Scale, out of a possible 5. Hurricanes of this magnitude are considered major hurricanes because of their potential for significant loss of life and damage. The islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama, the two most populated in the country, were among the hardest hit. Damage ranged from extensive compromise of the power and water infrastructure, to major flooding and structural compromise of



numerous buildings and houses, including several clinics and hospital infrastructure. No lives were lost in the Bahamas.

How much experience did you have with hurricanes and their impact on health services?

I joined PAHO in August 2016. Two weeks later, I assumed the role of Interim Head of PAHO/WHO Office and led the disaster response during Matthew. It was my first time ever experiencing a hurricane.

In my career, I've worked in several different roles in health care, from emergency medicine to health policy and economic research. None of these roles fully prepares you to face an emergency such as a hurricane of this magnitude. A hurricane is like a long-announced, slowly-occurring earthquake. You have a couple of days to prepare, to draw on all your knowledge and experience the best that you can, but you have to be ready when it hits you.

What are the most crucial actions that the health sector needs to take to prepare?

You have to ensure that emergency services are operating during and after the disaster, and that the health facilities receive emergency supplies. Health services buildings must be prepared, such as by protecting windows and roofs from wind and flying objects, and mitigating flooding and storm surge. Exposed areas need to be evacuated. Health staff need to be in safe shelters. The evacuated and sheltered population need to be safe from the storm and receive care as needed. Communication is also vital. PAHO/WHO is the only resident UN Agency in the Bahamas, so our office had to deploy an Emergency Operation Centre in downtown Nassau to closely coordinate with government and other emergency responders.

What about after the storm has passed – what are the priorities?

The first priority is to deploy rescue and relief efforts. There must also be rapid assessments of the operational status and damage of health facilities and services. Health providers must determine availability of staff and identify the epidemiological situation of the population. Lack of power, water, and contamination from flooded sewerages can mean a proliferation of vector-borne diseases. Health and environmental services need to be quickly restored to prevent deterioration in the health of vulnerable populations.

More on the next page...

What lessons have you learned that would be valuable to students or other alumni of the Institute?

Similar to a natural disaster, many ongoing problems in health systems can cost lives and diminish the quality of life for many people in our countries. With the same passion and courage, we have to be able to face our challenges thinking of the people that give meaning to what we work for. Events like Mathew remind you very powerfully of the importance of using every experience and opportunity you have to become a stronger professional, better prepared to the unexpected and unpredictable requirement that a career that aspires to transform health care systems in some capacity will have to confront.

[1] Source: Haiti COUN/Ministère de l'Intérieur et des Collectivités Territoriales, from PAHO Hurricane Matthew Situation Report No.27 (23 Nov, 2016).

Read the
DLSPH Bulletin

IHPME IN THE NEWS

Health care: bilateral agreements could encourage innovation, enhance performance

A new [paper](#) - [PDF] from the Institute for Research on Public Policy by Prof [Gregory Marchildon](#) says properly designed bilateral health transfer agreements between Ottawa and the provinces could encourage innovation and enhance overall performance in the Canadian health system.

IRPP News Release: irpp.org/research-studies/insight-no13/

Time to Move Health Research into the Community

A Toronto Star Opinion-Commentary by [Adalsteinn Brown](#) and Stephen Bornstein about changing how we educate our health experts will improve our health-care system

Full story: www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2017/01/04/time-to-move-health-research-into-the-community.html

IHPME ON flickr

SUPPORT IHPME

The Institute of Health Policy, Management & Evaluation, as part of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, is the first Canadian public health school to launch its own fundraising campaign. With the support of our generous donors, our Boundless Campaign will enable IHPME to continue shaping training and research in health systems, management and policy.

For more information on how you can get involved, give annually, create a named fund, or consider the School in your estate planning, please contact **Ryan Lindsay, Senior Development Officer** at ryan.lindsay@utoronto.ca or visit [IHPME Donate](#) or [Support/Campaign](#). Thank you for your support!

PUBLICATIONS

Stevens B, Yamada J, Promislow S, Barwick M, [Pinard M](#), and the CIHR Team in Children's Pain

Pediatrics

[Pain Assessment and Management After a Knowledge Translation Booster Intervention](#)

Chindalo P, Karim A, Brahmabhatt R, Saha N, [Keshavjee K](#). *International Journal of Handheld Computing Research*
[Health Apps by Design: A Reference Architecture for Mobile Engagement](#)

[Cartagena RG](#), Thompson AK, Katebian K, Lemmens T, Geist R, Schipper H, Buchman S, Kim H, Handelman M
Law Commission of Ontario

[Understanding the relationship between suffering and capacity at the end-of-life: A pilot study](#)

Hold the Date
IHPME Faculty Retreat

Tuesday, January 31 | 12:30 pm - 7:00 pm

RSVP: ihpme.events@utoronto.ca

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

IHPME graduates are leaders in government, health care, academia and research – shaping our health care system through innovative and creative thinking and leadership.

The IHPME Society of Graduates supports and celebrates this excellence through its [Leadership, Innovation and Literary Awards](#), recognizing the accomplishments and contributions of IHPME Alumni.

IHPME Website: [Criteria & How to Submit](#)

Deadline: January 15, 2017

EVENTS

The Toronto and Ottawa Supervised Consumption Assessment (TOSCA) Project

January 10 | 10:30 am - Noon | CAMH or Webinar | Free

The Goering Award acknowledges innovative KT projects in mental health and addictions. Please join us for an address from the TOSCA team, along with brief overviews of other innovative projects in the 2016 competition.

Learn about:

- The TOSCA project;
- The Paula Goering Award;
- Other integrated KT initiatives

[Register](#) to join in person or via webinar.

This webinar will be recorded and posted on [EENet.ca](#).

Health Policy Rounds

January 12 | Noon - 1:00 pm | HS412 | Free

Renata Axler - How Scientists' Values Shape Scientific Practice: An Institutional Work Analysis of Research Commercialization in Canada

CCHE Seminar Series

Fridays | 10:00 am - Noon | HS100 | Free

Please note the upcoming seminars:

- [Michael Wolfson, January 20](#)
- [Kaveh Katebian, February 3](#)

POHR Seminar: Emily Nicholas Angl

January 25 | Noon - 1:30 pm | HS412 | Free

IHPME in collaboration with the McMaster Health Forum and the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute are pleased to host a Seminar as part of the Partnership for Health System Strengthening's program on Patient-Oriented Health Research & Innovation.

NAO Launch Event

February 6 | 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm | HS610 | Free

The North American Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (NAO) is a collaborative partnership of interested researchers, research organizations, governments, and health organizations promoting evidence-informed health system policy decision-making.

Resiliency & Change: Finding your Balance in a Dynamic Health Care System

March 20 | 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm | Holland Bloorview | \$

IHPME, the Society of Graduates (SOG) and the GTA Chapter of the Canadian College of Health Leaders (CCHL)

Featuring five experienced and compelling health care leaders who will share their personal stories and explain how future leaders can respond effectively to find balance during health system change. This event will borrow from the popular *TED Talks* format to give each leader 10 minutes to present and end with an opportunity for audience participation.

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

We're pleased to receive submissions of 400 words or less for consideration in upcoming editions. If you'd like your event listed, please send full details.

Contact: rhonda_cockerill@utoronto.ca and ihpme@utoronto.ca

Save the Date
IHPME Education Day

Tuesday, April 4 | 8 am - Noon