

Surgical Missions/Surgical Wound Care

Dr. Stephen Gordon

Case Study (One of many): Mission to Somalia



Above are pics of our armed guard & trip coordinator, Dr. Gordon outside of Saafi Bazaar moments after speaking with Timi's dad, and one of several underutilized spaces inside of Hargeisa General Hospital that could be retro fitted

Hargeisa General Hospital is located in civil war-torn Somaliland, a country located in the Northern Horn of Africa which declared their independence from Somalia in 1991, the same year the US Embassy in Mogadishu, Southern Somalia was closed. Somaliland is a desperately poor Muslim country which still has not been internationally recognized as independent of Somalia. Hargeisa Hospital is a building with running water (running water in a poor hospital *is not* a given) and has adequately sized spaces which could be retrofitted, equipped, and transformed into a decent modern burn and wound care surgical center.

Projects like this require partnership with local government and business entities as well as expertise in design and development that is provided by Gordon Healthcare Technologies (GHT). GHT has personnel with extensive experience in facility design, hyperbaric therapy, burn and wound patient care, supply chain acquisition, personnel development, and sustainability oversight. “

The people I met in Somaliland are some of the most gracious, and kindest people I have ever met. I learned that the Quran (Muslim) and Tora (Jewish) Holy books are strikingly similar. The people have a profound sense of country and were very appreciative of the work we did,” explained Dr. Gordon.

Incident: Timi was a 2 y.o. boy who died at Hargeisa immediately after having his cleft lip repaired. He was one of seven children. He died because postoperatively he developed an initially unrecognized anesthesia complication with his airway. The hospital had 7 anesthesia machines, none of which we could use because they were all set up to use Halothane, an older generation gas anesthetic. Halothane would have been alright, (works great for kids) except they didn't have any! No halothane was available anywhere in the country! Worse yet, the hospital (like so many poor hospitals) didn't have proper functioning monitoring equipment. It was all out dated-no parts available- donated junk which is what cost this little boy his life. Modern equipment would have prevented this tragedy. I was sitting having coffee in a nearby break room and began to wonder what was taking so long to move Timi to the recovery room. The surgical result was outstanding, I was the surgeon. I walked into the O.R. to find the nurse anesthetist feverishly trying to resuscitate our patient. No code blue or other urgent cry for help was ever activated. I was dumbfounded. We were in a strict Muslim country, armed guard travelled with us for protection. Closest U.S. Embassy was 34 hours away (Nairobi, Kenya), and I, not knowing what might happen to me, wanted to hide. 2 days later the deceased boy's father hunted me down...found me in a bazaar...someone tapped me on the shoulder. Said “that man out there wants to talk to you”. I didn't know who he

was. The grief-stricken dad proceeded to tell me how grateful he was for the work we were trying to do for his people and to *please continue* to help them. I apologized for what happened. And then we wept.

Gordon Healthcare Technologies

Gordon Healthcare Technologies, LLC is a for profit LLC founded 2021 with the mission of establishing Sustainable medical aid to Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC), emerging Small Island Developing States (SIDS), underserved Indigenous Peoples, and/or underserved U.S. Territories and/or populations. This is the third iteration of a Healthcare company founded for the purpose of helping the disadvantaged. The first two precursor companies, Wounded Bird Projects, Inc. (WBP) (2017), and Wounded Bird Human Health Services, Inc. (WBHHS) (2018) were both nonprofit companies and as such *were inadequate concept models* to accomplish our mission goals. Our objectives and mission goals are consistent with the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) regarding global health care partnerships and the moral responsibility we share to serve the less fortunate both here in America and globally. All people are entitled to modern, safe, timely and cost-effective wound care regardless of their financial circumstances.

Activities

2023 in addition to many projects, Gordon Healthcare Technologies and Premiers Secours created a strategic initiative to deliver medical and surgical facilities to areas of need both domestically and internationally.

Over the past 4 decades the ideology, actions, and mission (the precursors) of what has now come to be known as Gordon Healthcare Technologies (GHT) existed in the volunteer work of **Dr. Stephen Winslow Gordon**, an American Plastic & Reconstructive surgeon. Dr. Gordon is the founder and Medical Director of **GHT**. The following is an abbreviated First-Person Narrative of Dr. Gordon's volunteer activity prior to the founding of **GHT**. This 4-decade period began when Dr. Gordon finished his residency in Plastic Surgery and continues to the present. There are no unaccounted-for gaps of time.

1980-1990 **Dr. Winston Crookendale** a general and plastic surgeon colleague on the Caribbean Island of **Barbados** asked me (Dr. Gordon) to come and lend expertise in the care of a severely burned family member. There was no dedicated burn or wound care center on the Island at that time. I went and assisted in the care of the patient, and toured the local healthcare facilities, the largest of which was Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The limited resources and British system of healthcare delivery on this Small Island State were discussed in great detail. Establishment of a burn or wound care center at that time was severely hindered by British Government required & directed service work, and significant economic restrictions. This was 15 years before the U.N. *Millennium* Development Goals were established in 2000, and 30 years before the U.N. 2030 SDG.

1990-2000 **Dr. Fernando Ortiz-Monasterio (FOM)** was a world-renowned plastic and craniofacial surgeon in **Mexico City** and Director of the Plastic Surgery residency training program at Dr. Manuel Gea Gonzales Hospital. After I got my boards in Plastic Surgery, and with 9 years of private practice, I spent a year (1990-91) of post-doctoral training at my expense with (FOM) and the dept. of Plastic Surgery. (FOM) was a man of extraordinary generosity and a great example to me of helping the poor and disadvantaged. He and other faculty were great teachers of surgery and humanity. 2 other pioneer craniofacial surgeons Drs. Paul Tessier and Daniel Marchac visited Mexico during that year, operated with me and I in turn visited with them in Paris in subsequent years. I participated in numerous surgical missions into **rural Mexico** and learned valuable lessons about how to think through the surgery, be conscious of what we had to accomplish, the all-around impact of poverty on the human condition, and how to work effectively with limited resources.

As Chief Surgeon of the **American Medical Team for Africa (AMTA)** I led a multispecialty medical team of doctors and surgical personnel (1994) to Muhimbili Medical Center in Dar es Salaam, **Tanzania**. We also worked briefly in **Zanzibar**. At the time these were low-income countries. Approximately 60 surgical procedures were successfully completed during our visit. Muhimbili Hospital is and was the teaching hospital for the Medical school. The limited resources were at times overwhelming. Enormous progress has been made since my visit. **2023:** Tanzania has elevated to lower middle income by the

World Bank but still needs *substantial* health care partnership support to provide burn, hyperbaric and wound care surgical facilities and supply chains.

2000-2010 In 2004 I began to supplement my surgical continuing education with internal medicine/integrative medicine continuing education because of my interest in anti-aging & functional medicine. This supplementation took place via the auspices of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine (A4M).

During this decade I visited physician colleagues in the Caribbean to explore the feasibility of opening a center to offer plastic surgery services including wound care. Despite their willingness to be of assistance, factors such as travel, lodging and lack of cross coverage during my absence strongly suggested that at that point in my career, (as a solo plastic surgeon) opening a surgery center in the Caribbean would not be economically feasible. **2023:** I continue to have contact with **Dr Crookendale** as well as these other Caribbean physician friends:

Dr. Alfred Anduze, an ophthalmologist on the U.S. Virgin Island of St. Croix

Dr. James Nelson, a neurologist on the USVI of St. Thomas.

Dr. Harold Narain, an OB/Gyn on the Caribbean Island of Aruba, Kingdom of the Netherlands. Government regulations regarding healthcare discouraged me from pursuing establishment of a surgical practice on this Island.

2011-2015 **Panama City, Panama** I specifically traveled to Panama City, **Jan 2011**, to speak with representatives of the medical community regarding the establishment of a plastic & reconstructive surgical facility to include wound care. I knew that Panama was a growing economy with a lot of new building construction and infrastructure improvement going on. Government required & directed service work precluded my going forward as a *for profit* corporation. Panama was a rapidly improving upper middle-income country actively participating in the Millennium Sustainable Development Goals. **2023:** Panama is now a high-income country.

2011-2015 **I experienced a resurgence of interest in volunteer reconstructive surgery.**

New Abirim Government Hospital, Ghana, West Africa. In October **2012** I visited, worked, and taught reconstructive surgery and wound care to health care providers at this hospital. My full report entitled Chief Surgeon's report, representative photos, and news articles are *available upon request* in **file labeled Ghana, Africa.**

2011-2015 **Hargeisa General Hospital, Somaliland, (Somalia), East Africa.**

In Feb. **2013** I visited, worked, and taught reconstructive surgery and wound care to physicians, medical students, nurses and other health care providers at this hospital. This hospital has the space and basic design to allow it to be a very substantial resource to the very large, very poor population it serves. Somaliland is a small war-torn country struggling for International recognition of its statehood and independence from Somalia (Republic of Somaliland established May 1991). If it were recognized, then Somaliland would be eligible for significant international economic relief. The African Union appears to be the primary impediment to that recognition. My full report entitled Open letter to Minister of Health, Somaliland, representative photos, and news articles are *available upon request* in **file labeled Somaliland, Africa.**

2016 In March 2016 I reactivated with the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine (A4M) and committed to pursue board certification in Anti-aging, Regenerative and Integrative Medicine. (see **c.v. section regarding c.m.e.**). *available upon request.*

- 2017 In July of 2017 I made the decision to transition into wound care full time with a strong emphasis on HBO therapy, regenerative and integrative medicine, and wound care reconstructive plastic surgery.
- Wounded Bird Projects, Inc. was founded and incorporated in New Mexico in New Mexico
- I joined 3 international wound care organizations: Association for the Advancement of Wound Care (AAWC), The Wound Healing Society (WHS), and the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine Society (UHMS) and began attending their regional and national wound care and hyperbaric medicine meetings. I have 3 subscriptions to wound healing and hyperbaric medicine journals which I regularly read.
- 2018 February 2018. I was re-appointed to the medical staff of the largest adult hospital and largest children's hospital in the state, Sunrise Hospital, Sunrise Children's Hospital, Las Vegas, NV. I was re-appointed to the medical staff at Valley and Mountain View Hospitals to provide HBO supervision & Reconstructive Surgery support to the respective wound care programs. I became interim director of Inpatient wound care at Sunrise Hospital.
- Wounded Bird Human Health Services, Inc was founded and quickly obtained 501-c-3 status which remains current (2023).
- 2019 I co-anchored the opening of the burn and wound care center at Sunrise Hospital and worked there until Feb. 2021
- 2021-2022 I completed all 3 continuing education certificate programs in Non-Profit Management at UNLV
- Gordon Healthcare Technologies, LLC was founded in 2022.
- 2023 I am aggressively pursuing international opportunities in Comprehensive Hyperbaric, Burn and Wound Care Surgical Facility development and local part time plastic surgery pursuits.
- Gordon Healthcare Technologies, LLC is strategically aligned with Premiers Secours, LLC for the purpose of advancing mutual medically related business goals. Our collective goals are to serve and improve the human healthcare condition of all people.

