

Fundashon Salú pa Tur **Primary Care Clinic**

Background:

According to UNHCR around 2.3 million Venezuelan citizens have left their country since 2015. The exact number of Venezuelan citizens residing abroad is unknown, but estimates are that at least 26.000 are residing on the island of Curacao and around 16.000 on Aruba. In addition to these Venezuelan migrants, many other immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Colombia and Jamaica are residing on both islands.

Due to financial constraints and fear of local authorities most undocumented migrants do not have access to basic healthcare. This lack of care leads to emergency, sometimes life-threatening, situations which could in many cases have been prevented by regular check-ups (i.e. diabetes, hypertension, pregnancy) and early treatment (i.e. wounds, infections). Treatment for emergency cases poses a large financial burden on the local healthcare systems and on the government.

Both the consequences for the patients and the costs could be greatly reduced by a specialized medical program targeting the at risk migrant population. There are many international funding opportunities available for healthcare projects focusing on migrants in the Caribbean region. Despite this, an organization focusing on this healthcare program does not yet exist.

Aims:

To provide primary care to uninsured migrants in the Caribbean region (Curacao, Aruba and Bonaire) with a focus on:

- Antenatal care: prevention, pregnancy check-ups
- Postpartum care: maternity care, vaccination, provisions (formula, diapers, clothing), contraception
- General Practitioner visits
- Prevention: communicable diseases and secondary/tertiary prevention
- Financing of outside care: laboratory tests, medication, deliveries and hospital admissions

Method:

Set up of a primary care clinic through a Foundation funded by foreign government and charity grants.

Target population:

Undocumented person, including refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants and other vulnerable populations who do not have or have limited access to the formal healthcare system.

Location:

First location on the island of Curacao. Centrally located near Sint Elisabeth Hospital.

Staff:

- One full-time project coordinator
- One full-time physician
- One full-time medical assistant
- One part-time administrative assistant
- One part-time cleaner
- A team of local specialists and volunteer doctors based on availability

1. Antenatal care

Prevention:

- Early detection of common pregnancy complications such as urinary tract infections, pre-eclampsia, growth restrictions and gestational diabetes
- Volunteer team of health care messengers educated to provide information to pregnant women throughout the island
- Dietary recommendations and folic acid/iron supplementation
- Attention to consumption of alcohol and smoking/drug use

Pregnancy check-ups:

- Minimum of visits according to WHO standards: before 12 weeks and at 20, 26, 30, 34, 36, 38 and 40 weeks
- At least one ultrasound before 12 weeks to determine gestational age and one to determine growth
- Specific requirements for check-ups according to local protocol and in agreement with local midwives/hospital
- Availability of emergency appointment on every weekday and arrangement with local midwives/hospital for emergency visits outside of regular working hours

2. Postpartum care

Maternity care:

- Volunteer team to do at-home visits for support and checking of baby (jaundice, weight, adequate supplies) after adequate training
- Promotion of breast feeding
- One standard check-up at six weeks post-partum by nurse practitioner or doctor

Vaccination:

- According to local vaccination protocols
- Vaccination days coordinated with GGD

Provisions:

- Formula in cases where breast feeding is contra-indicated
- Clothing and baby supplies through donations

Contraception:

- Counseling on different contraceptive methods
- Provision of common oral contraceptives and IUDs

3. General Practitioner visits

- Daily availability (on weekdays) of general practitioner by appointment and by open consultation
- Urinalysis by urine dipstick
- Basic wound care
- Referral for X-rays upon suspicion of fractures
- Referral to appropriate specialist or Emergency Room depending on urgency of care

4. Prevention

Communicable diseases:

- Education by health care messengers with regards to HIV, hepatitis and common STDs
- Vaginal cultures in women, urinalysis/lab tests in men
- Provision of antibiotics and antiretrovirals
- PAP smears/HPV testing: to be discussed with Fundashon Prevenshon

Secondary/tertiary prevention:

- Promotion of healthy lifestyle: diet, physical activity
- Regular blood pressure and blood sugar checks

5. Financing of outside care

Laboratory tests:

- Focus on laboratory testing recommended during pregnancy according to a special local protocol, agreed upon with midwives and gynecologists. All lab testing to be done at hospital to avoid extra costs in case of emergency delivery at hospital.

Medication:

- Financing of medication at local pharmacies at agreed upon prices

Deliveries:

- With a midwife or at a local hospital based on medical indication
- C-section according to medical indication/after consultation with a gynecologist

Hospital admissions:

- Urgent admissions covered at agreed upon prices
- Focus on admissions for pregnant women/children