

Learning and Leading: A Global Surgery Elective Designed By and For Medical Students

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Background/Objectives

- Emory Global Perioperative Alliance (EGPA): US-based, medical student-led organization
- **Goal:** Address surgical needs in under-resourced regions through community partnerships, capacity building, and education
 - **2008-2019:** Annual one-month surgical outreach programs in Haiti, including pre-program participant education, 2 weeks OR/Clinic, final week follow-up (f/u) clinic. Partnered with Promise for Haiti & local Haitian surgeons for follow-up
 - **2022-2024:** Annual 10-day surgical outreach programs to Guatemala, including pre-program participant education, 1 week OR/clinic & f/u clinic. Partnered with HELPS International in rural areas remote from established hospitals
 - All trips included education provided by faculty, residents, and medical students to local hospital staff and students
 - Research projects were accomplished as part of programs in both countries

Surgical Outreach Program Framework

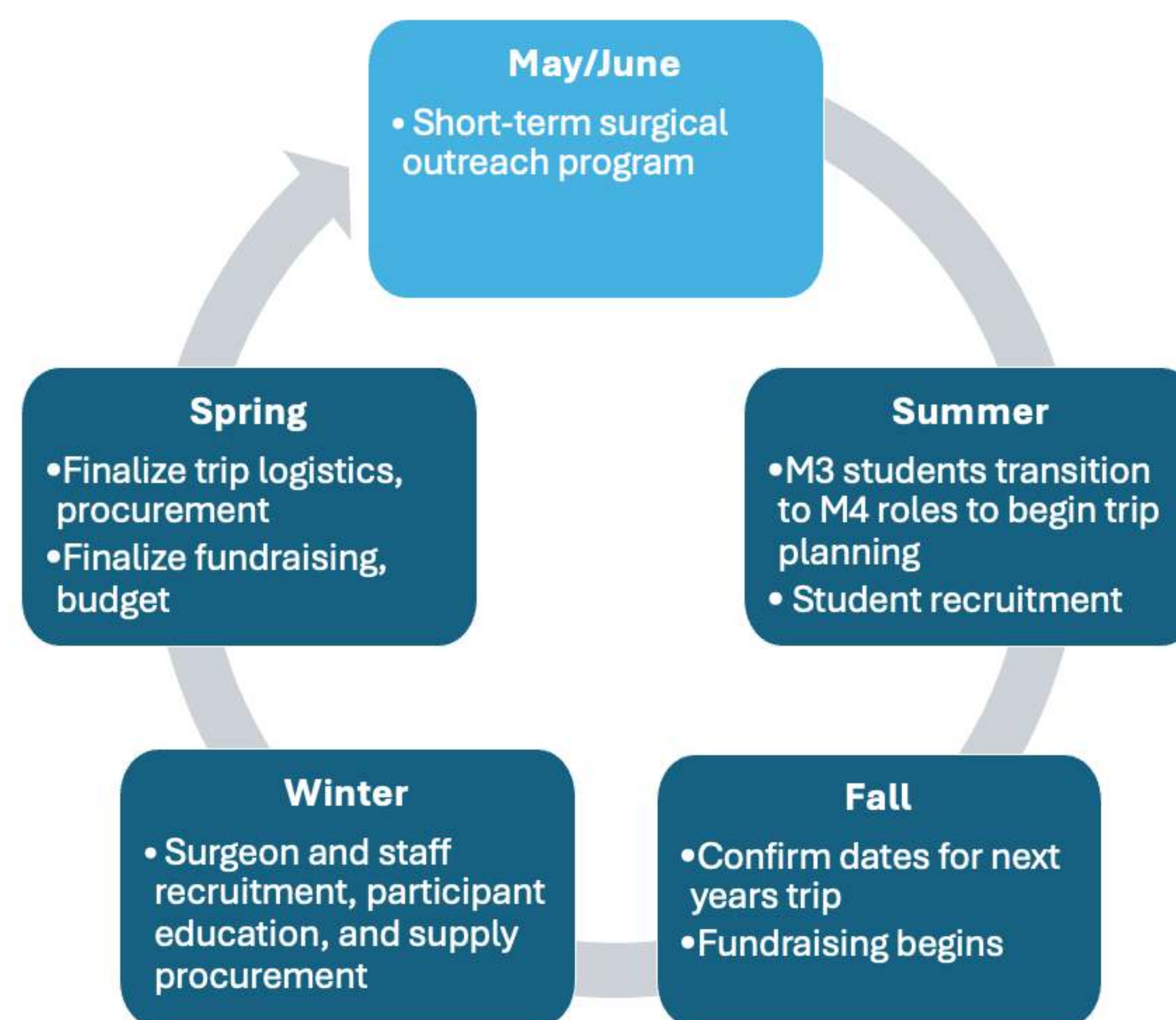


Figure 1. Annual surgical outreach program framework

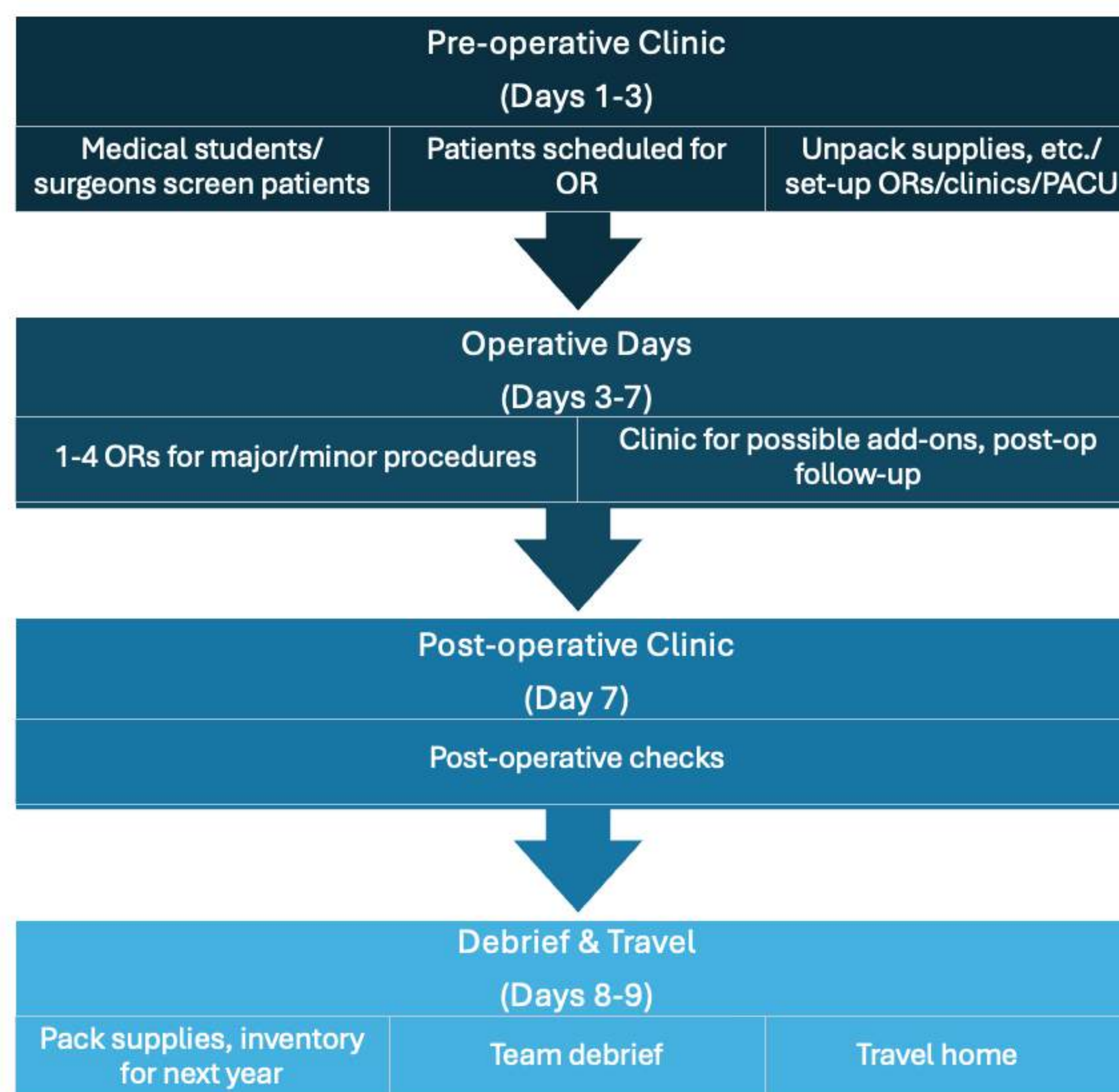


Figure 2. Weekly surgical outreach program framework

Findings

- In 2024, 79 operations were performed
- Pre-trip and in-country curriculum for US medical students
 - Global health ethics
 - Culture/language/customs of Haiti/Guatemala
 - IV/spinal anesthesia placement and suturing/knot tying
 - Guatemala: local medical student lectures on traditional Guatemalan health practices
- Curriculum for Guatemalan medical students
 - Common surgical conditions: pathology, anatomy, management
 - Suture/knot-tying lab
- Since 2008, 7 publications/presentations, WHO analysis of surgical burden of disease/surgical capacity in Haiti, several patient education videos and handouts, & education for staff at partner hospitals
- Participant satisfaction, including Guatemalan students, was very high

Conclusions

- EGPA's unique, longitudinal framework of medical student leadership allows for continuous efforts to annually improve relationships with community partners, capacity building, and education
- Short-term surgical outreach programs, while limited in number of patients served, have a significant impact in the lives of those whose access to surgical care is otherwise extremely limited
- Short-term surgical outreach programs in rural settings far from existing hospital facilities require follow-up protocols different than similar programs close to hospital or other medical facilities

Acknowledgements

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References available upon request.
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Methods

- Annually, M4 students lead with faculty assistance/supervision
- M4 student roles:
 - Procurement of medical supplies, instruments, medications
 - Oversee fundraising and grant writing
 - Oversee recruitment of faculty, staff, surgery resident(s), medical students
 - Schedule staff and patients in OR and clinics in-country
 - Manage logistics: transportation, lodging, partner communication
- M3 student roles:
 - Assist surgeons/staff in clinic, OR, and PACU
 - Partner with M4s to learn leadership roles for following year
- M2 student roles:
 - Assist w/ fundraising, ensure pipeline of students