

TRAINING

A Healthy Pregnancy for Every Body

Shining a light on equitable care for all.

In January 2026, St. Boniface Hospital held a training, education, and advocacy session about perinatal care for women with a spinal cord injury (SCI). Dr. Berthony Guerrier, Head of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Social Worker Elyse St. Cyr collaborated to create the training, with Dr. Guerrier leading the event itself. In the interview below, Mr. St. Cyr explains the goals and importance of the session.

Q: What was the focus of this training?

A: The training focused on pregnancy and childbirth after an SCI. It explained that women with an SCI can still become pregnant, but need special care during pregnancy. The training also introduced some of the complications that can occur, and emphasized the importance of follow-up with a multidisciplinary medical team.

Q: Why is training important for patients and families? Why is it important for clinicians/caregivers?

A: For patients and families, training helps reduce fear and misinformation about pregnancy after an SCI. It also gives them the **tools to make informed decisions about their reproductive health** and family planning. For clinicians and caregivers, it strengthens their ability to understand the special needs of these patients and **encourages collaboration** between rehabilitation and maternity services, and all other services.

Q: How does this training help others better understand the needs, desires, and humanity of people with disabilities?

A: These trainings remind us that people with disabilities have the **same dreams and aspirations as everyone else**, such as starting a family. When



More than 40 patients, family members, and hospital staff attended the training.

patients participate in discussions, it helps change the way society views disability. It emphasizes the **dignity, rights, and abilities** of people rather than limiting them to their medical conditions.

Q: What can you tell us about your role, and why the SCI program is so important?

A: As a Social Worker, I support patients and their families throughout their care journey, liaising with medical teams and addressing their social needs. Home visits are key to understanding living conditions, strengthening follow-up, and supporting reintegration, despite security challenges. **The SCI program is vital**, providing comprehensive biopsychosocial care and serving as the only specialized center in Haiti for people with spinal cord injuries, helping them regain autonomy and dignity. **Support from partners and donors is essential to sustain these services and continue restoring hope to patients.**

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Baby Garvens and his mother Kendie are finally going home after spending three months at St. Boniface Hospital. Kendie came from more than two hours away for an emergency C-section. And because he was delivered at just seven months, Garvens needed time in our NICU to grow healthy and strong.

Every day at St. Boniface Hospital, we treat patients like Kendie and Garvens who have travelled for hours to get to us. There is simply nowhere else for them to turn.

A recent United Nations report found that *only 10%* of healthcare facilities are fully functional. Day by day, Haiti's ongoing crises keep forcing more hospitals and clinics to shutter. USAID's closure has only put more strain on this dire situation.

But St. Boniface Hospital is still here. Every day, all day, hundreds of patients get the care they need.

We, too, have been under enormous pressure from the crises and the loss of USAID. But as you will see throughout this newsletter, that has not stopped us from doing everything we can to make healthcare more equitable and more accessible for more people than ever before.

Your support has helped us keep moving forward through every challenge. On behalf of Kendie, Garvens, and all our staff and patients, thank you for being a part of our team.

Kenbe Fèm,



Conor Shapiro
President and CEO
Health Equity International



LEADING THE WAY

Moving Forward, Saving Lives

Supporting southern Haiti's hospitals after USAID

We created the Healthy Futures Haiti (HFH) project in response to the abrupt loss of our USAID-funded Improved Health Service Delivery (IHSD) program. With few functional hospitals left in the country, we're doing everything in our power to keep quality care available in southern Haiti.

Together with HFH Director Dr. Mario Laroche, we've put together a primer on what the project is, how it's meeting the moment, and why continuing this work is so important for the road ahead.

What is the HFH Project?

HFH supports maternal and child health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services at a network of healthcare facilities in southern Haiti, specifically in the Nippes and South geographic departments.

The project is a one-year collaboration among three public and private entities: the Haitian Ministry of Health, Mission Évangélique Baptiste du Sud d'Haïti, and St. Boniface Hospital. Together, these groups manage a network of eight health facilities across the region.



*A club for pregnant women meets near Bonn Fin, Haiti.
Photo courtesy of Mission Évangélique Baptiste du Sud d'Haïti.*



A community health worker vaccinates a child at a community health event outside of L'Asile, Haiti. Photo courtesy of Courtesy of Hôpital Communautaire de Référence de L'Asile.

Participants receive financial support to help fund the staff and resources needed to deliver care.

The institutions also receive managerial support for program planning, coordination, supervision, monitoring, and reporting.

How does this project differ from HEI's former USAID project? What is the same?

HFH continues IHSD's focus on supporting quality maternal and child health services and good WASH practices at the facility level. IHSD, however, also supported HIV activities, clinical training, and technical assistance, and operated within a framework focused on proactive system development and strengthening. In contrast, HFH serves a much smaller network and is reactive, helping mitigate the devastating funding loss that followed USAID's dissolution.

What has HFH accomplished in the past year?

HFH's financing and administrative support helped each institution to relaunch or stabilize its community-based health activities. As service availability increased, attendance at community health events surged.

How have cutbacks on foreign aid impacted healthcare in Haiti over the past year?

USAID's sudden closure has significantly weakened Haiti's healthcare system and curtailed health service delivery for highly vulnerable people. International aid was already in significant decline; the decline is now much steeper. Haiti's urgent, ongoing crises have made it difficult for most people to pay for care. At the national level, the crises have also made it difficult to develop and implement a strategy to help support and improve the health system.

Why is continued funding for projects like this important for Haiti right now?

In the short and medium term, HFH and similar initiatives can help keep essential health services available and accessible to protect health and save lives. In the medium and long term, these kinds of projects should serve as bridges to mitigate the effects of the crises and help transition toward an adequately structured systemic response to Haiti's healthcare challenges.



Save the Date



**Health Equity
International**

2026

Celebration

**Thursday, October 15, 2026
Saint Cecilia Parish, Boston, MA**

Honoring Jeff Lynch



Scan the QR for tickets
and sponsorships, or go to:

healthequityintl.org/2026celebration

GIVING SPOTLIGHT

Multiply Your Impact

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Double the Donation is now integrated into all of HEI's donation forms. In seconds, you can now see if your employer will match your gift. Plus, the system will help you submit the match request quickly and easily.

Taking advantage of a corporate matching gift program is an easy way to amplify the impact of your donation. For every dollar you give to HEI, your employer could give another dollar—or more!

Learn more and try it today at healthequityintl.org/corporate-matching-gifts

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