

Princess Margaret Hospital
Nassau, Bahamas

Laura Huff
June 20 – August 1, 1991

I would like to take this time bring you up to date on my summer experiences in Nassau, Bahamas at Princess Margaret Hospital. As you know, I was sponsored through the COSTEP Program with Dr. Henry Ziegler acting as my preceptor.

My stay in Nassau extended from June 20 to August 1, a period of six weeks. During that time I was able to take advantage of a variety of educational opportunities and close interactions with hospital staff. These experiences are virtually unknown for first year students in the US System. The size of the firms (teams) and the willingness of the consultants, house staff and interns to teach gave me an outstanding opportunity to learn. My time was divided between the Children's Ward and Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) under the guidance of Dr. Colaco, Senior Pediatric Registrar. I completed a 28 day study of the admissions, care and neonatal outcome in the SCBU. The study, to be published and presented at an international meeting, will additionally benefit the hospital as an overview of SCBU management. I attended Pediatric rounds, took part in Pediatric Cardiology Clinic, and interacted with visiting professors during formal presentations and informal discussions. The availability of leading authorities and their willingness to teach were phenomenal. In the US system these types of interactions are commonly limited to students who are at a third year level or well beyond.

My time at Princess Margaret was challenging, encouraging and fulfilling. I often found myself doing outside reading to broaden my knowledge and prepare myself for the next day. This was done not as a chore, but because of the interest. The experience was so positive that I would like to return to PMH during a third year or fourth year elective rotation.

The Bahamas offer medical students experiences in "Third World Medicine" without a great deal of complications. They are close to the US both geographically and linguistically, but divergent in culture, medical experience/training, and opportunities for medical students to become involved early in their education. In particular, the staff of PMH (New Providence's only public hospital) are eager to interact with other hospitals and educational institutions. I found students from around the world taking part in this unique experience, and organizations like Georgetown University and the Ontario Babies Hospital actively participating in a very exciting exchange of ideas. Dr. Glen Beneby and Dr. Jose Colaco, Acting Medical Head and Pediatric Senior Registrar, are extremely interested in establishing ties with Case Western Reserve University and desire a more formal and solid interaction.

I feel very strongly that Case Western should take advantage of the opportunities offered in this situation and establish a direct link with PMH. Options exist for first and second year students to become involved both clinically and in research projects. Third and fourth year students would be able to take advantage of clinical experiences not usually open to them, by participating in procedures and patient care in ways not available in US institutions. Faculty would have the unique ability to collaborate or conduct their own studies in clinical, scientific and educational areas. Two way interactions would benefit both institutions by stimulating an exchange of ideas and faculty.