



From West Pueblo Street to Southern Chad

DR. MARY-LOUISE SCULLY, EXPEDITION DIRECTOR, CHAD RELIEF FOUNDATION

Many Sansum Clinic physicians are active beyond the walls of our Clinic, delivering the humanitarian component of care to the people of our community and around the globe.

Dr. Mary-Louise Scully recalls a patient who came to see her at the Sansum Clinic Travel & Tropical Medicine Center for pre-travel preparations before going to Chad. "That is not a place most people go," said Scully. During the appointment, Scully found herself inquiring about the Chad Relief Foundation, the organization the patient was traveling with, and learning about their work. "Before I knew it, I was on their board of directors going on the next trip with them," said Scully. During her residency and fellowship at Yale, Scully volunteered at a tropical medicine clinic, so travel was not new to her.

The Chad Relief Foundation primarily works in southern parts of the Republic of Chad which is on the border of the Central African Republic. Sometimes the people are referred to as

"forgotten refugees" because the area gets less attention than Sudan and Darfur. "It is like traveling through a lot of dust and dirt and maybe passing a town here and there," said Scully. Contrary to what you might expect for a physician, the organization is not medical in nature nor does it focus on medical supplies.

Scully's primary interest lies in preventing malaria and infectious disease, and she is passionate about bed netting to decrease risk. "For many Americans malaria is just a word,

"My goal is not only to protect travelers when they go to other parts of the world, but in the long-term to raise the bar on good health around the globe," said Scully.



Dr. Mary-Louise Scully on location in Chad, central Africa with patients

but for many parts of the world it is a daily reality,” said Scully. Scully likes to work on issues close to her heart and participates in projects such as microfinance, oxen and plow programs for agriculture, latrines, building wells and implementing solar electricity. One of her most memorable trips was when she was supplied with \$26,000-worth of medications by Direct Relief International during a meningococcal meningitis outbreak. “It was very meaningful to hand-deliver a life-saving medication,” said Scully.

At Sansum Clinic, Scully dedicates time to educating travelers about vaccines, repellents and preventive medicines because she would rather prevent diseases than treat them. “Our travelers are amazing and start at age eleven or twelve going on school trips to Costa Rica, which is a great experience,” said Scully. For the younger crowd, Scully focuses on risks and safety issues. She encourages kids to stay with their friends when they travel and be aware that they are not in the United States anymore.



“The focus is on educating young girls about staying in school longer, delaying marriage and therefore delaying childbirth which significantly decreases the risk of their having rather difficult obstetrical complications,” said Scully.



She said that there is potential for developing an exchange program between students in Chad and students at Santa Barbara High School. Scully is grateful for the chance to travel because it has brought her experience

and exposure to various infectious diseases first-hand as opposed to just reading about them in a book.

“My mantra is that an educated traveler is a good traveler; and the more people know that these diseases are not just words and can put them in context, they will be much better prepared and more likely to stay healthy,” said Scully.

Scully is currently getting teased about her next trip to Philadelphia where she will serve on the American Board of Internal Medicine Infectious Disease Exam Committee. “I do not need any shots or preparations for Philadelphia!” said Scully. ☀

Planning a vacation or humanitarian travels? Please visit our Sansum Clinic Travel & Tropical Medical Center at <http://sansumclinictravel.com> to learn more about vaccines and other important travel considerations.

