

5 Tucson docs in Haiti, helping fix broken bones

Nation desperate for medical help, so they step up

By Stephanie Innes
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Five local doctors are in Haiti this week helping residents there heal broken bones from this month's devastating earthquake.

The doctors include three surgeons from the Tucson Orthopaedic Institute, one orthopedic surgeon from the University of Arizona and an anesthesiologist who practices at Tucson Medical Center.

The journey for four of the doctors began last week when Dr. Russell G. Cohen was watching a television news report



Dr. Eric P. Antcil



Dr. Russell G. Cohen



Dr. Joel R. Goode



Dr. Joseph E. Sheppard

about Haiti with his 11-year-old son, Gavin.

The story said that what was needed most in Haiti were orthopedic surgeons to help the many people suffering from broken bones. His son suggested his dad try to help, and that's what he did.

Russell Cohen was able to connect with a relief group and soon found two other local doctors with the Tucson Or-

thopaedic Institute who wanted to join him — Eric P. Antcil and Joel R. Goode.

Since they were going to perform surgery, they was able to find a local anesthesiologist to help as well — Dr. Luis Esparza of Old Pueblo Anesthesiology who also practices at Tucson Medical Center.

A fifth Tucson doctor — orthopedic surgeon Joseph E. Sheppard, left for Haiti on

Wednesday. Sheppard is an associate professor of clinical orthopedic surgery at the UA's College of Medicine and specializes in the hand and upper extremities. He will be working with the Northwest Haiti Christian Mission in the northern part of Haiti, University Medical Center spokeswoman Katie Riley said.

Sheppard has done extensive volunteer medical work outside the U.S. as a volunteer with Hand Surgeries Overseas, a program of Health Volunteers Overseas. The nonprofit group works in developing countries and focuses on training and educating local health-care providers.

Sheppard also recently mentored and lectured orthopedic and plastic-surgery residents at

Hospital Escuela in Honduras and held oral examinations for the hospital's second-year plastic-surgery residents.

Cohen, Antcil, Goode and Esparza left Monday and are in the area of Leogane, a community about 20 miles west of the capital of Port-au-Prince that was the epicenter of the quake.

The Washington Post reported that the centerpiece of Leogane was destroyed in the earthquake — the Sainte Rose de Lima School, which collapsed and crushed 500 nuns, priests and students to death.

The death toll in Leogane is believed to be in the thousands, and Cohen has already sent home messages saying nearly all of its buildings have been flattened.

The four local doctors, who

brought surgical supplies and cash donated by Tucson Medical Center, have already performed surgeries in and around Leogane, Cohen's wife, Lori Cohen, said.

Russell Cohen specializes in hips and knees, Goode in upper extremities and Antcil in feet and ankles.

"Between the three of them they cover the whole body," Lori Cohen said. "My husband described one very touching moment when he was brought to a tent and found a 7-year-old boy whose leg had been amputated after the earthquake. Russ had to repair a broken femur in his other leg."

The couple is communicating mainly by text messages.

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