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Tulsa medical team going to Indonesia

By NICOLE NASCENZI World Staff Writer
1/11/2005

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Tulsa doctor Mitchell Duinick is preparing to lead a team of area physicians on a medical relief mission to Indonesia to help tsunami victims recover from the recent natural disaster.

Duinick said he and eight other doctors are planning to begin their 30-hour flight to the Banda Aceh region of Sumatra, Indonesia, on Friday.

"We will be sharing what the Lord has given us with the less fortunate," Duinick said.

The doctors will be working in makeshift clinics and hospitals set up in tents throughout one of the areas hardest hit by the Dec. 26 tsunami.

"It could be kind of stressful because we don't know what we are getting into. You just have to be flexible," Duinick said.

Doctors may be sleeping on tent floors and the climate will be very hot and wet, he said.

Six of the physicians are residents training through a Tulsa-based program called In His Image. The program trains doctors in Christian family practice, but is not affiliated with a university.

In His Image is affiliated with Hillcrest Medical Center and administered through Family Medical Care of Tulsa. Duinick is the director of the residency program.

Three of the doctors including Duinick, hold private practices through Family Medical Care of Tulsa and will put their practices on hold for the two-week relief mission to Indonesia.

Duinick said although many of the doctors normally integrate Christian prayer into their daily medical practices, the physicians will be respectful of the religions practiced by the tsunami victims, many of whom are Muslim.

"We are not going to proselytize or Americanize," he said. "We hope we can do a little to relieve their suffering."

Duinick said the doctors will take some basic medical supplies such as antibiotics and gauze with them, but can only bring what they can carry.

The Tulsa physicians will work with a group of doctors from other relief programs once in Indonesia.

This will not be the first international relief trip for Duinick. He has volunteered in several countries, including participating in medical relief efforts in Honduras after Hurricane Mitch devastated the country in 1998.

The medical mission is being funded by donations from community members and the Family Medical Center of Tulsa. In addition, several of the doctors involved are dipping into their own bank accounts to pay for the relief effort.

In His Image is accepting donations of money and medical supplies to help the doctors with their relief work. All donations are tax deductible.

More information on the relief program is available by visiting <http://jimweems.com/duinick/duinick-1.html> or calling 493-7816 Ext. 8.



Dr. Mitchell Duinick, with a world map in his office at the Family Medical Clinic in Tulsa on Monday, will be leading a team of area doctors to Indonesia to assist with the tsunami relief efforts.
MICHAEL WYKE / Tulsa World