

# SerenaGroup

building the nation's leading wound care team.

## DR. SERENA IN HAITI

By DEAN WELLS *Warren Times Observer*



A capital city in rubble. Hundreds of thousands of people homeless. Tens of thousands of injured people and infection running rampant.

"It was the Third World with a major medical disaster," said Dr. Thomas Serena of Warren of his recent trip to Haiti. "I couldn't imagine anything worse."

Serena, head of Warren General Hospital's Wound Clinic, was selected to help lead a M.A.S.H-type relief effort for a week outside of Port-Au-Prince, Haiti in late February. He spent seven days coordinating wound care and follow-up for hundreds of Haitians injured in a devastating earthquake that struck the tiny island nation in January.

Serena was attached into the relief mission through his ties with the Wound Clinic at the University of Miami. He has conducted a significant amount of research with the university in the past and was familiar with its Medishare program, which has provided relief to Haitians since 1994. He received a phone call from one of the coordinators, whom he knows, and was informed, "Tom, you've got February 17 through February 23."

Team leaders such as Serena take one-week tours of duty, constantly rotating through the Haitian facility.

Medishare's facilities which consist of circus-style tents and giant generators are located within a stone's throw of the Port-Au-Prince airport. The sprawling temporary wound clinic is served by 175 nurses, doctors, technicians and administrators.

"Infection is just rampant down there," Serena said. "I would say 60 to 70 percent of the wounds we did surgery on were infected."

Doctors were faced with two major types of wounds while working at the clinic, Serena said: amputations and pressure ulcers.

"Here," Serena said of amputations in the United States, "they close them up nice and neat. Down there, they use a guillotine method. (Rescue workers) were going down into the rubble and actually performing amputations so they could remove the people. So you had these horrific wounds."

Serena said doctors in the clinic saw a large number of pressure ulcers due to people being trapped in one position for long periods of time following the earthquake. "We saw some absolutely amazing pressure ulcer situations," he said.

*“ . . . they use a guillotine method: Rescue workers were going down into the rubble and actually performing amputations so they could remove the people. ”*

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The medical personnel at the wound care facility put in 12- to 15-hour days, starting their shifts at 6:30 in the morning. The doctors and support staff worked using a large tent as an in-patient receiving area and smaller air conditioned side tents as operating rooms.

"The operating rooms were like 80 degrees with the air conditioning," Serena said, "but the in-patient tent was like 110, 120 all the time. It was just impossible to work in there."

*" . . . five orphans, who were brothers. . . begged Serena's group to adopt the youngest brother and take him back to the United States. "*

Medical personnel slept in shifts in bunks in a large tent. They were often awakened at night by aftershocks.

"They were still having aftershocks like crazy," Serena said. "You would wake up at 1:30 in the morning to someone screaming because the tent was shaking."

Serena and several other volunteers toured Port-Au-Prince by motor vehicle during their stay on the island, despite being warned to avoid the devastated capital city.

"Downtown Port-Au-Prince is just rubble," Serena said. "There are great, huge lean-to cities with thousands of people living in them. I just don't know what they are going to do. It's still a very desperate situation."

Serena said that clean water is "at a premium" on the island. "It is a super precious resource," he said. "On the third day there, they rigged up a shower for us and we were allowed to have 30 seconds of water."

Serena's departure from Haiti was scheduled for Feb. 23, but a minor earthquake knocked off the landing strip lights at the airport.

During his team's wait in the airport, they were approached by five orphans, who were brothers. They begged Serena's group to adopt the youngest brother and take him back to the United States.



*Downtown Port Au Prince*

"Anything of value that we had on us we put in a box and gave to them," Serena said.

According to Serena, some of the volunteers returning from the island are having a difficult time readjusting.

I call it 'Post-Haiti Depression Syndrome,'" Serena said. "You're operating for 12 hours a day, then you come back and realize all the carnage you experienced. It all sort of sets in. There are 500,000 homeless people down there and orphans everywhere. It still a very dire situation."

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## **HBO/WC INTRODUCTORY COURSE COMPLETED**



**SerenaGroup™** conducted the quarterly introductory course for Hyperbaric Medicine and Wound Care, at the Marriot Key Largo Bay Resort beginning May 22, thru May 27th.

This course has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Essential Areas and Policies of the Accreditation Council for Continued

Medical Education (ACCME) through the sponsorship of the Undersea & Hyperbaric Medicine Society (UHMS) and **Oxygen 8** Hyperbaric Medicine Centers.

The next scheduled course will be in Milwaukee WI on October 10 thru 14.

**For more information or to register to attend the next course, please call Rachael Thayer at (814) 723-3745 or visit our web site at [serenagroup.net](http://serenagroup.net)**

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## SHARON MCCONNELL, DIRECTOR NEWBRIDGE MEDICAL RESEARCH, HONORED

On Sunday, April 25, 2010, Sharon McConnell was honored for maintaining her CCRC (Certified Clinical Research Coordinator) status for 10 years through ACRP. The award ceremony took place at the 10 Year Certification Ceremony at the ACRP 2010 Global Conference & Exposition in Tampa, FL.



The CCRA and CCRC certification program was recently accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the accreditation body of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence. The ACRP certification exams are the first and only certification programs in clinical research to earn this level of recognition.

According to Kathryn Kimmel, chair of the Academy's Board of Trustees, "Those who earn the CCRA and/or CCRC designation have demonstrated their understanding of and compliance with internationally accepted standards of clinical research practices for the conduct of studies of experimental medicines, medical devices, and other therapies involving human subjects".

NewBridge Medical Research, a wholly owned not-for-profit corporation of the SerenaGroup, is acknowledged world wide as a leader in wound healing research with ongoing trials in growth factors, gene therapy, bioengineered skin products, and adult stem cell research.

*Research is the heart of*

*SerenaGroup 's mission*

*to advance the science*

*and practice of wound*

*healing and hyperbaric*

*medicine.*

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## NEW EMPLOYEES



Rachel Thayer is a native of Warren County, Pennsylvania. Having just recently received her B.A. from the University of Pittsburgh, she has returned to the area to work in the Serena Group's corporate office. She will be assisting the Corporate Controller, acting as Executive Assistant to Dr. Serena, playing a central role in the distribution of marketing materials, and assisting in the planning and implementation of the Introduction to Hyperbaric Medicine CME courses.

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## LIMB PRESERVATION CENTER OPENS:

### THE CENTER FOR LIMB PRESERVATION AND REGENERATIVE MEDICINE AT WARREN GENERAL HOSPITAL

has opened under the supervision of Dr Thomas Serena MD FACS. He is joined in the service by Dr David DeMarco MD FACS who brings his expertise in vascular surgery into the program and with Dr Anthony Tuccio DPM and Dr Mark Tuccio DPM who operate the largest podiatric practice in the Warren-Jamestown area. "This service expands our existing wound care program and will further serve the community with adjunctive Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy that is also available at WGH," Dr Serena said.

## SerenaGroup™

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*SerenaGroup™* consists of a group of companies working in concert to provide the most comprehensive care for acute and chronic wounds available in the US today. From the wound clinic to the hospital ward and skilled nursing facilities, state-of-the-art wound treatment is provided in all patient care settings. The dedicated wound care specialists and staff of *Penn North Centers for Advanced Wound Care™* operate clinics recognized as centers of excellence in wound care, education and research. *NewBridge Medical Research™*, a not-for-profit corporation, is acknowledged world wide as a leader in wound healing research with ongoing trials in growth factors, gene therapy, bioengineered skin products, and, most recently, novel pharmaceuticals in early stages of development. *Oxygen 8™* is an innovative provider of hyperbaric medicine with turn-key set up and several different management programs available. *Healing Wounds™* delivers the latest in wound care technology to skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation centers, and long term acute care hospitals.

## DR LE MD FEATURED IN "OKLAHOMA" MAGAZINE

*At 32 years old, Le is St. John's youngest director leading the charge of a major medical service*



### Dr. Lam Le

As the medical director for the St. John Wound Center, a specialized center that helps to heal advanced wounds, Dr. Lam Le provides impeccable service to patients recovering from wounds, such as diabetic foot ulcers and radiation injury from cancer treatment. The only Oklahoma physician certified by the American College of Hyperbaric Medicine, Council for Medical Education and Testing and the Academy of Wound Management, her commitment to patients has played a major role in helping grow what started as a temporary, two-room clinic in 2008 into a center that receives patients statewide as well as from Texas and Kansas.

At 32 years old, Le is St. John's youngest director leading the charge of a major medical service, a role that she says has been an incredibly gratifying experience. "Just knowing that I am making a difference in someone's life has been so rewarding. There are always at least a few who heal every day – and we get to see their progress – and we can tell that wounds are improving and healing," she says.

Patients who come to the clinic have a 95 percent healing success rate, and to make that happen, we really become a part of their lives. I love the relationships that we build with them and I love being able to assist in making the quality of their lives better." In addition to her service at the center, Le is the founder of HERO (Helping Emergency Residents Overseas), a nonprofit organization working to provide aid to countries like Vietnam, where HERO is currently sponsoring 1,000 families with rice and food. With a passion for furthering education, Le's goal for next year is to open a clinic in Vietnam to provide clinical training and education for medical residents.

Dr Le became associated with the *SerenaGroup™* in June 2008 and "... she has been a model of professionalism and quality that is really quite remarkable," said Dr Thomas Serena MD FACS founder and president.



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