FDI, FOLA and DTI launch campaign for Haitian dentists

By Javier M. de Pison, Editor in Chief
Dental Tribune Latin America

The president of the Haitian Dental Association, Dr. Samuel Prophet, told Dental Tribune Latin America that he and several colleagues he was able to contact in Port-au-Prince were fine after the devastating earthquake in his country. “So far, we only have reports of two missing dentists,” Prophet wrote in an e-mail.

The recent earthquake not only devastated Haiti’s meager health resources, but also most dental practices. In a country where there were only 500 dentists for nine million people before Jan. 12, 2010, the extent of the devastation has affected regular people and dental professionals alike.

The president of the Latin American Dental Federation (FOLA), Dr. Adolfo Rodríguez, launched a campaign immediately after the quake to help both the general population and dental professionals in Haiti.

Rodríguez, who is also the president of the Dominican Dental Association, asked for help for Haiti at a meeting in Panama. Rodríguez is flanked by the president, right, and vice president of the Panama Dental Association.

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→ See page 5 for the test
→ See page 6 for the answer (no skipping to this page first)

Signs point to uptick for dental products industry

By Fred Michmershuizen, Online Editor

After one of the worst slumps in decades, the American economy has been showing signs of improvement in recent weeks — and several factors show better days may be ahead for the dental products industry as well.

The gross domestic product, which is considered the broadest measure of economic activity, expanded at an annual rate of 5.7 percent in the fourth quarter of 2009, its biggest jump in more than six years.

The growth followed a 2.2 percent increase the previous quarter.
cification (AOP), is asking companies and dental professionals to donate dental instruments, materials and equipment, is organizing the campaign for Haiti with the help of FDI World Dental Federation and Dental Tribune International.

In addition, Rodriguez is putting together teams of dental volunteers to travel to Haiti once the major health and humanitarian crises are under control, or at least manageable, to attend to the dental needs of the population. The hub for this effort would be the headquarters of AOP in Santo Domingo.

“We also need to show our support for our colleagues in Haiti, most of whom have lost everything,” Rodriguez said. “We need to get them back on their feet by helping them to rebuild their practices.”

Lost practices

Prophet said in his e-mail that “many of our colleagues have lost their practices and we were thinking about how to help them. It’s very good news to know that FOLA, FDI and Dental Tribune are trying to help Haitian dentists.”

If dentists know “that help is on its way, they can have hope,” Dental Tribune will publicize this campaign for Haiti in its worldwide print and online editions. At a meeting in Panama, Rodriguez received the support of the presidents of all Central American dental associations, and made an emotional appeal to dental manufacturers to donate much needed supplies. He said Colgate has already agreed to donate brushes and toothpaste, and that he meet with KaVo in Brazil at the San Paulo International Dental Meeting meeting to ask for donations of new and used dental units.

Rodriguez added that it was moving to witness dental professionals from countries with little resources such as Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador say that they will collect funds from their members, second-hand equipment and dental supplies to help their Haitian colleagues.

Some prominent Latin American dentists professionals from Brazil, Uruguay and Costa Rica, among others, have already expressed their interest in participating in dental teams to help the most urgent needs of the Haitian population.

Conditions on the ground seem to indicate that these teams would operate in mobile units at the Dominican-Haiti border, once the most pressing health emergencies and needs are somewhat under control.

The reason for this is that most of Port-au-Prince is in ruins, and the Dominican government has moved the majority of its mobile health resources to the border in an effort to treat Haitians, and avoid a migratory Exodus.

Rodriguez said that this tragedy “is also an opportunity to build a public health service that includes dental care. We have asked the Pan American Health Organization, FDI, all Latin American dental associations, companies and other institutions for help in putting together teams of dental professionals to travel to Haiti and start working there, and leave in place basic dental treatment centers.”

Rodriguez added that this would be a long-term program that includes rebuilding the dental school at the university as well as private practices. It will also take some time to start, and he said that the priorities would be treating children and pregnant women.

Rodriguez also said he has asked for funding from the government of the Dominican Republic.

Companies and dentists interested in helping Haiti should contact Rodriguez at arroll@code.et.net.do or by phone at (809) 519-0789.