

I cherish all of the memories I made during my time on the Jamaica Dental Mission Trip. I remember, when we first arrived at the clinic on day 1, the amount of Jamaicans waiting outside to receive our services was astonishing to me. We jumped right into working with the patients, providing health screenings and going through patient histories one after the other. There was honestly no time to be timid. I learned to adapt to patient friendly language familiar to the Jamaicans and deciphered through their face-paced responses. There were many times when non-verbal communication played a key role. Communication improved after a couple of hours and pretty soon, we had seen over 40 patients by noon that day.

Throughout the four days at the clinics, it was truly amazing to see the interprofessional teamwork that took place by dentists, pharmacists, students, and volunteers with a common goal in mind: to provide the best patient care for as many people in the underserved communities of Jamaica. Our group put in a lot of sweat and hard work from early mornings to late evenings, but we were always greeted with the warm smiles and unforgettable kindness from the Jamaican people and staff. (Fresh coconuts were also provided when available!) We worked together to lend a hand when it was needed, whether it was in dental, pharmacy, or even crowd control.

The challenge to work through the cultural differences with the Jamaican people taught me the importance of tailoring communication when working with a specific patient population. The experience was challenging, but the exposure to diversity of Jamaica has helped me consider the differences in patients and patient education as I move forward in my career as a future healthcare professional. As I reflect on my time on the Jamaica Dental Mission Trip, I know that it has given me relationships and lessons that will last a lifetime.

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