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Practicum Site: Primeros Pasos

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Strategies to Address Health Workforce Support During a Pandemic in Guatemala

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Introduction: COVID-19 has affected the world's population health and general living; however, with innovations and the introduction to possible protections there are optimistic views toward ending the pandemic. Yet in rural locations of Palajunoj Valley of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, this is just not the case. General access to healthcare, exacerbated by the pandemic, has been difficult for families living in the rural highlands. The Primeros Pasos clinic goes to great lengths to minimize the health disparities families face in the Valley. The clinic now has additional COVID-19 related obstacles (e.g., over filled clinics, lack of supplies, and over worked healthcare workers and physicians). The overall objective of this practicum was to analyze these barriers to gain insight into how best to support Primeros Pasos physicians and healthcare.

Methods: A REDCap survey and interview surveys and interviews were developed to evaluate the overall challenges. The survey consists of about 50 questions covering items regarding clinic resources, access clinic demands or pressures, and general healthcare worker wellbeing.

Results: Physicians and healthcare workers will have the opportunity to be interviewed to elaborate on survey items through an interview which consists of 10 open-ended questions to better understand the dynamic of teamwork and individual responsibilities. Interviews have been postponed due to patients overflow due to COVID-19.

Conclusions: Through a REDCap survey and interview, physicians and healthcare workers who work at Primeros Pasos clinics can communicate the areas of growth for the clinic as it addresses COVID-19 response resources and stressors. These findings will also help navigate where to allocate more funds, this will also assist where to place more funds, reprioritize services, and shape the future of Primeros Pasos Needs Assessment and to better communicate to future potential funders, healthcare workers, and volunteers.

