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## Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As the holiday season gears up this week, provoking reflection of what one has to be thankful for, I am ever-thankful for my family and close friendships, and as an American, for the educational, economic, and health opportunities I have had in life. While collaborating with our local friends and partners promoting health in the communities where Health Horizons International (HHI) works, I am ever-impressed by their energy and positive attitude in the face of poverty and limited opportunities. HHI's Community Health Workers' (CHWs) persistent efforts to work together as a team to support patients in their villages are truly inspiring, and make me extremely thankful for the opportunity to collaborate alongside them, and learn from them.

But there are more challenges here than just providing access to primary health care. Recently in the Dominican Republic, national legislation was passed that redefined the path to residency and citizenship, tightening restrictions on immigrants and descendents of immigrants in the DR. The laws disproportionately negatively affect those of Haitian ethnic descent, and have created a stressful environment across the country where all people of Haitian ethnic descent are at risk of being questioned by authorities, harassed for identification documents, and possibly deported across the border, even if they were born in the DR.

HHI's cadre of trained Community Health Workers are of both Dominican and Haitian ethnicity. During this unstable time, our Haitian CHWs have had to limit their travel throughout the communities for concern of being stopped and interrogated by Dominican authorities. The Dominican CHWs have stepped up in this crisis, supporting their fellow health workers by making certain trips for them, helping them ensure their patients get the proper medications and support as needed. Seeing this dynamic take place within HHI's extended team has been heartening and inspiring! We are so thankful that our team members are reaching out to support each other with such conviction; it embodies the spirit of cooperation that HHI is based upon.

Thanks to our entire team, HHI continues to provide access to health care, improve sanitation conditions, address hypertension and diabetes head-on through treatment and prevention education, and build the capacity of local health care system in the Dominican Republic. Please, as you ask yourself what you are thankful for this season, consider some of the challenges faced by our friends in the Dominican Republic, and consider helping us support them to take charge of their health by making a donation to HHI.

As always, please feel free to write me directly with any questions or feedback for Health Horizons and our work.

Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Hanukkah,

Paul

[pguggen@hhidr.org](mailto:pguggen@hhidr.org)

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## Introducing Logistics Coordinator, Marinelli Gutierrez

Marinelli has recently joined the HHI team as the Logistics Coordinator. She graduated from Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra in the Dominican Republic with a degree in Executive Secretary. She has experience includes work as an Accounting Administrative Assistant in both lawyers' and general offices. Those most in need, especially children, compel her to serve most. Her hobbies include watching cultural TV programs and listening to romantic music.



Welcome Marinelli!

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## World Diabetes Day November 14th

For more information on Diabetes worldwide—a chronic disease Health Horizons continues to focus on through diagnosis, treatment, monitoring and prevention education in the Dominican Republic—you can look to these valuable resources:

<http://www.worlddiabetesfoundation.org/>

<http://www.idf.org/diabetesatlas>

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Health Horizons International is committed to improving community health and expanding access to primary health care in partnership with communities affected by poverty in the Dominican Republic.

**Thank you for your support and belief in our cause.**



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