

Two Centegra nurses go to Haiti to lend hand

This might be the fastest that Angela Zientara ever has prepared for a trip.

Tuesday of last week, Zientara, a nurse at Centegra Hospital – McHenry, heard about a group of nurses going to Haiti to assist with relief efforts. On Thursday night, she decided to go. By Friday afternoon, she received a flurry of immunizations and was readying to board a plane for Miami on Saturday.

Today, she and another Centegra nurse, Christopher Mulkins, will fly from Miami to Haiti, where they will spend a week helping those injured by the January earthquake.

"It's been kind of a whirlwind to get everything," said Zientara, 34. "[But] there's all these people hurting. The opportunity arose, so I said, 'Sure, I could do this for a week.'"

Zientara and Mulkins are going with Project Medishare, a nonprofit organization formed in 1994 to assess the health care situation in Haiti and explore ways in which U.S. medical professionals could help. The organization is sending medical professionals to help treat Haitians so they don't have to travel to the U.S. for post-earthquake medical care.

Zientara and Mulkins, intensive care unit nurses, were told that they were allowed to bring two 50-pound bags with them to Haiti. They've been advised to bring enough water for six days and food, such as meal replacement bars.

Because there's been such a warm reception to the idea of the nurses going to Haiti, the 100-pound limit actually might be a problem.

Once McHenry County Orthopaedics heard about the trip, they donated about "two grocery carts full" of supplies, Mulkins said. Centegra also has donated some items.

"We just need a lot of favors when it comes to the airport, to actually get all our stuff on the aircraft," Mulkins said.

The two nurses said they weren't sure what to expect, but they're hoping to be able to improve some lives.

"We're going to go and do what we can," Zientara said.

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