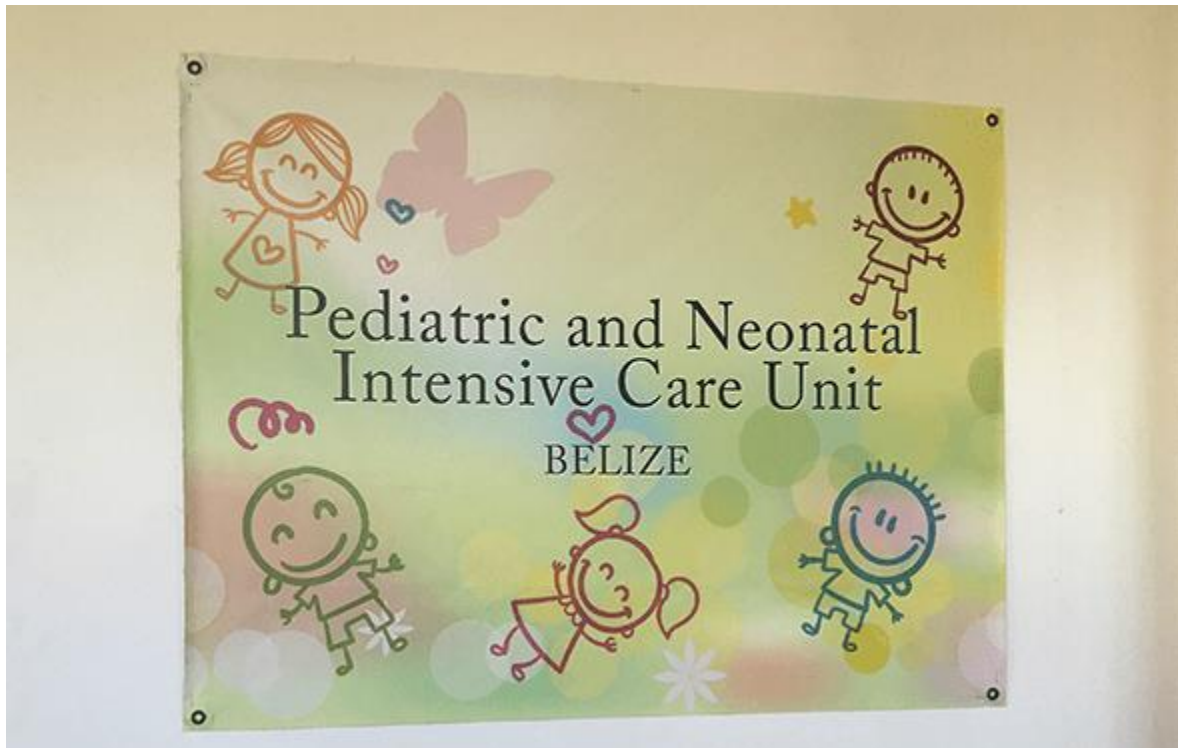


WakeMed NICU Team Visits Belize to Help Babies in Need

In September of 2017, a group of WakeMed NICU providers, led by Dr. Claudia Tolentino Cadet, visited the Central American country of Belize for seven days to share education about neonatal developmental care, nutrition, and respiratory care.

The trip was sponsored by the [World Pediatric Project](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to helping children in Central America and the Western Caribbean receive advanced medical care not available locally.



Empowering Providers to Improve Neonatal Morbidity

Dr. Cadet has been working closely with the World Pediatric Project since 2015 on maternal-infant educational initiatives to empower providers with educational tools that will help improve neonatal morbidity and mortality in the country. During her last visit, it was identified that developmental care training would be highly beneficial at [Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital](#) (KMH), which houses the only Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in the country.

The neonatal team included Dr. Cadet, a neonatologist; Marlene Heggie, a neonatal nurse practitioner; Kristen Buczkowski, a nurse educator; and Melissa Johnson, a psychologist and NIDCAP specialist.



Supporting NICU Babies

The WakeMed team spent one week shoulder to shoulder with bedside nurses, demonstrating strategies for how to best support NICU babies. They discussed topics for optimizing environmental considerations like minimizing external stimulation from noise and lighting, to strategies like four-handed care and how to best support infants during procedures.

The team also spent time discussing optimizing nutrition and respiratory care through both lecture and hands-on formats. They sat down with parents to discuss barriers to infant bonding, breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact and were able to give feedback to nursing leadership for improving care.

The team also had the opportunity to visit with nurses from [Western Regional Hospital](#) to review neonatal resuscitation skills and newborn care. All in all, they were able to reach about 60 bedside nurses, 4 medical residents, and 2 pediatricians in their trainings over the course of the week.



Sharing Skills to Improve Neonatal Care

In addition to their experience teaching, the team was also awestruck at how much they learned about what it means to work in an under-resourced setting. The devotion and creativity neonatal providers in Belize demonstrated were eye-opening.

The team was absolutely impressed by the teamwork and enthusiasm they saw in the nursing staff caring for incredibly fragile babies, under the most stressful of circumstances. In order to demonstrate their gratitude, once back in the United States, they put together a diaper drive and were able to send multiple boxes of diapers to the KMH NICU, along with some basic medical supplies.

The experience demonstrated that WakeMed staff is volunteering their skill set beyond the boundaries of Wake County to help others in need.

About Claudia Cadet, MD

[Dr. Claudia Cadet](#) is a Neonatologist with WakeMed Physician Practices – Neonatology. Dr. Cadet is board certified in general pediatrics and neonatal-perinatal medicine. She has clinical interests within the field of neonatology and is committed to global health work in Latin America that is centered around neonatal resuscitation and newborn care.

Dr. Cadet is also the co-founder of the Manos de Ramon Foundation, a foundation she started with one of her residency friends to teach maternal/infant acute care skills in low resource areas in Latin America. [Visit her GoFundMe page for more information.](#)

About Kristen Buczkowski

Kristen Buczkowski MSN, BSN, RNC is a clinical educator/supervisor within WakeMed Health & Hospitals Newborn Nursery & Neonatal ICU. She is a member of the North Carolina Organization of Nurse Leaders and is actively involved with the Perinatal Quality Core of North Carolina (PQCNC). She enjoys working towards bettering the care for neonates.