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November 1, 2006

Dear Friends of SIGN,

We are en route to Bangladesh where we will attend a SIGN conference hosted by Dr. Faruque Quasem, program manager of NITOR Hospital, located in Dhaka the capital of Bangladesh. NITOR's SIGN program is nearly 5 years old. Surgeons here have treated hundreds of patients with the SIGN Nail. Surgeons from four hospitals in Bangladesh will attend the conference to hear papers presented by the residents from NITOR on research they have conducted using the SIGN nail. We will also provide training on the new extractor/compressor device that our engineers have designed to compress the fracture during the initial surgery to reduce the chance for non-union. We hope to start a new program in Comilla Hospital, located outside of Dhaka.

The enclosed newsletter summarizes the successful SIGN conference held in September this year. The conference was attended by surgeons from 15 different countries. The conference provided a forum for exchange of orthopaedic knowledge and an opportunity for overseas surgeons to network with US and Canadian surgeons. The 2006 conference was accredited Category 1 CME credits reflecting our expanding educational role.

The newsletter also shares our expanding role in Africa and disaster relief. Over the last 18 months, programs in Africa have grown to 26. Several US surgeons have traveled to establish programs in Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Malawi, Rwanda, and Tanzania. African surgeons have started programs in neighboring countries.

Our role in disaster relief is expanding as we have become first responders for orthopaedic surgery. Local SIGN surgeons are able to respond immediately when their own country is affected. SIGN surgeons from other countries, including US respond within days, bringing SIGN equipment and hands to help. Dr. Quasem met us in Pakistan in December 2005 and stayed until February 2006. He trained surgeons in two hospitals to use SIGN equipment.

To accommodate the growing number of programs, SIGN is expanding internally. By June 2007, we will be moving to a larger facility. The new facility will allow space to double our capacity for manufacture of implants and to expand the types of implants and instrumentation we now provide.

The expansion of SIGN creates many opportunities for us to help in the world and many changes to the way we work in the US. We continue to seek ways to improve communications with our friends. The enclosed newsletter is reduced to four pages in response to suggestions from our friends that the previous newsletters were too long. In conjunction with a shorter newsletter, we have added more related stories onto the website (www.sign-post.org). We hope that you can take a moment to view it soon. We appreciate your feedback and are eager to hear your comments. Please send them to us at signcom@sign-post.org.

As always, we are indebted to you for your support.

In gratitude,

Lewis G. Zirkle Jr., MD
President and Founder

Jeanne Dillner
Executive Director