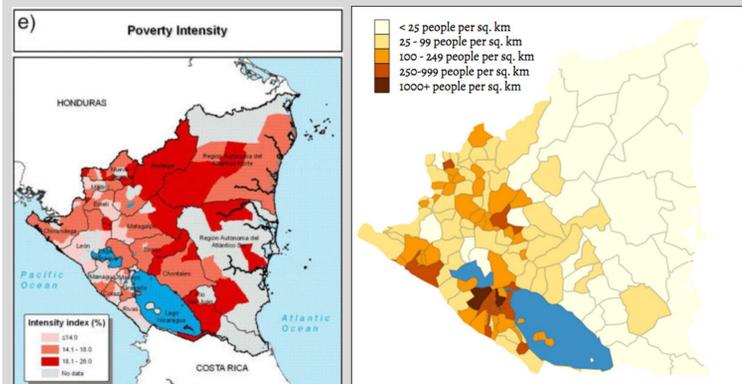


## Healthcare in Nicaragua

In order to better understand medical education in Nicaragua it is important to begin with a basic understanding of the healthcare system. In order to meet the needs of a predominately poor population the Ministry of Health (MINSAs) provides tax funded healthcare services.

Despite this, many problems and barriers to healthcare exist. The division of healthcare resources among the population of Nicaragua is staggeringly inequitable. The sparsely distributed population contributes to this problem with most healthcare resources divided among the largest cities, especially the capital city Managua. It is estimated that nearly half of the population lacks access to basic medical care.



Sparse population and lack of healthcare is mirrored by trends in poverty throughout Nicaragua. Despite small populations in these areas, healthcare needs are not being met. In the largest cities in Nicaragua many still struggle to access basic healthcare services. Interestingly, the Nicaraguan government does not currently provide financial incentive to work in underserved or remote areas.

## Medical Education in Nicaragua

Medical Education in Nicaragua begins immediately preceding secondary school. Our global health experience allowed us to partner with students and faculty at UNAN-León to learn more about the methods this government funded public school is using to meet the diverse challenges of delivering healthcare in Nicaragua.



UNAN is a public university and students do not need to pay if accepted.

- Marks on exams must meet minimum requirements
- Medical education is six years followed by one intern year and two years of social service.

## Project Aims

Six students from UMass continued a third year of partnership between the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua-León and University of Massachusetts Medical School with the goals of:

- Learning Spanish through immersion and instruction
- Gaining a better understanding of healthcare/medical education in Nicaragua
- Learning more about universal healthcare in a challenging environment
- Identifying strengths of the Nicaraguan healthcare system and how these lessons can be used to improve healthcare in the United States

## Experience Summary

Intensive Spanish classes/immersion



Attendance at lectures with local students



Working in Centros/Puestos de Salud (Health Centers and stations)



CPR Instruction with local students



## Conclusions

- Spanish/cultural immersion can provide students with all levels of Spanish proficiency with a valuable experience that can be applied to practicing healthcare in the United States
- We can further develop a relationship with UNAN to improve future trips and experiences



## Challenges for the Future

- Continue to identify meaningful medical classroom experience at UNAN
- Explore the possibility of creating a flexible clinical experience
- Expand surgical component of the trip with contact Dr. Marco Quintanilla
- Create a true exchange program and identify barriers to this process
- Expand CPR education and further collaborate with CAPHED

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