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U.S. Southern Command doctors provided humanitarian assistance in Puerto Suárez

The Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy in La Paz Krishna Urs, accompanied by Bolivian government officials, visited the town of Puerto Suárez, in the Department of Santa Cruz on the border with Brazil, to witness a healthcare cooperation program carried out by a team of the Tenth Medical Group of the U.S. Air Force Academy. The U.S. medical professionals, who teamed up with Bolivian physicians, provided free medical attention to approximately 4,500 people in Puerto Suárez for nine days.

The team, which included seven U.S. doctors, nine U.S. medical assistants and around 20 Bolivian doctors, offered services in general medicine and medical specialties including gynecology, pediatrics, dermatology and dental care. The doctors provided attention from May 21 to 23 in a Puerto Quijarro clinic, then at a school in Yacuces on May 24 and 25, and finally at San Juan de Dios Clinic in Puerto Suárez, from May 27 to 30.

The humanitarian assistance programs sponsored yearly by the U.S. Southern Command include medical specialists from general medicine to plastic surgery, and they allow to provide assistance to people unable to reach medical services in their countries. Last year, the Southern Command carried out four of such missions in Bolivia and this year it will complete five, of which the current Puerto Suárez program is the first one. The other missions will take place in July and August in Cobija, Riberalta, Guayaramerín, and in several riverside communities in the Department of Beni that will be reached by a Bolivian Navy Hospital Ship.

Humanitarian medical missions are combined cooperation efforts between Bolivia and the United States Southern Command, allowing local and U.S. military officers to work together to select and carry out projects that meet the needs of Bolivians.

These military medical and humanitarian assistance programs for low-income populations are a part of the activities of the Southern Command in Latin America and the Caribbean. U.S. pilots, soldiers, and marines also contribute to professional and educational exchanges, to economic development, and to the strengthening of democratic institutions.