Background

Since the 1990s, numerous Korean American doctors have engaged in medical exchange activity with their DPRK counterparts. Some were individual efforts, while others were carried out through organizations like Korean American Medical Association.

Since 2008, Korean American neurosurgeons began biannual trips to Pyongyang, performing joint surgeries with DPRK surgeons. And in 2011, this neurosurgery project transformed into the "Doctor to Doctor Initiative" under KAMA, opening its door to all. This allowed for significantly more KA physicians to join the biannual trips.

And starting 2012, undergraduate and medical students from America started accompanying these trips, which lay the foundation for Friends in Health: DPRK as well as the first Ever Pyongyang International Conference of Medical Students in 2013.

Friends in Health: DPRK: Mission Plans and Organizing Conferences

Mission:

To provide resources and support for physicians, students, and volunteers as they engage in the medical context of DPRK through medical conferences, foreign exchange programs and public health projects. To this end, FHD seeks to increase the exchange of medical knowledge and promote trusting relationships with healthcare professionals in North Korea.

Organizing Conferences in DPRK:

FHD helps organize medical/scientific conferences in DPRK. Contact: Friendsinhealthdprk@gmail.com for more information.

Previous Projects and Outcomes

- PICOMS 1.0-3.0
  - Students given the opportunity to give presentations to their DPRK counterparts in topics like US and global medical education and health care systems.

- Donation of Medical Equipment and Textbooks
  - Supported by members of other medical student organizations like KAMSA and physicians around the country

- Measuring Perception Change Through Survey
  - Pyongyang International Neurosurgical Symposium & surveying previous trip participants from the US side.

Ongoing Projects and Outcomes

- Explore ways of improving medical exchanges in politically-restricted and resource-limited nations like DPRK.

- Document the history and current structure of health care system in DPRK with greater detail.

- Continue to support medical exchange trips via PICOMS, Pyongyang Medical Conference, and Pyongyang International Medical Symposium

Moving Forward

- Allow for more students (undergraduate and graduate) to engage in medical/scientific diplomacy through mentor-supervised scholarly projects.

- Collaborate with other NGOs to secure peaceful medical diplomacy and exchange relationship with DPRK physicians

Acknowledgements

1. Korean American Medical Association