

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Local Cardiologist Saves Lives in the Dominican Republic**

### **Dr. Carlos Cuello Implants Donated Pacemakers for Patients in the Caribbean**

**NAPLES, Fla.**— Dr. Carlos Cuello, chief cardiologist at two Physicians Regional locations near Naples, Florida, is the first volunteer physician from the United States to visit Heartbeat International's new location in the Dominican Republic. In February, Dr. Cuello volunteered his time to assist with lifesaving heart care procedures for those who cannot afford them. During his first trip, he implanted defibrillators and a unique type of pacemaker. The Closed Loop Stimulation pacemaker is manufactured and donated by German device company BIOTRONIK. Dr. Cuello said it is "probably the first one implanted in the Dominican Republic. This special pacemaker features heart rate controls that speed up or slow down, depending not just on a patient's physical needs, but on their mental needs as well."

Dr. Cuello returned to the Dominican Republic for a week in early March to assist with six more operations. He implanted pacemakers and defibrillators, which serve as a pacemaker and can reset an irregular heartbeat through electric shocks. All devices were donated by HBI partner, BIOTRONIK. Dr. Cuello also performed an electrophysiology scan on a patient who survived cardiac arrest. The scan determines the precise location of an abnormal heartbeat, which allowed Dr. Cuello to recommend the best treatment option. Between his two trips, he saved the lives of eight people, ranging from 34-70 in age.

HBI ended 2015 by opening a new Heart Center in the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo. Heartbeat International Dominicana (HBID) saved the lives of 10 patients during its first full month of operation. Dr. Cuello hopes that the new center will contribute to heart care awareness in the Dominican Republic. He says that "Now there's an awareness of cardiac arrest, the risks, causes, benefits of devices to prevent cardiac arrest. That was inexistent when I grew up there." He is optimistic about the effects of his work and of the new Heartbeat International Dominican Republic center on the community. "I think it will have a tremendous impact. This Heart Center will further awareness to a disease that's affecting the world in epidemic proportions."

**About Dr. Carlos Cuello:** Dr. Carlos Cuello was born and raised in the Dominican Republic. He graduated in 1977 with honors from Univ. Nacional Pedro H. Urena in Santo Domingo, Dom. Rep. Dr. Cuello completed fellowships at both the University of Massachusetts and New York Medical College, where he also did his residency. Currently, he is chief of cardiology for Physicians Regional at their Collier Boulevard and Pine Ridge locations, both located in Naples, Florida.

**About Heartbeat International:** Thirty years ago Federico Alfaro, MD, a Guatemalan physician, was treating a seventeen-year-old patient. The boy had a heart condition cardiologists refer to as "heart block", an affliction in which the heartbeat continually slows until one day the heart just stops pumping. The boy's condition was curable. The problem was that he was poor. Dr. Alfaro tried desperately to find financial assistance to provide the boy with the pacemaker he needed. But in the end he had to watch the boy die. He swore another countryman would not die because they could not afford a pacemaker. And so our mission was born.