
Cuban Trained Doctors Head to Standing Rock

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A delegation of doctors trained at the Latin American School of Medicine in Cuba announced they will head to Standing Rock to “serve in solidarity”

In a Facebook post late on Thursday a group of U.S. based medical professionals trained at Cuba’s famous Latin American School of Medicine, ELAM, announced they will head to Standing Rock “to humbly serve in solidarity with the Sacred Water Protectors on the front lines of the current human rights and ecological crisis occurring right now in North Dakota.”

OPINION:

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Dr. Revery P Barnes, a graduate of ELAM, said in a post on Facebook, “We answer the call to serve in alignment with the mission and core principles of our alma mater and dedication to our commitment to serve underserved communities in our HOME country.” The delegation will work in collaboration with the Standing Rock Medic and Healer Council.

“While Cuba instilled in us an unwavering commitment to internationalism, with

the acceptance of a full scholarship to medical school at ELAM, we made the moral commitment to respond to the needs of our most vulnerable communities here at home in the U.S.," the statement continued.

On Wednesday the Standing Rock Medic and Healer Council, which has been providing emergency and chronic health care services to the thousands of Water Protectors gathered at Standing Rock, issued a warning about the grave health and safety threats posed by escalating use of violence by Morton County Sheriff's department and Dakota Access Pipeline security, which they described as creating "war-like conditions."

While the Facebook statement did not give details about the size of the delegation or when it is expected to arrive, the announcement comes as thousands of U.S. Army veterans are expected to arrive at the Oceti Sakowin camp this weekend in anticipation of the Dec. 5 eviction notice given to the camp by the Army Corps of Engineers and North Dakota Governor, Jack Dalrymple.

Health and safety concerns for the thousands of Water Protectors, who are asserting their Indigenous sovereignty in attempts to block the multi-billion dollar Dakota Access Pipeline project, are also on the rise as harsh winter conditions have been exacerbated by state law enforcement threats to cut off supplies and access to emergency services.

The Latin American School of Medicine was created in 1999 by the Cuban government and is one of the largest medical schools in the world, with approximately 19,550 students from 110 countries. All students receive a full scholarship, including room and board, and preferential treatment is given to applicants from marginalized groups who intend to return and practice in their own communities. The school plays a key part in Cuba's widely-hailed medical internationalism, which has seen 80 000 health care workers sent to work in over 94 countries.
