

Utah doctor returns home after week volunteering in Ukraine

SALT LAKE CITY (KUTV) —

A Utah doctor who volunteered with a local non-profit in Ukraine is now home after spending a week helping in clinics, hospitals, and orphanages.

The Tooele-based pediatrician, Dr. Gordon Duval, arrived home to the Salt Lake City International Airport Saturday after spending a week on the ground in Ukraine treating refugees and distributing medical supplies from Utah.

August Mission, the non-profit he traveled for, said Duval spent a lot of time in Western Ukraine.

He treated children and women at an orphanage in need of medical care and was able to get thousands of dollars worth of medical supplies to medical teams on the ground.

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SPECIAL REUNION: A Tooele physician's family welcomes him home after he spent a week in Ukraine near the Poland border helping refugees. Watch for more on his journey coming up at [#2News](#) at 5. [@KUTV2News](#)

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7



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According to Duval, the bulk of supplies went to a hospital east of Lviv.

Duval and his wife, Leona, decided he'd go after seeing the non-profit was sending a team to Poland and Ukraine to help refugees.

When they let family and friends know he was going, many wanted to help.

Leading up to the trip, the Duvals raised thousands of dollars worth of medical supplies that he was miraculously able to transport in 21 suitcases.

In addition to individual donations, Mountain West Medical Center, Central Valley Medical Center, Uintah Basin Hospital, and Birch Family Pharmacy all contributed.

Duval said at one point he handed off some of the remaining supplies to an American pastor who was traveling into Eastern Ukraine at a time it was Russian-controlled.

"It seemed like a little bit of a, potential suicide mission, but he, he was willing to do it," shared Duval.

He did not know if the pastor was able to deliver the supplies yet, but was hopeful that the area he was heading to was back in Ukrainian-control.

Duval said the medical needs are great.

"If you can think of a human need, it's a need there. Much the same way that we're struggling with a little bit of inflation and a little bit of supply-chain issues. Imagine that many, many, many more times for them," he said.

The doctor said medical teams are in need of insulin, pacemakers, and even telemedicine doctors.

"I don't think I could adequately describe in words what they're experiencing. They're very determined people," he said.

Duval left behind his family for a week. The family originally had spring break plans that changed when they decided he'd go to Ukraine and help.

Bruce Roberts, the founder of August Mission said because Duval's trip went so well, they are preparing to send two more volunteer doctors to Ukraine next week.

Roberts said they are still in need of more volunteer doctors.