Medical Mission
Chinle Reservation
Navajo Nation

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Chinle Reservation

- Navajo Nation
- Population: 5418
- Located in north east Arizona – near Four Corners
- 16 square miles
- Gallup, NM – nearest town
  - 90 minute drive
  - Population 22,000
- Albuquerque, NM
  - Nearest major airport
  - 4-5 hour drive
Chinle Reservation

- 72% speak Navajo at home
- ~50% of homes have running water
- ~50% of homes have electricity
- 44% live below the poverty line
Canyon de Chelly

- Adjacent to town of Chinle
- National Monument established in 1931
- Continuously inhabited for over 5000 years
- Pueblos were first inhabitants
- Now part of Navajo Trust
- Currently about 40 Navajo families live and farm on the Canyon floor
Spider Rock - 700’ spire
Chinle Hospital

- Part of the Indian Health Service (IHS)
- 60 beds
- Limited services
  - No Orthopaedic Surgery
  - No Hand Surgery
- Closest transfer: Flagstaff, AZ - 180 miles away
Hand Clinic

- Visiting Hand Surgeons
  - 4-6 per year
  - Tour of 5 days
- 2 excellent Certified Hand Therapists (CHTs) on site
- In the absence of a Hand Surgeon patients are well cared for by internists, family medicine doctors and CHTs
Operating Room

- 2 operating rooms
- Well staffed
- Modern equipment
- Similar structure and function to Veterans Affairs (VA) Health System
Chinle Patients

- Most present with poorly managed, chronic disease
  - Diabetes
  - Rheumatoid arthritis
- Many overuse injuries of the arms
  - Hauling fire wood to heat their homes
  - Carrying buckets of well water to their homes
- Respectful and appreciative
Common ailments/injuries

- Carpal tunnel syndrome and trigger finger – often exacerbated by poorly managed diabetes
- Lacerations and fractures with delayed presentations, which complicates management and recovery, and ultimately impedes use of the hand
- Advanced arthritis, especially rheumatoid arthritis
- Many patients come from geographically remote Reservations, with delayed presentations from initial injury
  - Shiprock, AZ
  - Tuba City, AZ
  - Fort Defiance, AZ