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Medical Missions Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

Where do medical missions take place?

Primary care missions take place in the communities surrounding our future site in the Dominican Republic. We set up temporary field clinics in community facilities such as schools and churches.

Volunteer accommodations are located on the NPH-Dominican Republic property, about 45 minutes outside the capital, Santo Domingo.

What healthcare services do volunteers provide during medical missions?

During primary care field missions, we address acute and chronic conditions such as parasites, respiratory problems, skin infections, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Providers also assess patients for surgical conditions that may be treated at One World Surgery's future surgery center.

Do you have a referral system and plan for follow-up care in place?

Yes. One World Surgery has a local general physician, Dr. Jhomairy Miller, who provides follow-up care for patients with chronic conditions via home visits. We also provide financial and logistical help for patients with urgent needs to access care from the local medical system through our patient assistance program.

What is the patient population?

The majority of our patients come from the communities surrounding where our future facility will be located. These communities, called bateyes, are primarily inhabited by Haitian immigrants and their descendants. Many work in the sugar cane fields or other manual labor jobs. Our health promoters performed a needs assessment on 4,846 residents in 2,542 households of the patient population and found the following: 55% had less than primary education, 31% had no access to a toilet or latrine, 42% had no access to a health clinic, 46% had an inadequate floor, and 36% had an inadequate roof.

What medical roles are needed?

Primary Care Physicians (family medicine, internal medicine, and pediatrics), Physician Assistants, and Nurse Practitioners are needed to examine and assess patients and establish a plan for care and follow-up.

Depending on how many providers participate on the trip, they may also assist with obtaining patient vital signs or and help to run the pharmacy. Physicians should be comfortable seeing patients with a variety of issues., Medical specialists such as cardiologists, , gynecologists, dermatologists, as well as pharmacists and optometrists are also needed.



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Nurses (RNs and LPNs) and experienced medical assistants are needed to obtain patient vitals and chief complaints and help to run the pharmacy and laboratory.

What are the eligibility requirements for medical volunteers?

All medical volunteers should be currently licensed (if required for their profession) and working in their profession with at least 1 year of experience. Volunteers who are retired or not currently working the field may serve in support roles.

How long is a medical mission?

Most medical missions are one week long and take place from Saturday to Saturday.

How many people participate in a medical mission?

Approximately 20-25 people participate in a primary care field mission. However, during “phase 2” of our reopening plan from the COVID-19 pandemic, trips are limited to 15 participants.

Can my kids attend?

Adult children are welcome to attend. Since our primary care missions in the Dominican Republic take place out in the communities, for safety reasons we are not currently accepting volunteers under the age of 18. We encourage families with younger children to join a medical mission to Honduras until we begin incorporating younger volunteers in our programs in the Dominican Republic.

Can non-medical volunteers attend?

A limited number of nonmedical volunteers age 18 and over may join primary care field missions in the Dominican Republic. They will work in patient registration, vital signs station, and the pharmacy.

Applying for Medical Mission

I am currently applying for a passport. Can I still submit an application?

Yes, you can still submit your application. However, please plan far enough in advance so your new passport arrives before you are scheduled to depart for the trip.

I can't attend the entire week. Can I still apply for a medical mission?

All first-time participants are required to attend orientation on Sunday, and One World Surgery has limited ability to provide transportation outside of official arrival and departure dates. Please contact



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medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org to confirm if a late arrival or early departure would be appropriate in your situation.

I'm not available during your scheduled trips. Can I volunteer during another time?

International volunteer opportunities are generally only offered during scheduled medical missions. Contact medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org for information regarding possible opportunities outside of medical missions. We are seeking subspecialists of internal medicine to make home visits to select patients with our local physician, so if this applies to you then there is more likely to be an opportunity.

Can I stay for longer than a week?

Typically, we do not have opportunities for volunteers to stay beyond the mission week. Occasionally, longer term opportunities, such as summer internships, may be available. Contact medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org for more information.

When is the application deadline?

Applications are accepted year-round on a first come first served basis. Applications are accepted until 10 days before the trip, but we recommend applying at least 3 months before the trip. Physician spots and summer trips start to fill a year in advance. Applications for the following year typically open in May.

Requirements

Do I need a passport?

For the Dominican Republic, your passport must be valid for the duration of your trip (for US passport holders).

Do I need a visa?

U.S. passport holders can stay in the Dominican Republic for 30 days without a visa. Participants who hold passports from other countries should confirm requirements with an embassy or consulate.

I don't speak Spanish. Can I still attend?

Yes, a team of local medical interpreters works with us during every mission.

Cost

How much does it cost to attend?



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- Program fee (covers accommodations, emergency medical/evacuation insurance, meals, and ground transportation in the Dominican Republic)
 - \$1000 for first participant
 - \$500 for additional family member 18 and over
 - \$250 for additional family member under 18
- Flight costs
- Any additional travel costs (i.e. recommended immunizations, baggage, cost of applying for/renewing passport)

How much do flights cost?

Flight costs typically range between \$500 and \$1,400 roundtrip. Flight costs vary depending on time of year, departure airport, and time at which flights are booked.

Preparing for the Medical Mission

How do I book flights?

Participants are responsible for booking their own flights according to the guidelines found in the trip informational packet. In the Dominican Republic, participants fly into Las Americas International Airport in Santo Domingo (SDQ).

What immunizations do I need?

Hepatitis A and Typhoid are the recommended immunizations for this trip, but they are not required.

What to Expect

Where do volunteers stay?

In the Dominican Republic, volunteers will stay on the NPH site in either a large visitor house (with 7 rooms and capacity for 29 people), a small home (with 3 bedrooms and capacity for 7 people), or in the dormitories (same style as the children's homes; dorm rooms with mostly bunk beds). Accommodations are simple, and volunteers will share bedrooms.

What is the weather like? How should I dress?

The Dominican Republic has a hot and humid tropical climate with average temperatures around 80°F year-round. Air conditioning is not available in volunteer accommodations or field clinic locations. Volunteers should dress modestly, as cultural standards in the Dominican Republic are different than those in the U.S.



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Shorts and skirts should reach to the knee, and straps on shirts must be at least 3 fingers wide. Comfortable, broken-in walking shoes are a must, and light, cotton clothing is recommended.

Is it safe?

NPH Dominican Republic is located between Santo Domingo (57 miles) and Punta Cana (69 miles). Visitors travel to and from the airport by NPH's private vehicles, which are operated by NPH's licensed drivers. NPH Dominican Republic has unarmed security guards that do rounds in the evenings and cover the front gate all day. There are presently no safety concerns on the site.

Primary care field missions will involve trips off the NPH site to provide care in the surrounding communities. Transportation will be provided in private NPH vehicles, and visitors will be accompanied by a local NPH or OWS staff member. The staff member will orient visitors to any additional safety advice prior to leaving the site.

Short term travel insurance, which provides coverage for medical expenses and evacuation, is purchased by One World Surgery on behalf of all visitors. All visitors are registered with the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo through STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program), which facilitates contact with the Embassy in the event of an emergency.

Will there be an opportunity to explore the city or other parts of the country?

Primary care missions will involve daily trips off the NPH site to provide care in the surrounding communities. Schedule-permitting, off-site meals or other activities may also be planned for the group on early days or the last day of the mission. Any travel off-site during the mission must be organized by OWS. All other leisure or tourism activities off-site must take place before or after your mission.

What is the typical schedule?

Saturday: Arrive and settle in

Sunday: NPH tour, Catholic mass (optional), activity with NPH children, orientation, supply and equipment preparation

Monday-Friday: Off-site field clinics all day, dinner and programming in the evening, shorter day on

Wednesday to explore NPH and have tour of neighboring Batey Nuevo (optional)

Saturday: depart

What is NPH?

NPH, or Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos, is a children's home with 9 locations in Latin America. Our future facilities in the Dominican Republic will also be located on the property of a NPH home. Visit the [NPH website](#) to learn more.



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Will we have an opportunity to interact with the children?

Opportunities are built into the weekend schedule for volunteers to meet some of the children who live at NPH. Children are in classes during the week and have after school routines (i.e. homework, chores, etc.). We respect these daily routines on the ranch in order to maintain a sense of stability for the children. Volunteers will not serve as direct caregivers or teachers. These duties are filled by trained, long-term, Spanish-speaking staff for the benefit and safety of the children.

Do medical volunteers have an opportunity to volunteer at the NPH home?

This trip is primarily a medical service trip. Typically, medical volunteers are needed to fill their assigned medical role during the entire mission. We usually build a half-day of work into the schedule to allow medical volunteers an opportunity to experience other activities on the property.

I'm a medical volunteer. Will I stay in the same role the entire week?

Medical volunteers may rotate between different stations, depending on the needs during the particular mission. We appreciate volunteers' flexibility and willingness to serve where needed. Volunteers will only perform duties within their current level of skills and training and the limitations of their role in the Dominican Republic.

What kinds of donations can I bring for the kids at NPH?

All donations will be turned in to the NPH Visitor Coordinator, directed to NPH's donation warehouse, and distributed according to need. Volunteers are welcome to bring commonly needed items such as children's books in Spanish, clothing and shoes for children of all ages, toys for younger children (i.e. puzzles, Legos, board games), sports equipment (soccer, basketball, baseball), materials for therapy (speech, occupational, physical); diapers (up to adult XXL), and baby wipes. Please do not bring candies, other small items to pass out, or expensive items (i.e. phones, portable speakers).

What kinds of donations does One World Surgery need?

One World Surgery accepts pre-approved donations of goods. Please see the [in-kind donations page](#) of our website for lists of items needed. Contact Justyna.twardowski@oneworldsurgery.org for donation approval. Most donations will be transported via volunteers' checked luggage. Do not attempt to ship anything directly to the Dominican Republic.

Will I be required to reserve a checked bag for supplies?



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Yes, it is very likely. Since we are in the beginning stages of standing up our programming in the Dominican Republic, we need help transporting supplies and medications from the US. You will be contacted in advance of the trip to coordinate logistics.