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Dominican Republic Medical Missions COVID-19 Volunteer FAQs

What kind of personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided to volunteers in the field clinics? Will I have access to N-95 masks?

For the field clinics, we will have plenty of simple masks, gowns, and gloves for volunteer use. We will be able to provide each volunteer with at least one N-95 mask to use during the week, with extras as needed in case of damage.

Should I plan to bring any PPE with me?

Volunteers should bring a reusable mask to wear for the duration of travel and while on the NPH property, as there is a universal masking order in place in the Dominican Republic. If you have access to additional PPE, your donation would be greatly appreciated, as it will help us extend our current inventory. If you plan to bring PPE beyond your personal use, please contact medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org so we can secure customs approval.

Are patients tested for COVID-19 before consults?

We will not have the capability to perform a COVID-19 laboratory test for every patient we will treat during the medical mission clinics. Patients will be screened for fever and symptoms suspicious for COVID-19 outside prior to their arrival to clinic; those with suspicious symptoms will be kept in a separate waiting area from the remainder of patients. All patients will be given masks to wear while inside the clinic if they do not have one of their own, and hand sanitizer will be available and required for all patients to use.

Will volunteers be tested and/or screened for COVID-19 prior to arrival?

One World Surgery volunteers are asked to obtain a PCR or rapid test with results no more than 72 hours old prior to travel. Please contact medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org with any questions or concerns regarding this requirement. One World Surgery may also contact volunteers to complete a symptom screening prior to travel.

What are the requirements for entering the Dominican Republic?

Volunteers should have a passport with at least 6 months remaining validity for entry. Proof of PCR test results is not currently required for entry. Travelers may be randomly selected for rapid tests at immigration in the Santo Domingo airport. The Dominican government currently requires universal masking.

What will happen if I present with COVID-19 symptoms during my trip? Will I have access to testing? Where will I receive care? Will I be permitted to return home?

Volunteers who present with COVID-19 symptoms or have a prolonged exposure without PPE to someone with a confirmed case will be required to follow COVID-19 quarantine guidelines. Access to PCR testing may be limited. Approved volunteers will receive the "Volunteer COVID-19 Screening, Quarantine, and Return to Home Country Procedures" document by e-mail which includes further details.

What other safety measures are being taken in the field clinics and visitor center?

All volunteers will be screened for fever and symptoms daily while in the Dominican Republic. Volunteers will not have contact with NPH children or staff, besides visitor center staff. Only

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family members will be permitted to room together in the visitor center. Volunteers who exhibit any symptoms will be quarantined. Vehicles and shared surfaces will undergo more frequent and enhanced cleaning. Cooks and servers will wear masks and gloves when preparing and serving food, and disposable dishes, cups, and utensils will be used. Staff, volunteers, and patients will be required to wear masks and practice social distancing. Volunteers will not leave the site for off-site dinner.

What is the current status of COVID-19 in the Dominican Republic? Are cases surging?

The number of cases in the Dominican Republic has not increased dramatically over the past few months and is not predicted to do so. There is a national mask mandate, and schools are all virtual with no in-person classroom attendance in private or public schools. There is currently a curfew in place.

Will I have to share a bedroom?

During the initial medical mission reopening phase, only household members will share bedrooms. The number of volunteers on each trip will be limited to allow volunteers to have their own bedrooms.

Who is permitted to attend medical mission at this time?

Clinical volunteers and general volunteers ages 18 and over are permitted. Volunteers over age 65 and those with certain medical conditions may require medical approval to attend.

What happens if the Dominican Republic closes its borders again?

While we have no indication that the Dominican Republic will close its borders again due to COVID-19, if this were to happen, volunteers would remain in country at One World Surgery accommodations until airlines could coordinate evacuation flights with the Dominican government. OWS vigilantly monitors the local situation and would strive to coordinate volunteer departure prior to any anticipated border closures.

What is air travel like during the pandemic?

Travelers are required to wear masks inside the airport and on planes, except while eating and drinking. Drink and meal service on planes is limited. Planes are being cleaned more thoroughly and frequently.

Will I have to wait at the airport in the Dominican Republic for all volunteers to arrive?

Depending on volunteer flight times and availability of transportation, One World Surgery may be able to coordinate additional pick-up times. One World Surgery will provide volunteers without an outdoor meeting point at the airport so that volunteers are not waiting or congregating inside the airport.