General Information

Where do medical missions take place?
Medical missions take place at One World Surgery’s Holy Family Surgery Center in Honduras. The surgery center, clinic, and volunteer accommodations are located on the property of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos, a children’s home about an hour outside of the capital city of Tegucigalpa.

Which specialties are provided on your medical missions?
Currently, services are provided in the following specialties: primary care; ear, nose, and throat; general surgery; gynecology; surgical oncology; ophthalmology; orthopedics; total joints; spine; urology; and preventative and restorative dental care. Most trips have 2-3 different specialties, and specialties are spaced throughout the year to ensure patients have regular access to all specialties.

What medical roles are needed?
Surgical missions require surgeons in the above-mentioned specialties, anesthesia personnel, surgical techs, OR circulators, and Pre-op and PACU nurses. We also welcome physical therapists, first assists, X-Ray techs, EMTs, MAs, CNAs, and sterile processors. Primary care missions require primary care providers (physicians, NPs, or PAs) and other clinical support staff such as MAs or clinic nurses. Other medical professionals should reach out to medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org before applying to determine if there is an appropriate role for you on the trip.

What are the eligibility requirements for medical volunteers?
All medical volunteers must be currently licensed, working in their profession, and have at least 1 year of experience. All medical volunteers must submit proof of current license/certification (if required by their profession) in order to practice in the mission. Volunteers who are retired or not currently working in the field may serve in support roles.

How long is a medical mission?
Most medical missions are 1 week in duration and take place from Saturday to Saturday. Some missions may end on a Friday or Thursday. Your approval email will contain the official dates.

How many people participate in a medical mission?
An average mission has approximately 45 volunteers. We can host up to 60 volunteers in our visitor center.

Can my kids attend?
Yes! Volunteers under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult for the entire duration of travel, including traveling on the same international and domestic flights. Children under 13 must be accompanied by a nonclinical adult at all times during the mission. If you are a clinical participant, you must bring another adult family member or friend to help supervise all younger
children. This includes when walking around the ranch, in the surgery center or clinic, and when participating in workstations and other activities. One World Surgery staff and other medical mission volunteers are not able to provide supervision. One World Surgery allows children 13 and over to walk around the ranch and participate in general volunteer activities on their own. If you are not comfortable with this, you should bring a nonclinical adult to accompany them.

Please note that some stations have minimum age requirements. Volunteers must be at least 15 years old to observe surgery inside an OR and to support as a clinic scribe. Volunteers must be at least 18 years old to scrub into surgery. Volunteers must have medical knowledge to scrub into total joints orthopedic cases.

Can non-medical people attend?
Yes! They will participate as general volunteers, rotating between different workstations in the surgery center and clinic and on the NPH ranch. Surgery center stations include turning over ORs, washing instruments, taking out the trash, and assisting with administrative projects. Opportunities on the ranch include helping in the kitchen or on the farm.

Applying for Medical Mission
I don’t have my passport information available or am just applying for a passport. Can I still submit an application?
Yes, in most cases you can still submit your application. If you are a provider, a copy of your passport is required 8 weeks prior to the mission so that we can submit your documentation and credentials to the local ministry of health.

I can’t attend the entire week. Can I still apply for a medical mission?
Due to limited transportation resources and the distance of the airport from our location, we try to limit additional airport pick-ups and drop-offs whenever possible. Additionally, all first-time participants are required to attend the orientation on Sunday afternoon. Please contact 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 with One World Surgery during another time?
At this time, volunteer opportunities are only offered during scheduled medical missions.

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 may be available for medical volunteers. Contact medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org for more information.
When is the application deadline?
Applications are accepted year-round on a first come first served basis. Providers are required to apply 8 weeks prior to the trip so that their medical credentials can be verified and submitted to the local ministry of health. Applications for other volunteers may be accepted until 10 days before the trip for critical roles. We recommend applying at least 3 months before the trip to ensure you receive all trip reminders and have adequate time to prepare. Applications for the following year typically open in the late summer.

Requirements
Do I need a passport?
Yes, you must have a passport valid for at least 3 - ideally 6 - months past the date you will enter Honduras.

Do I need a visa?
U.S. passport holders can stay in Honduras for up to 90 days without a visa. Participants who hold passports from other countries should confirm requirements with a Honduran Embassy or Consulate.

I don’t speak Spanish. Can I still attend?
Yes, a team of local interpreters work with volunteers during every mission.

Cost
How much does it cost to attend?
- Program fee (covers accommodations, meals, ground transportation in Honduras, and emergency medical/evacuation insurance)
  - $1000 for first participant
  - $500 for additional family member (parent, spouse or adult child)
  - $250 for additional family member (child under 18)
- Flight costs
- Any additional travel costs (i.e. recommended immunizations, baggage, cost of applying for/renewing passport)

Scholarships that cover program fee expenses may be available; including through OWS (for critical clinical roles), partner organizations, and for members of ASCA and AST. Check out our website https://oneworldsurgery.org/scholarship-fundraising/ for more information.

How much do flights cost?
Flight costs typically range from $500 to $1,400 roundtrip. Flight costs vary depending on time of year, departure airport, and time at which flights are booked. One World Surgery has partnered with Diversity Travel, a travel management company that provides access to humanitarian fares, which are more flexible tickets with added benefits (e.g. additional baggage allowance).
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. Participants fly into Palmerola International Airport (XPL) in Comayagua, Honduras on the 1st Saturday of the mission and depart on the 2nd Saturday of the mission (or whichever day is indicated in your approval email).

What immunizations do I need?
Hepatitis A and Typhoid are the recommended immunizations for this trip, but they are not required. If you are travelling directly from a country with risk of Yellow Fever transmission (the U.S. is not one of these countries), you will be required to show proof of Yellow Fever vaccination.

What to Expect

Where do volunteers stay?
Volunteers stay in our conference center, the Moscati Center, which is located on the NPH ranch property about a 10-minute walk from the surgery center and clinic. All rooms have a private bathroom, and most have 4 single beds. Volunteers can make roommate requests on their applications. Due to limited space, volunteers may not be roomed with their spouse, share rooms with other volunteers they do not know, or stay with our local team members.

What is the weather like in Honduras? How should I dress?
Honduras is hot and humid year-round. The average high temperature nationwide is 90°F and the average low is 68°F. June-November is considered the rainy season. December-May is considered the dry season. Mornings and evenings can be cooler (60°F) December-March. Dress on the ranch and in Honduras is conservative, and most people do not wear shorts. If you choose to wear shorts, they should come at least to mid-thigh, and tank top straps should be 2 fingers width. Casual clothing is fine, but you should bring a nicer outfit if you plan to attend the optional Catholic mass on Saturday (shorts and short skirts are not permitted at mass).

Is it safe?
The surgery center is located approximately 1 hour northeast of Tegucigalpa on the 3,000 acre property of the children’s home Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH). We remain on the NPH property for the entire trip, apart from traveling to and from the airport. The NPH ranch is gated and patrolled 24/7 by a team of security guards. Emergency medical and evacuation insurance is purchased for all participants. We have never experienced a security incident during a medical mission.
Will there be an opportunity to explore the city or other parts of Honduras?
Participants are required to stay on the ranch property. Sightseeing is not included in the
medical mission.

What is the typical schedule?
Saturday: Arrive and settle in, optional afternoon mass with the NPH community
Sunday: Surgery center tour and orientation and ranch tour
Monday-Friday: Surgery and clinic all day, dinner and programming in the evening, early day on
Wednesday to explore the ranch
Saturday: depart

What is NPH?
NPH, or Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos, is a children’s home that provides a loving environment
to nearly 300 children. NPH-Honduras is one of 9 homes that NPH has in Latin America. The
Holy Family Surgery Center is located on the NPH-Honduras property known as Rancho Santa
Fe or “the Ranch”. Visit the NPH website to learn more.

Will we have an opportunity to interact with the children at NPH?
Any activities with the children (i.e. soccer, games, joining the volunteers for dinner) are
scheduled by the local OWS team. It is never appropriate to walk into the children’s homes or
school unannounced or to invite children into the visitor center. Those who sponsor a child at
NPH can arrange a visit through our local team. Children are in classes during the week and
have after-school routines (i.e. homework, chores). We respect these daily routines 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.

I'm a medical volunteer. Will I stay in the same role the entire week? Will I have the
chance to learn a new skill or observe surgeries?
Generally, we have just enough volunteers for each area, and we need to use each medical
volunteer for their particular skills. Medical volunteers usually serve in the same role all week
and will not have the opportunity to observe surgeries. Because we are committed to providing
safe and high-quality care, medical volunteers will only perform skills in which they are trained
and experienced. For example, a nurse with primarily PACU experience will not serve as a
scrub in the OR.

I'm a pre-med student or a student of another health profession. What will I be doing?
Patient care is only provided by trained medical professionals, and we will never sacrifice
patient safety in order to provide a volunteer with a learning opportunity. We also expect all
volunteers to participate fully in the service aspect of the trip. Pre-med students and students of
other health professions will serve as general volunteers, rotating among different opportunities
in the surgery center, including administrative tasks, cleaning the ORs and helping in the
kitchen. Occasionally, students may have clinical training and experience (i.e. EMT, CNA) that
they can use to contribute to a different role on the mission, such as assisting in pre-op. If your
expectation is that you will be able to spend the entire trip shadowing a physician or observing or scrubbing in on surgeries, this may not be the right trip for you.

I’m a medical student. What will I be doing?
Volunteers are never permitted to perform duties that exceed their skills, training, or licensure. Current medical students will be permitted to participate in medical missions in the following ways:

- Shadowing physicians in clinic and assisting physicians, as needed (NOTE: Separate translators will not be provided for medical students.)
- Acting as a scribe for the physician; writing notes from the consult legibly in the Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system.
- Observing/Scrubbing during surgeries (NOTE: Medical students will be required to adhere to all observation policies, including signing up for scheduled observation shifts. Students will only be permitted to perform tasks within their current level of training.)
- Helping the circulators find supplies for the ORs
- **Medical Students who are interested in performing additional functions during the mission may submit a training plan to the Clinical Operations Director for approval. Student volunteers must be attending the mission with a clinical mentor and submit the training plan in collaboration with the clinical mentor.**

Because our medical missions are, above all, service trips that require a team effort, medical students will also be asked to participate in general volunteer duties. If your expectation is that you will be able to spend the entire trip shadowing a physician or observing or scrubbing in on surgeries, this may not be the right trip for you.

What kinds of donations can I bring for the kids at NPH?
The most common donations requested by NPH include hygiene products, school supplies, children’s clothing, and sports equipment. If you would like to bring something more specific, please contact medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org to ensure the donation can be used. Donations should be turned in to our hospitality team upon arrival to ensure that they are distributed appropriately. Please do not bring small gifts or candies to randomly pass out. This can create feelings of jealousy and teach the children to expect gifts from all visitors.

What kinds of donations does One World Surgery need?
One World Surgery accepts pre-approved donations of goods. All goods must be sterile and safe according to United States standards. Equipment for donation should be fully functioning, include all relevant and associated parts, and ideally come with all an instruction manual. Contact michael.fry@oneworldsurgery.org at least 40 days prior to your mission for donation approval and any questions so that there is adequate time to submit customs paperwork. Most donations will be transported to Honduras via volunteers’ checked luggage. Do not attempt to ship anything directly to Honduras.