



Service. Healing. Transformation.

## **One World Surgery Physical Therapist Informational Packet**

### Facilities and Staffing

One World Surgery funds and operates the ambulatory surgery centers in Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

- Honduras: The Holy Family Surgery Center has three operating rooms, one procedure room, 14 consult of which 6 are overnight bays, two private consult rooms, a physical therapy space, imaging room, and dental and eye clinics and the Moscati visitor center which house up to 70 volunteers. Dr. Merlin Antunez, an orthopedic surgeon, is the full-time, on-site Medical Director, Dr. David Vargas is the on-site Clinical Operations Director. Watch this [video](#) for a view inside the center.
- Dominican Republic: This site includes an ambulatory surgery center with three operating rooms, 28 Same Day Surgery bays, with capabilities of 14 overnight, Primary Care clinic with 8 bays, one procedure room, three private consult rooms, two ophthalmology consult rooms, and the Sienna Center, our visitor center, which can house up to 70 volunteers. OWS has been hosting primary care missions in the nearby communities since 2019, and surgical missions began in 2024. Dr. Joice Morillo, an orthopedic surgeon, is the full-time, on-site Medical Director and Joanna Sun is the Operations Director. Watch this [video](#) to learn more about the history of the Dominican Republic surgery center.

### Clinical Scope

The OWS ambulatory surgical centers provide free, safe, high-quality surgical care. Scheduled, elective surgeries are performed during normal business hours. The OWS sites do not offer any emergency services, surgical or otherwise. If an emergency arrives at a center, the patient is stabilized and transferred to the nearest hospital. Procedures requiring multiple night stays or urgent second stages are generally not permitted.

### Specialties

Through the support of medical mission teams, OWS is able to perform more complicated cases and expand the available specialties. Most specialties are scheduled at least 3 times per year.

OWS currently provides surgical services in the following specialties:

- Orthopedics (HN, DR)
- General (HN, DR)
- Urology (HN)
- Otolaryngology (ENT) (HN, DR)
- Ophthalmology (HN, DR)
- Surgical oncology (HN)

### Patient Selection and Scheduling

The OWS surgical centers provide free surgeries to patients who would otherwise not have access to high-quality surgical care. Patients are selected based on financial and clinical need. Most patients are adults from surrounding communities, though patients come from all over the country.

With regularly scheduled medical missions, OWS is able to meet the demand for services. Guidelines exist to prioritize cases and limit daily patient volume. These guidelines also ensure sustainable work schedules for our staff and allow patients to travel home safely before dark.

**General Medical Mission hours:** 7:00am – 5:00pm

**Clinic hours:** 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

**First surgery begins:** 7:00 am

**Last patient leaves OR:** 4:00 pm

*Variability in cases may require flexibility in these hours.*

### Physical Therapy at OWS

At the surgery center, physical therapy revolves around two basic workflows: 1. pre-surgical instruction and/or post-surgical education and 2. primary care clinic support.

### **Pre and Post-Surgical Instruction**

- Pre and post-surgical needs are dependent on the type of medical mission you attend.
  - For example, if you attend an oncology mission, the PT can be engaged in pre-surgical instruction about lymphedema risk, and how to treat it with massage, nutrition, and exercises. And post-operatively, teaching about not touching the surgical site, reviewing positioning and exercise, and possible surgical complications.
  - Everything depends on the size of the caseload, the physicians involved, timing, etc. For example, in orthopedic missions, your expertise will be used in pre-op and post op patient care. Some of the tasks you may be doing will include but not be limited to educating patients on the use of crutches, walkers and exercises.
  - All patients will go home either the day of surgery or the next morning, so it is important that you review the surgical list, talk to the surgeons and make sure you have an opportunity to teach and demonstrate before discharge. Family members should be involved whenever possible.
- There is no specific requirement for documentation of educational sessions.
- The surgical system is divided into pre-op, phase I PACU, and phase II PACU (prep to go home). Therapy usually takes place in phase II, although you are welcome to see patients in pre-op.

### **Primary Care Clinic**

- The clinic is a very busy place, and there are often many patients waiting for their appointment. Some have come from a great distance. Two full-time, OWS Honduran general physicians see patients in clinic. They are bilingual in English and Spanish. They are supported by a team of local nurses. This team is used to working without a PT, so they are constantly engaged in teaching and showing exercises, and doing many activities where PTs can be helpful.
- Sometimes, there will also be 1-2 volunteer physicians also seeing patients in clinic. They are generally family medicine physicians, internists, or cardiologists confirming surgical diagnoses, optimizing patients for surgery, or providing preoperative clearance.

- Please introduce yourself and make yourself available to the local primary care physicians. They will welcome your expertise. Many post-operative cases, as well as new acute and chronic injuries and conditions, will come to the clinic. You will be asked to step in to one of the patient “bays”, and the physician will brief you and explain to the patient why you are there.
  - Documentation is encouraged in these cases. Outside each bay there will be a stand-up charting station where you can add a brief narrative note (1-4 lines) indicating your assessment and intervention.
  - Patients can return as often as indicated to see you while you are there, though this is limited by clinic space and patient ability to travel to the clinic. Depending on transportation and distance, some patients may want to return 1-2 times during the week. Be sure to first check with the patient coordinators to confirm availability of space and to leave the patient's name and the day of their appointment.
  - There are two NPH volunteer PTs on site who primarily serve the children on the ranch with special needs. If you see a case that definitely requires ongoing care, and the patient is willing to come, you can arrange for treatment once per week by the NPH PTs. Confirm days and times with the therapist and be sure to leave detailed instructions.

### Supplies

- Many of the patients you see might never have heard of a physical therapist; be respectful by showing and telling them what you are doing or any additional tools you may be using. Education and excellence in our communications with patients creates a safe and trusting environment.
- There is a multi-drawer set of portable shelves in the last bay in the clinic that says “**Fisoterapia**” on the outside. Here you will find things like a gait belt, goniometer, theraband, biofreeze, over the door pulleys, and hot/ cold packs for home use.
- Near the linens area (across from the doors leading to the sterile area), you will find a storage area for braces, crutches, canes, and walkers for patient use. If a patient will be taking home an item, they need to sign a loan form with one of the Patient Coordinators.
- Post-operative handouts for common surgeries at OWS can be found in the bottom two drawers of the file cabinet in phase II (in English and Spanish). A copy machine is available at the clinic's main desk for copies of home exercise handouts.
- One option for teaching is to use short patient education videos in Spanish. There is Wi-Fi on site, and as long as you are not downloading huge files (the bandwidth is limited), you can show your patient YouTube or other relevant videos, as needed. The primary focus of their time with you is hands on treatment but use videos if you are struggling to explain or show something. If you think you may use this option, consider bringing your own laptop or iPad, as extra laptops in the surgery center are limited.
- Supplies such as therabands and biofreeze gel can be given to patients to keep. Other supplies such as shoulder pulleys, basic splints, and therapy balls will need to be returned. If you provide any of these supplies to patients, be sure to write down the patient's name and supplies loaned. Provide this information to the Patient Coordinators in clinic so they can ensure the supplies are returned.
- Use creativity to educate patients about simple PT supplies they can make at home. For example, patients can easily make ice packs or heating pads by filling a bag with uncooked beans or rice. For pain reduction, patients can soak a towel in hot water to make a warm compress.

- Physical Therapist DO NOT need to bring their own exercises, the Clinic has plenty they can put together when you get there.

### **Patient Privacy:**

The goal of OWS is excellent patient care, and treating every patient with the utmost respect as we would treat a patient in the U.S. We don't take pictures of the patients without their consent. We don't talk about patients in English when they can't understand. If possible, pull the curtain while they are learning a new exercise to give them privacy.

**One World Surgery currently needs donations for PT supplies listed below.** All donated supplies will need to be transported to Honduras in your luggage and need to be registered with Honduran customs. OWS also requests the ability to pre-approve all other donations to ensure the items can be used at the facility.

**If you have any questions about our supplies or equipment, contact Tiffany Healey, our Director of Clinical Services and Quality at [tiffany.healey@oneworldsurgery.org](mailto:tiffany.healey@oneworldsurgery.org)**

**If you plan to bring any supplies or medications with you and/or to solicit vendors for any donations, please contact Michael Fry 45 days prior to the medical mission start date at [michael.fry@oneworldsurgery.org](mailto:michael.fry@oneworldsurgery.org)**

- Thermoplastic sheets (50X60cm, 3 or 4 mm thick), splint making materials
- Portable folding exercise bike
  - Example: <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0027ZNH2O/>
- Basic splints, especially EVO's
- Stress balls
- Inflatable neck rehabilitation pillows
- Velcro tape roll (female and male type, strong medical Velcro)
- Reacher extenders/grabbers

### Additional Information

- This is probably the first time a patient has ever seen a physical therapist. Take extra time to explain who you are and what you do.
- **Patients come from all over the country for surgery and often the time and money to travel can be a huge burden. When developing your care plan, consider: Is it necessary for a patient to come for an appointment once a week, or if you spend more time explaining the exercises, can they do them at home?**
- The surgery center does not always have physical therapists available, so the physicians are used to explaining exercises and providing patients with handouts. When discharging a patient after surgery, it is not necessary to schedule a follow-up PT appointment. At the surgical follow-up appointment, the physician will determine if PT is necessary. While all patients could benefit from PT, capacity to provide PT services is still limited.
- **Since patients speak Spanish, make sure that any exercise handouts you bring are in Spanish. You can also ask the interpreters for assistance translating the handouts on-site.**

### Contacts

For clinical questions, please contact Tiffany Healey, our Director of Clinical Services and Quality, at [tiffany.healey@oneworldsurgery.org](mailto:tiffany.healey@oneworldsurgery.org).

For more information on medical mission trips, visit <https://oneworldsurgery.org/medical-mission/> or contact the Medical Missions team ([medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org](mailto:medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org))