



Service. Healing. Transformation.

One World Surgery Spine Surgeon 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.

A typical OR team includes one surgical tech, one circulating nurse, and one to two anesthesia providers. You are welcome to bring your PA, MA, resident, or recruit your own OR team, especially if you prefer additional surgical assists. Your team may include other mission volunteers and/or our local staff. Local anesthesia techs are not trained to perform regional blocks. For this reason, we will recruit at least one U.S. anesthesiologist whenever possible. Local interpreters provide English- Spanish interpretation, as well as guidance on local culture and context.

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.

No surgeon will perform any procedures beyond their active privileges in the US. In addition, some procedures (as defined below) are outside the scope of our center. Surgeons should not perform any procedures beyond their skill or comfort level in an ambulatory setting.

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)
- Otolaryngology (ENT) (HN)

- General (HN, DR- no laparoscopic procedures in the DR)
- Urology (HN)
- Gynecology (HN)
- Ophthalmology (HN)
- Surgical oncology (HN)
- Spine (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.

Surgeons typically spend 3 days in the operating room and 2 days in clinic. Seeing patients in clinic helps line up surgical cases for future missions. All postoperative follow-ups are performed by our Medical Director or general physicians. In Dominican Republic, surgeons should expect to spend up to 4 days in clinic and 1 day in the operating room as surgical volumes increase.

About one to two weeks prior to the mission, Patient Coordinators contact surgeons to begin discussing the surgical schedule. Surgeons perform surgeries within their typical scope of practice and should notify the Patient Coordinators if proposed cases fall outside their current scope.

Generally, surgical schedules are confirmed the week before the mission. For some specialties, clinic patients may be added to the surgical schedule the same week. During orientation and at the end of the first day of surgery, there will be a discussion regarding the possibility of adding or removing patients. The Medical Director and Clinical Operations Director will ultimately determine the center's capacity to perform additional surgeries.

Spine Surgery at OWS

Our goal is to improve patients' quality of life by reducing pain and restoring function through addressing readily treatable conditions with spinal surgical intervention infrequently available in Honduras. This translates to performing simple, shorter surgeries, over more complex procedures that would require focusing limited resources on more complicated pathology.

The emphasis is on patients whose needs can best be met in the outpatient setting or with 23-hour recoveries. We have performed one and occasionally two-level lumbar fusions, one to three level anterior cervical discectomy and fusions, along with cervical and lumbar decompressive surgeries. We have also performed epidural steroid spinal injections for pain management. To date, we have not felt that lateral lumbar interbody fusions would be appropriate in this setting.

Common Types of Surgeries Performed at OWS

- Cervical/Lumbar Laminectomy
- Cervical/ Lumbar Laminotomy
- Cervical/Lumbar Foraminotomy
- Cervical/Lumbar Discectomy
- Cervical/Lumbar Fusions
- Carpal tunnel and ulnar nerve releases
- Epidural steroid injections

Types of Surgeries Not Performed at OWS

- Artificial Disc Replacements
- Minimally invasive surgical procedures
- Lumbar fusions beyond 1-2 level
- Cervical fusions beyond 2-3 level
- Fusions to correct scoliosis
- Thoracic procedures

Typical Schedule for Visiting Spinal Surgeons

- Clinic on Sunday or during a pre-mission visit
- Surgery and small clinic Monday-Friday
- All surgical patients will be evaluated by the surgeon in clinic during the week of the mission or during the pre-mission visit

Type of Day	Pre-mission visit/clinic only	Full Day
Clinic	20-25 patients	10-15 patients
Surgery	N/A	2-4 cases depending on approx. length of case

Supplies, Equipment, Medications

The center is stocked with basic medical-surgical supplies and specialty packs for every procedure. Most supplies are purchased in the U.S. and transported via shipping containers a few times a year. Suture, hardware, and implants are mostly donated, and inventory is limited. We recommend bringing donations of your preferred items. You may also wish to bring your preferred surgical gloves and masks.

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

If you plan to bring any supplies or medications with you and/or to solicit vendors for any donations, please contact Michael Fry at michael.fry@oneworldsurgery.org

There is a customs process in Honduras that requires OWS to register all donations with the customs office by 45 days prior to the trip. We cannot accept any expired items, and we request

the ability to pre-approve all medical donations to ensure the items can be used at our facility. If the items can be used at our center, our team can provide you with a customs letter.

Equipment is primarily donated and may be a couple of models older than what you typically use.

Some tests and medications are unavailable in country or cost prohibitive to our patients. Our local team can recommend alternatives. Most of our patients cannot afford MRIs, CTs, or EMGs. Our social worker works with these patients to obtain necessary imaging or diagnostic studies; however, this process is time consuming and typically cannot be completed within the week of the medical mission.

- See *general equipment* and *specialty-specific equipment* [here](#)
- See *instrument sets* [here](#)

Additional Information

Due to the emphasis on providing safe, high-quality care, OWS has strict guidelines regarding nonmedical volunteers observing and scrubbing in on surgeries. Volunteers must be at least 15 years old to observe and at least 18 years old to scrub. All nonmedical volunteers are considered general volunteers and will be permitted to observe or scrub only during assigned shifts.

Contacts

For clinical questions, please contact Tiffany Healey, our Director of Clinical Services and Quality, at 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)