

Rocky Vista University and DOCARE International, NFP

January 2010 Guatemala Medical Outreach



Information Bulletin

General Information

The 18th mission will take place very early this year, January 1-10, 2010. The medical outreach component of the mission will be four to five days concentrated in the Lake Atitlan region.

Please read this bulletin carefully. It contains many important details about the mission as well as provides answers to many of your questions.

Participants

Missions are open to healthcare providers, medical educators and medical students who are also members of DOCARE International, NFP. A detailed Itinerary will be provided to participants just prior to departure to Guatemala. Only Licensed Providers will be allowed patient contact and supervision of students. Everyone is expected to work while on the mission. A schedule of sites and teams will be posted each day. Assignments may include registration, triage, patient care, lab, pharmacy and relevant patient medical education, dependent upon the specific site. Primary care providers are necessary to fulfill the goals and objectives of the mission, and have priority over specialists. If you are interested, please return the attached Registration, Waiver of Liability, copy of provider license if applicable, and payment as soon as possible. Group size is limited to 40 and participants will be notified of their status by email or phone, only after all paperwork and payment is received. A maximum of 20 students is allowed. **All participants MUST be current members of DOCARE International. Applications for membership are available through their website at www.docareintl.org**

Travel Arrangements

American, Continental, Delta and TACA are some of the airline carriers. Port of entry is Guatemala City. Airport taxes should be included in the cost of your plane ticket, but a security fee of about \$3.00 (2009 rate) will be collected prior to departure from Guatemala.

Everyone is responsible to provide their own flight transportation to Guatemala City Airport, proceed through customs, pick up their luggage, change money (usually the best rate of exchange is at the airport) and go outside to meet the rest of the group. A group shuttle to Antigua (1.5 hours away) will be available for all participants. Specific times will be posted on the itinerary when completed.

All prearranged group transport is included in the price of the mission, and it is highly recommended that you travel with the group, as security will also be provided. There are no refunds to those not traveling with the group. If you are not able to meet the “Group shuttle” you can make your own arrangements to get to the hotel in Antigua. Note: A private taxi could cost as much as \$30.00US one way.

While in Antigua the participants will have time to explore the rich culture of the Mayan people as well as adjust to the altitude of 5000 feet. There are museums, shopping, great restaurants providing international cuisine and day spas for all to enjoy. After a day or two, the group will then be transported to the western highlands and settled at their next destination, Panajachel located on the shore of one of the most beautiful lakes in the world, Lake Atitlan. This will be home base, as the participants will provide healthcare to the people living in multiple villages scattered around the lake. Transportation to and from the villages will either be by land or water, whichever is most appropriate. Most of the patients seen will be of Mayan ancestry, and many will still be wearing the traditional dress from hundreds of years ago. Most of the patients speak either a Mayan dialect or Spanish. When not working, the participants are encouraged to engage in local activities that will add to the cultural experience.

In order to keep costs down, all lodging and transportation will be provided through locally owned and operated businesses. Local translators will also be used. Students will be placed 2-4 per room in the hotels, healthcare providers and other community volunteers, 2 per room. All arrangements are made directly through the office of the Mission Coordinator. Special requests may be accommodated; however, they may involve an added fee.

Lectures and CME

Didactic lectures may be provided on workdays from 7:00 -7:45 AM to all students. It is anticipated that both Category 1-A and 1-B continuing medical education credits will be available for all health care providers attending. A schedule will be posted and appropriate documentation provided.

General Meetings

There will be frequent orientation, planning and prep meetings throughout the week. They will usually occur in the evenings, directly after patient care.

Meeting locations and times will be posted at a specified site in the hotel.

Healthcare providers and medical educators are expected to lead by example and guide and assist the students, who will perform the bulk of the prep, cleanup and patient care. Everyone is expected to participate in these activities.

Food

Most meals are not included in the mission. One luncheon and one dinner meeting will be provided. Breakfast may also be available depending on hotel services and fees. We will do our best to provide additional meals when possible.

Communication back to the USA

International phone cards, internet phones, cell phones and emails are readily available.

Language

60% of the population speaks Spanish, the rest speak one of the native Mayan dialects, especially Cakchiquel and Quiché. Translators will be provided for the workdays only.

Clothing

In the highlands, evenings are usually cool, and sometimes cold (40-60 °F), and during the daytime temperatures can reach 85°F. During January the weather is usually dry and sunny. A hat, sunbloc and good walking shoes are essential.

There are public laundry facilities should it become necessary to have your clothes washed. A "*Personal Packing Guide*" will be provided a few weeks prior to departure.

Toiletries and prescription medications

Bring whatever is necessary but MOST toiletries and many medications can be purchased at the markets and pharmacies in Guatemala.

Money

The unit of exchange in Guatemala is the Quetzle. One quetzle is worth about 13 cents OR \$1.00 US = 7.40 Quetzles. Bargaining for all items is expected at the markets, you should start by offering half of what they say, then expect to pay about not more than 70%. If you carry cash, make sure that you have small denominations and that the bills are in good condition. Many of the vendors in Antigua and Panajachel will accept American bills, but only in good condition.

Luggage

Each participant should plan on taking 2 suitcases, one exclusively for medications and supplies, the other for your personal items. Remember, many airlines now charge additional fees for your baggage, this is not included in your registration fees.

Immunizations

None are routinely required for entry into Guatemala. However, we request that all participants be vaccinated for Hepatitis A and B.

Prophylactic medications

None required. We do recommend bismuth subsalicylate (one chewable per meal) to help prevent traveler's diarrhea. See CDC and State department recommendations on food and water intake in Guatemala.

International Medical Evacuation and Travel Insurance

Recommend that you visit www.squaremouth.com to view options on available plans. Coverage not provided by RVU or DOCARE International.

General Mission Conduct

Excessive alcohol consumption is not permitted, and illicit drugs and firearms are not permitted. Abusive and/or rude behavior will not be tolerated. **Anyone** who violates these rules will immediately be dismissed from working or traveling with the group.

Hiking around or swimming in Lake Atitlan is forbidden by students. Those healthcare providers practicing substandard medical care, not behaving as good role models or not cooperating with the requests of the mission coordinator will also be dismissed from the mission.

***Medications and Medical Supplies**

A list of medications needed will be provided to each participant. A general supply of meds and equipment will be purchased and provided by the Medical Coordinator. See *Guatemala Medication List Form* provided.

All doctors are requested to pack one suitcase with some meds and those supplies that they feel necessary for them to have access to while providing patient care. For example, a stethoscope, and some disposable office supplies would be appropriate, dermatologists should bring surgical supplies and extra topicals, dentists must supply their own equipment and meds for extractions, abscesses, etc.

An inventory list of items packed should be emailed in advance to the medical coordinator and also be available for custom representatives, only if requested.

EXPIRED MEDICATIONS ARE NOT ALLOWED INTO THE COUNTRY.

Each volunteer provider and student is requested to pack one bottle of each of the following: **pediatric** chewable vitamins (no “gummy” types, please), **pediatric** acetaminophen or ibuprofen, and **pediatric** liquid cold medication.

All participants need to provide the following items for the worksites as applicable:

1. One bottle waterless hand cleaner/antiseptic
2. Flashlight for emergency use
3. Pens/some small Pads
4. Students Only: Diagnostic Kits: Stethoscope, BP Cuff, Ophthalmoscope, otoscope and specula (disposable can be washed and reused), percussion hammer, tuning forks and necessary chargers/batteries.

Culture, Souvenirs and side trips

We encourage that all participants learn as much about the people and country before arriving. Also, the ability to speak and understand Spanish would be very beneficial.

Guatemala is known for its green, black and lavender jade, colorful woven goods, beaded jewelry, and other native handicrafts. Recommended sites to see are: Multiple Markets and cathedrals throughout area, Pacaya Volcano hike (\$25), Santo Domingo Hotel and Cathedral (\$5), Zip Line in Panajachel (\$30), Excursion to Tikal (\$200), Iximche Ruins (\$8), black sand beach at Monterrico (\$25), Macadamian Nut Farm and Coffee Plantation Tours (\$10). Many of these activities can be arranged by the group after arrival.

Recommended websites are:

www.state.gov (general travel, country and immunization information, passports and safety)

www.lonelyplanet.com (Antigua, Panajachel, currency, food, etc.)

www.infoplease.com (history, culture, etc.)

The fee of \$650.00 includes:

- Prescheduled group shuttle bus to and from the airport and Antigua (1.5 hours one way)
- All transportation between Antigua and Panajachel (3 hours one way) with stops.

- Visit to Iximche Ruins between Antigua and Panajachel
- All transportation to and from work sites, by land or water
- All lodging, with private bathrooms
- All worksite translator fees
- A supply of commonly needed medications and supplies for workdays
- All transportation and housekeeping tips
- One group luncheon Meeting
- One group Dinner Meeting
- Breakfast/Coffee/Pure Water when available with lodging
- Additional supply expenses, meals and side trips, if funds available.

Contact

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