

Welcome to the Dominican Republic!

Who is Community Empowerment?

Community Empowerment is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that was formed in 2016 to function as the logistics partner to the Office of Global Health at Rush. We work to support our community partners by providing surgeries for patients in the provinces of Azua and San Juan for those who are the most marginalized. Our primary care partners refer patients to our teams and provide follow-up care. Each volunteer group partners with local surgeons, anesthesiologists and medical students.

Where will we be traveling?

The Dominican Republic is a Caribbean nation that shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti to the west. It is made up of 29 provinces, and it is run as a representative democracy, with elections every 4 years. The country is the home of Merengue music, is predominantly Christian, the national language is Spanish, and the national pastime is baseball.





Santo Domingo: We will be flying into Las Americas Jose Francisco Pena Gomez International Airport, which is about 20 minutes from the capitol, Santo Domingo. Santo Domingo is located in the Distrito Nacional province, which is on the southern border of the country on the coast of the Caribbean Sea, and is home to the president's office, the Zona Colonial (a historical and beautiful colonial district), and nearly 3 million Dominicans.

Peralta (if team is to be operating in Peralta): Most of our week will be spent in Peralta, a mountain village in the Azua province, located about a 2.5-hour drive northwest of Santo Domingo. We have a well-established relationship with the community in Peralta, and will be working in the small hospital serving the local community and others from surrounding areas that have even less access to healthcare. We will be staying as a group in a house on a hill in the village; there is running water and electricity in Peralta, but it is not always reliable.

Azua (if team is to be operating in Azua): Most of our week will be spent in Azua, an urban city, located about a 2-hour drive northwest of Santo Domingo. We will be treating people of Peralta community, as well as the residents of Azua. We will be working in an under-resourced hospital with a total of 3 operating rooms. We will be staying in a comfortable hotel—shared rooms (2-3 people), somewhat reliable wifi, air conditioning.

San Juan de la Maguana: Most of our week will be spent in San Juan de la Maguana, an urban city, located about 45 minutes from Azua. We will consult patients from Peralta community, the residents of Azua, as well as the local residents of San Juan de la Maguana. We will be working in a new hospital, still under-resourced, with a total of 4 operating rooms (only 3 available to us). We will be staying in a comfortable hotel—shared rooms (2-3 people), somewhat reliable wifi, air conditioning.

Food: Food is an important part of Dominican culture, and much of what we will eat during our time in Peralta is traditional Dominican fare. Rice and beans, plantains, fruit, scrambled eggs, chicken and pork are dietary staples, much of what we eat is grown or raised in the community, and there is always coffee at breakfast. On our way from Santo Domingo to the surgical site, there will be an opportunity to buy snacks and/or alcohol for the week; many team members have found it helpful to bring granola bars or meal bars as well as fiber supplements from home.

Water: As in most developing countries, the tap water is not potable. Please refrain from using it to drink or brush your teeth. We will provide bottled water. Do not flush toilet paper down the toilet, remember to place toilet paper in trash.

Communication: Cell phone service is dependent on where we are working for the day; the internet is available in certain parts of the hospital in Peralta; there is no service available at the house. If you plan to use your cell phone service while abroad, we recommend contacting your cellular carrier about the global service plans offered. Teams working in Azua will have service in the hospital and should have Wifi at the hotel. The group leader will have access to a working cell phone in the case of an emergency. It is useful to download WhatsApp, an app that allows users to text via the internet even when they don't have cell service. 911 is still the first contact in case of emergency, and 1411 is directory services.

Money: The official currency of the Dominican Republic is the Dominican Peso, denoted as RD\$. If you would like to have cash on hand, contact your local bank prior to travel to order \$50-100 in pesos. However, there are not many opportunities to make purchases outside of the grocery store and team dinner out at a local restaurant—both places that will take credit cards. Alert your credit card company that you will be using it in the DR if required.

Photo Ethics: Travel in other countries provides for many opportunities to take photos, but when taking photos of individuals in communities, we need to be mindful of our intentions and usage of photos. Any images that have faces of individuals that you intend to use require spoken/written approval. View a video tutorial on items to consider when taking photos abroad: <https://www.radiaid.com/social-media-guide>



Travel Smart, Travel Safe

Evacuation Insurance:

Per policy, evacuation insurance is required for all Rush trainees in all programs, and strongly encouraged for everyone else. Depending on your trip, the cost is usually about \$60-\$80.

Malpractice Insurance:

The policy provides medical professional liability coverage for indemnity, defense costs and regulatory defense costs up to \$1M per claim, subject to a \$3M group aggregate limit. The policy provides coverage for such claims in particular countries included in the policy that arise out of the Global Health Initiative's (GHI) operations in that country. In order for the coverage to apply, each provider must be included by name in the policy (to be added before departing for a trip), and the provider must be engaged in the scope of their duties with GHI. All volunteers of the GHI are considered providers and will be covered by this policy. The policy has a per claim retention (or deductible) of \$50,000.

Malaria, Cholera, Dengue, Zika: What You Need To Know

First, understand and minimize your risk: ensure that all of your routine vaccines are up to date- these include the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot- and wear insect repellent with at least 30% DEET per CDC recommendations. The CDC does recommend that medical personnel travelling to the Dominican Republic be vaccinated for Hepatitis A and Typhoid as well as take malaria prophylaxis; that said, many experienced trip leaders opt not to take prophylaxis because risk in the areas we work in is very low.

Information & Resources

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMra1508815#t=article>

<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/>

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/dominican-republic>



Packing List

- Please pack all personal belongings in one carry-on bag as you will be responsible (carrying & cost) for 1-2 checked bags of medication and supplies.

Personal Items:

Passport
(2) copies of passport & airline tickets
Toiletries: soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush & paste, feminine products, sunscreen
Insect repellent with 30% DEET per CDC recommendations
Personal meds: NSAIDS, Benadryl, allergy meds, antacids/antidiarrheals

- Zofran (for nausea)

Earplugs (shared rooms)

Clothing:

Scrubs for clinic (one set per day)
Seasonal clothing; sweat wicking material is great, as it is very hot/humid
One outfit for a night out
Bathing suit & flip flops for possible beach day
Socks & underwear
Comfortable, close-toed shoes for walking (tennis shoes or work boots)
Sweatshirt or jacket for nights
A bag or backpack to bring your phone, passport, and medical supplies to clinic

Medical Supplies:

Stethoscope
Copy of medical license or hospital ID
Any supplies or instruments pertinent to your field

Miscellaneous:

Spending money or credit card for souvenirs (You can exchange money in the airport or grocery store)
Snacks/granola or meal bars and fiber supplements
Travel games, books, headphones for downtime after clinic

What NOT to Bring:

- ⊗ Bottled water
- ⊗ Expensive jewelry or other personal valuables
- ⊗ Bed linens or pillow



Contact Information: Community Empowerment & Rush Global Health Contacts

Melhi Montero—Community Empowerment Executive Director

melhi@community-empowerment.org

829-505-7669

Stephanie Crane –Director of the Office of Global Health at Rush

Stephanie_Crane@rush.edu

312-623-9433

Zoe Kusnitz—Program Manager of the Office of Global Health at Rush

Zoe_Kusnitz@Rush.edu

708-833-1932

Money Matters

Your Amenities Budget includes:

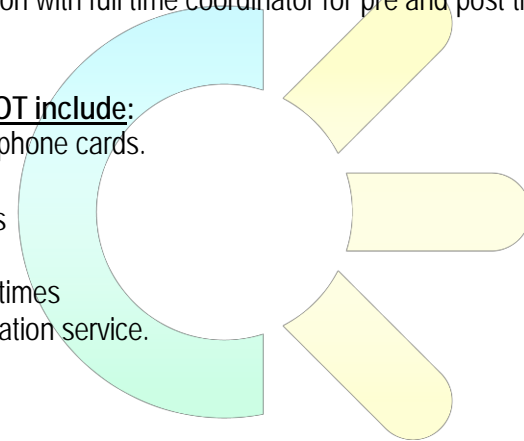
- Lodging (2-8 persons per room)
- Transportation to/from the DR airport
- Daily transportation to the work site
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Purified water
- Tips/gratuities

Your Administrative Budget includes:

- Orientation materials
- Organization, planning, and visits to clinic sites, hospitals, lodging
- Planning & evaluation with full time coordinator for pre and post trip, telephone, fax, internet
- Interpretation

Your Budget DOES NOT include:

- Telephone calls or phone cards.
- Any R&R activity
- Any alcoholic drinks
- Departure taxes
- Food outside meal times
- Any other transportation service.



community
empowerment



Deposit and/or Logistics Fee Payment

Please complete payment at least 2 weeks prior to departure date.

Include your **NAME** and **TRIP** on your payment.

Venmo, Quick Pay or Zelle transfer to Babs Waldman:

Quick Pay or Zelle: info@community-empowerment.org or (224-999-3235)

Venmo: [@C_empowerment](#)

OR

Send a Check or Money Order:

Community Empowerment

Attn: Babs Waldman

8 Milburn Park

Evanston, IL 60201