

HAITI MEDICAL SERVICE TRIP

Medical service trips to Haiti were started in January 2010, immediately after the earthquake. The trips are primarily staffed by RUSH students, residents, nurses, and faculty. However, volunteers from other institutions are also welcome.

Why Haiti?

Unfortunately, Haiti suffered from a lack of infrastructure and well organized medical care prior to the earthquake. Now, in the aftermath, there is still a significant absence of infrastructure and medical care. We have fostered a relationship with a resettlement community, called Jerusalem, just outside of Port-au-Prince. Our goal is to continue to work with the incredibly dedicated community leaders there to allow for the creation of sustainable public health and primary care programs. The Haitians are an extremely resilient group of people. However, a majority of them do not have access to the supplies (doctors, nurses, medications, and education) to allow them to pick themselves back up and rebuild.

Work Accomplished

Over the past 7 years we have sent teams comprised of 10-14 people to provide outpatient care. Teams are comprised of students (medical, nurse practitioner, and physician assistant), residents, attendings and nurses all in the fields of pediatrics, internal and family medicine as well as pharmacists and physical therapists. We also welcome non-medical team members to assist with logistics, crowd control, documenting the trip, and any other unforeseen adventures that may occur. We are looking to further relationships with Haitian surgeons to provide assistance with surgeries in the upcoming future.

Funding

Medications and supplies are obtained through a number of sources, including the AMERICARES Company, MAP, subsidy from the Department of Student Affairs at RUSH, subsidy and donations from the central Rush Pharmacy, and Project Cure.

Personal expenses for the trip are the responsibility of the individual. The total cost for a week is approximately \$1500-1600 per person. This amount is broken down into logistics fee and airfare. The logistics fee for the trip is \$950, which includes everything: lodging, food, water, on-the-ground transportation, and translation services. Airfare tends to vary by season. In recent years, we have been fortunate enough to be able to offer scholarships to all participating students and residents in the amount of \$850 per person, and to nurses for \$400 per person. While this is not a guarantee, we do anticipate being able to continue to offer some scholarship assistance.

Time Allocation

The medical school has created a Community Health Elective which allows medical students to get credit for this trip. Please contact Dr. Mariam Aziz for further details regarding requirements for this elective. Students in other schools (NP or PA) will need to discuss the issue of credit with their respective schools. Internal medicine and Med/Peds residents can obtain credit if they participate as part of the Global Health Elective, thru the department of internal medicine. Residents in other disciplines may be able to obtain credit, but would need to discuss this individually with their program directors.

What to expect

Haiti is a beautiful country. However, it continues to be in a rebuilding phase, and still has much work to do. Each day is spent in a clinic setting, working in the clinic we helped to have built. You will stay at a hostel with intermittent electricity and running water; thus showers will be cold and internet scarce if available at all. Breakfast and dinner will be provided to you by the hostel. Lunch will be eaten on site. Fresh drinking water will be provided. There is little privacy, and a sense of adventure, flexibility, good health, and the ability to go without some creature comforts is a must!

The above is a brief description, and we would be happy to talk in more detail with anyone who would like more info prior to committing to a trip. Once you have finalized a trip date with us, however, you are expected to fulfill that commitment to the program.

Stephanie Crane, MD
Stephanie_crane@rush.edu

Jennifer Towbin, MD
Jennifer_towbin@rush.edu