



**STUDENT & RESIDENT INTERNATIONAL MISSION OPPORTUNITIES**

## Introduction

“I would like to do an elective rotation in an international setting but how do I start? Where do I find information?”

“Will you help me? Information on medical missions is readily available but I am feeling overwhelmed by the whole process of trying to make good choices”

“My goal is to spend my medical career in a developing country and I have a chance to spend a few weeks overseas now during my training. However, I need someone with experience with whom I can talk. But who?”

You are not alone in asking these or in asking any great number of other questions that frequently come to us. We also do not want you to feel alone. This CMDA Student Missions Resource is designed to help you answer your questions and to guide you as you think, pray, and plan. Please feel welcome to search this site and to contact us for help.

Medical and Dental students have traditionally been our focus when talking about an international medical elective. But, these electives are really a tremendous opportunity for students of all disciplines in healthcare – medicine, nursing, physical therapy, public health, and others such as administration. Elective rotations are also available for post-graduates in their specialty training.

An elective in an international/mission setting will expose you to medicine in another culture with different values and with limited resources. You will develop new skills and use your current skills in new ways. More importantly, God can work in your heart in new ways through those for whom you care and those with whom you work.

In less developed countries you will care for people with problems you only read about in the USA and Canada. You will gain hands-on experience in caring for these people and such illnesses as malaria, leprosy, extra-pulmonary tuberculosis, typhoid, and bowel obstruction from worms --- just a few of the diseases causing people to suffer in the third world. You will also learn to care for individuals with very advanced presentations of the common diseases you see at home. Your ingenuity will be challenged by the lack of

resources and your diagnostic skills will improve greatly. The added experience will be invaluable to you in the future, making you a better clinician and a more caring individual no matter where you eventually end up practicing. You will also have the great opportunity to gain insight into the meaning of affordable, equitable, accessible primary health care; holistic health; disease prevention; allocation of resources including health workers (the most valuable resource); and leadership within a healthcare team.

Jesus, the great physician, gives to us a magnificent lesson in the Good Samaritan; true Christian love is prepared to put itself at risk and cross ethnic, social and cultural barriers to minister to another's need. Some of our most respected Christian heroes are those who have lived their lives in isolated areas of the world, being the love of Jesus to someone in need. It may be that God is calling you or will call you into cross-cultural medical work in the future. The need for committed individuals is greater today than ever before. A couple of months overseas is a tremendous time to grow in your love for and commitment to Christ. This time can also be a great encouragement and help dispel any false notions you may have about working overseas.

I encourage you to consider doing an international elective! This booklet will help guide you through the complete process.

### **CMDA can help you plan a successful international rotation!**

Planning and working out the details of a successful international healthcare rotation can take twelve to eighteen months. The best places fill quickly, so begin planning early. The CMDA departments, "Center for Medical Missions (CMM)" and "Campus and Community Ministries" (CCM), have prepared this information in order to assist you in planning your time overseas. CMDA does not send missionaries around the world, we are not a sending agency, nor do we have our own hospitals, clinics or projects. However, we are part of a large network and we are able to help you along the way to an exciting and challenging time. Over 1000 of our members are actually involved in mission situations overseas! Through them we are well known within their sending agencies and their

overseas projects. In addition, we have partnerships and cooperate with many other groups such as the Christian Nurses Association, the Christian Physicians Assistants Association and the International Christian Medical and Dental Association and we can link you with them.

So, if you have questions about why, where, when and how you should go, or anything concerning travel, immunizations, visas and life in another culture, this booklet will be a good place to start. Please feel free to contact us if this booklet does not answer all your questions and we will do our best to help you.

### **How soon can I go?**

Most medical, dental, nursing, physician assistant, physical therapy, nurse practitioner and other schools will not give credit for an international elective prior to your final year in training. In order to clinically benefit most fully from the experience you must have developed some clinical understanding yourself. In addition, most rotation sites prefer final year students because you will be more helpful than you probably were earlier in your training. However, we recommend that you spend time overseas even if the opportunity comes as an undergraduate or in your early years of professional school training. It is more difficult to find a rotation site then but it is sometimes possible and the rewards can be just as great.

### **When do I start to prepare?**

You need to begin your preparations 12 to 18 months prior to starting travel. Do not wait until your senior year to begin planning because many overseas programs that take students fill a year beforehand. You should begin contacting places and countries you are interested in during your sophomore year and definitely no later than the beginning of your junior year. God can open doors for those of you who may already be past these guidelines, but the old proverb “the early bird gets the worm” is usually true.

## Getting Started

Getting started and taking the first step is usually the most difficult part of the process. Understanding the requirements of your school, finding overseas contacts, thinking about finances, and making all the required may sound intimidating and weaken your desire and resolve to go. However, if you just take one step at a time the process becomes much easier. In fact, it is really not difficult at all.

First, make an appointment with your Dean for Student Affairs and discuss your interest in an international health elective. If you are a resident in training, check with the director of your program. There are a number of issues you will need to discuss with your Dean or Director:

1. **Academic credit.** To receive academic credit for the experience you will definitely need the Dean's approval. In most circumstances you will be able to use one of your student elective periods to go. Some students use vacation time instead of elective time or else combine the two together in order to stay longer. If it is possible to stay longer we highly recommend it.
2. **Timing.** Be sure to discuss requirements as to when you may and may not take electives away from campus due to such things as National Board Examination dates, match day, graduation, and so on. Many students ask about match day. It is entirely possible to be overseas on match day. Virtually everywhere will have some way to receive immediate word of the match. Do not feel intimidated by this threatened disconnect.
3. **Academic qualifications.** Your school may also have requirements regarding the academic qualifications of your medical mentor. For example, it may be required that the preceptor be one who has received Western medical training and be American Board Certified, or its equivalent.
4. **Rotation requirements.** Discuss what you and/or your mentor will need to do in order for you to receive academic credit. Will you make a written report; make an oral presentation, etc?

Inquiring about all of this early in your exploration can save frustration down the road. You do not want to waste time exploring your options and setting up a program that your school will cancel for some previously unknown reason. In certain circumstances such as you being the first one from your institution to do an overseas rotation, you may need to collect a lot of information in advance to demonstrate the strength of a rotation site.

## **How do I decide on or find a location?**

By now you should know if an overseas elective is possible and have an idea of the requirements of your school or program. Next, begin looking for the place where you will go. You may already have a specific geographical location in mind. On the other hand, you may feel you do not even know where to start. Your choice of location could depend on several factors and there are a number of issues to consider in this process.

**Is God directing you to a specific type of ministry in the future?** If so, this gives you a great opportunity to do something to benefit you as you pursue that goal. Most people who become new career missionaries have had previous short-term experience in the culture, or even the place, where they decide to work. However, the majority of people at your stage of training do not yet have such a clear sense of God's direction so don't feel like you are in the minority if you are early in your understanding of God's plan for your life. More importantly, be very serious about allowing God to speak His will to you through the whole process and experience of an international rotation.

**Is there a specific culture you would like to be involved with?** One of the challenges of cross-cultural work is communication. English is spoken in many of the countries of eastern or southern Africa as well as parts of India, Pakistan, Thailand, Bangladesh and others. Parts of West Africa speak French. Spanish can be used throughout South America. Knowing the language of an area may make it much more attractive to you. Most places will have someone who will help you translate as needed. However, be prepared for the challenges presented by asking, "Where is your pain?" and, after

listening to a two minute discussion between your translator and patient, hearing the answer, “Yes!” There is a tremendous value in going to a country where the language and culture are totally unfamiliar, but ask ahead of time if there will be someone to help translate.

It may be that you wish to experience life and work in a particular religious culture e.g. Islamic, Hindu or Animistic. Or, you may wish to be in an urban setting versus a rural area or vice-versa. International rotations are available in the least developed to the most modern of countries, in many different cultural and religious settings, and in far-flung rural settings to inner city centers. You choose!

**Do you have a certain interests?** Most students spend time at a mission hospital rotating on the different wards, outpatient clinics, and in surgery. This usually gives the final year student an excellently balanced clinical experience. However, there are wonderful opportunities in primary health care clinics, in community preventive and public health, or involvement with a specific disease e.g. HIV/AIDS, or tuberculosis.

**What type of organization or group do you want to work with?** Faith-based agencies and national church groups run the hospitals and other programs where students typically work. However, this is not the only option for you. Government hospitals and projects often offer opportunities for international students to come for a period of time. Development and aid agencies are another option for you to investigate. Not all overseas work is in a mission setting. During our final four years in Liberia we helped a number of our CMDA members work in a government hospital and medical school. This is a different type of medical work than the traditional clinics and work of mission hospitals, but it can give you a chance to increase your vision of ways God could use your skills. If this “tent-making” approach to medical missions interests you, CMDA can refer you to some members working in non-traditional medical settings overseas.

Wherever you choose, be sure to communicate well in advance so that you know that you will have good supervision and teaching. Too many students have gone with false

expectations and have returned disappointed. It is very helpful to have an idea of what you want as you look; thinking about the above questions will be very helpful as you select your rotation site.

## **Resources for finding sites**

Consult the CMDA Directory of International Preceptor Sites listed below. This list is updated regularly with places that are interested in you as a student. The list below was updated last in the spring of 2006. We contacted each mission agency and asked for new contact information and we received a confirmation from each site that they are accepting students. Most of the listed rotation places have web links to their home internet site for further information. We also have more detailed information about some of the sites in our Campus and Community Ministries office at CMDA. Please contact us if you would like for us to check. As we learn of new possibilities we will add them. If you know of other positions not listed we would appreciate an email telling us about the place so it can be added. Your local CMDA chapter can also be an excellent source for information. Members of the chapter may be able to provide the names of Christian physicians, dentists and others who are working overseas.

Your school may have a list of locations where other students have traveled. Check with the Dean of Students Office or the Office for International Studies if your school has one. Many USA based universities have a cooperative exchange agreement with an overseas university and it may be possible for you to do a rotation there. An example is the relationship between Indiana University and Moi University School of Medicine in Eldoret, Kenya. Christian faculty can also be a great resource. Many have friends from their student days who are now working in overseas settings.

Ask your pastor, priest or a missions committee member at your church if there are missionaries supported by your congregation/denomination doing medical missions. It is amazing how many people work in a small medical work in a relatively obscure place and how students find these places to go to each year.

Do not get discouraged if you do not find a place through the above resources. There are many other sources for good information. Keep digging until you are convinced you have found the place that is right for you.

## **Making contact and application**

The first step is to contact the hospital/project and doctor or other person with whom you wish to work. Remember you are contacting someone who is usually very busy, so keep correspondence as short as possible but be sure to include the necessary information. Tell them who you are (med student, resident, male, female, married, single, with or without kids who are coming, etc.), the months you would like to come, how you heard of them, and why you are interested in doing such an elective. Also include any specific requirements of your school. If you are applying to a mission hospital, you should include something about your faith experience and church background as well. Ask if they are willing for you to come. If your requested time is not available, find out if there are other options.

Be sure to ask about other requirements from organizations that sponsor the mission you wish to visit. Many faith-based organizations require at least a short form application to the general mission as part of the process. Government organizations may have other requirements. Every situation is different so follow up carefully on any instructions you receive from your new mentor. Communication overseas is improving rapidly but still can take some time. Don't procrastinate in following up with applications, needed information, and any other requirements. Be sure all your questions are answered and that expectations of you are also met.

## **Expenses**

It is important, early in your communication, to discuss what your financial obligations will be. Each site may have variations as to the specifics but generally you should expect to be responsible for all travel (international and within the country) and daily living

expenses. Be sure that you ask about this beforehand so you are not surprised by a big bill you did not anticipate. Inquire also about any other expenses such as special trips you may make within the country or possible hotel stays on arrival and before leaving.

Remember, especially if you are going to a mission setting, that the hospital/project and the people who work there are all on a very limited budget: be responsible and prompt in paying for all your expenses. As a general guideline you can expect a minimum of \$1000 to \$1500 in expenses for a two-month stay in addition to your international travel.

Depending on the amount of travel required once you reach the country and the local cost of living, this figure could easily be higher.

## **Financial Aid**

God already knows your need and is preparing the way for you already, so do not be disheartened by the costs. God is in control and He is always faithful in meeting all our needs as Christians. If you have carefully prayed about this trip and have felt God leading you then He is far ahead of you in solving this “problem”. I really think the much bigger issue to God is our hearts, not the financial need.

It is important that you begin working on the finances for your trips early in your preparations, don't procrastinate; watch out for deadlines for any applications that may be needed. Talk with your church. If your church has a missions' or outreach pastor this would be the person to contact. Be prepared with some facts and figures about expenses and prepare a simple budget. Have the budget broken into separate categories because some groups or people will feel challenged to meet one portion of your trip. Ask your church about establishing a tax-deductible account to which people may donate and receive a receipt for tax purposes. Family often provide further financial support, especially if a tax-deductible account is set up. Write them and let them know of your plans and expenses.

The Christian Medical & Dental Associations (CMDA) provides the James S. Westra Scholarship for medical and dental students, the Vance Memorial Endowment Fund for

dental students, and Resident Short-Term Mission Fund for residents. The amounts awarded are generally \$250 to \$500 for students while the resident funds may vary more. Each of these funds has an application process so, pay attention to the requirements and deadlines. These funds are generally limited to qualified students and residents who are CMDA members. The Readers Digest International Foundation also provides scholarships for qualified applicants through the Medical Assistance Program. This scholarship is for approximately 75 % of your international travel costs. Again, there is an early deadline for application. For more information about these resources, see the “Scholarships” section on the CMDA website. (Baptist Medical and Dental Fellowship has funds available as well).

### **I am married, should I take my spouse?**

Absolutely! This may be one of the greatest experiences of your life, especially if the two of you are together. There is no way to adequately come back home and “tell” someone about your time. God can direct you through this trip. When you and your spouse are together you have shared God’s direction. His leading will then be much clearer to you. This is can be a part of a wonderful marital history. Years later you will talk about the “Do you remember when?” part that no one else can quite share!

### **Summary...**

We at CMDA are very interested in you and your family. We want to do whatever we can to help make this international rotation experience all that it can be for you. This time has the potential to make a great impact on both you and others - your family, those you work with, and those who you give care to. There is no doubt you will be a more complete and compassionate physician for having done an international rotation. We encourage you to contact the CMDA’s Campus and Community Ministries department or CMDA’s Center for Medical Missions for help with all your questions.

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## **CMDA Directory of International Preceptor Sites**

The following organizations can be contacted for information about overseas rotations. If you have additional questions please feel free to e-mail us at [susan.carter@cnda.org](mailto:susan.carter@cnda.org) or call The Center for Medical Missions at 1-888-230-2637. If you contact any of these organizations and find that the information we have listed needs to be updated, please let us know.

### **ABWE- Assoc of Baptist for World Evangelism, Inc**

International Healthcare Ministries Department

PO Box 5885

Harrisburg, PA 17105

(717) 774-7000

(877) 636-5478 (toll free)

[info@abwe.org](mailto:info@abwe.org)

[www.abwe.org](http://www.abwe.org)

### **AGAPE IN ACTION, INC**

P.O. Box 230

Porter, TX 77365

011-502-7755-1595

Matt and Dr. Heidi Bell

Serving in Santa Cruz del Quiche, Guatemala

Best way to contact us: [heidi\\_and\\_matt@hotmail.com](mailto:heidi_and_matt@hotmail.com)

[www.agapeenaccion.blogspot.com](http://www.agapeenaccion.blogspot.com)

[www.nbri.net](http://www.nbri.net)

### **AIC KIJABE HOSPITAL**

*Pre-professional Program*

PO Box 20

Kijabe, 00220

Kenya

Medical Education and Research Division

Mary Mwangi, Administrative Assistant at [mededdirasst.kh@kijabe.net](mailto:mededdirasst.kh@kijabe.net)

[www.aim-us.org](http://www.aim-us.org)

### **AIM – Africa Inland Missions**

*Offers 4th year med rotations to medical students at two hospitals in Kenya*

P.O. Box 178

Pearl River, NY 10965

(845) 735-4014

(800) 254-0010 - toll free

Short Term Department

[stfacilitator.us@aimint.net](mailto:stfacilitator.us@aimint.net)

<http://www.aim-us.org>

### **AMERICAN LEPROSY MISSIONS**

One ALM Way

Greenville, SC 29601

(864) 271-7040

[amlep@leprosy.org](mailto:amlep@leprosy.org)

[www.leprosy.org](http://www.leprosy.org)

**BAPTIST MIDMISSIONS**

*For Baptists Only*

PO Box 308011

Cleveland, OH 44130-8011

(440) 826-3930

[info@bmm.org](mailto:info@bmm.org)

<http://www.bmm.org/bmm/>

**BREAKING BORDERS, INC.**

Breaking Borders, Inc.

PO Box 35220

Tulsa, OK 74153-0220

Toll Free: 1-877-212-0562

[info@breakingborders.com](mailto:info@breakingborders.com)

[www.breakingborders.com](http://www.breakingborders.com)

**CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL OF SAHIWAL**

57004 Punjab

Pakistan

(864) 233-5226

Contact: John Hopkins

(864) 233.5226

[johnh@worldwitness.org](mailto:johnh@worldwitness.org)

[www.worldwitness.org](http://www.worldwitness.org)

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SA

Peter J. Hambidge (Base Leader) or Angeline Hambidge

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[mahyeno@telkomsa.net](mailto:mahyeno@telkomsa.net)

**EMMANUEL HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION**

808/92, Nehru Place

New Delhi 110019

India

[info@eha-health.org](mailto:info@eha-health.org)  
[electives@eha-health.org](mailto:electives@eha-health.org)  
[volunteers@eha-health.org](mailto:volunteers@eha-health.org)  
[www.eha-health.org](http://www.eha-health.org)

Contact : Mrs. Zarema Dawson at [zarema@eha-health.org](mailto:zarema@eha-health.org)  
[www.eha-health.org](http://www.eha-health.org)

### **EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF AMERICA INTERNATIONAL MISSION**

ReachGlobal  
901 E. 78<sup>th</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55420  
(800) 745-2202  
Contact: Thomas P. Cairns, MD at [tcairns@efca.org](mailto:tcairns@efca.org)  
Central African Republic, Cameroon

### **ELCA GLOBAL RECRUITMENT**

*3-month rotations in Africa*  
Evangelical Lutheran Church Association  
8765 West Higgins Road  
Chicago, IL 60631  
(800) 638-3522 Ext 2648

### **GLOBAL HEALTH OUTREACH**

(CMDA)  
P. O. Box 7500  
504 Old Jonesboro Rd  
Bristol, TN 37621-7500  
(423) 844-1000  
[gho@cmda.org](mailto:gho@cmda.org)

### **GLOBAL PARTNERS**

6060 Castleway W Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46250  
(317) 570-5160  
Contact: Joni Stevenson at [stevensonj@wesleyan.org](mailto:stevensonj@wesleyan.org)  
[www.praygivego.com](http://www.praygivego.com)  
Zambia: Joan Wallace at [jpwallace51@yahoo.com](mailto:jpwallace51@yahoo.com)  
Haiti: Cory and Kris Thede  
[haitithede@yahoo.com](mailto:haitithede@yahoo.com)

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Madagascar  
Dr. David Mann at [davidmann@uuplus.com](mailto:davidmann@uuplus.com) (Text messages only please)  
[www.mandritsara.org.uk](http://www.mandritsara.org.uk)

### **HCJB WORLD RADIO (Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings)**

**WORLD RADIO MISSIONARY FELLOWSHIP**

Pat Jacquin

P.O. Box 39800  
Colorado Springs, CO 80949-9800  
(719) 590-9800  
(800) 873-4859 (toll free)  
[www.hcjb.org](http://www.hcjb.org)

**HOPITALY VAOVAO MAHAFALY**

Good News Hospital  
Association of Bible Baptist Churches of Madagascar  
*Students must be able to communicate reasonably in French.*  
Mandritsara  
HVM, BP 12  
415 Mandritsara  
Madagascar  
Interested students, residents contact: Dr. David Mann at [davidmann@uuplus.com](mailto:davidmann@uuplus.com) (Text messages only please)  
[www.mandritsara.org.uk](http://www.mandritsara.org.uk)

**HOSPITALS OF HOPE, INC.**

USA & Bolivia  
3545 North Santa Fe  
Wichita, Kansas 67219  
(316) 262-0964  
Michael Joseph Wawrzewski III, PA-C  
Founder/CEO  
Hospitals of Hope, Inc (USA & Bolivia)

**INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES**

PO Box 851  
Valley Forge, PA 19482  
(800) 222-3872 X2367  
[BIMvolunteers@abc-usa.org](mailto:BIMvolunteers@abc-usa.org)  
[www.internationalministries.org](http://www.internationalministries.org)

**INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD**

Southern Baptist Convention  
P.O. Box 6767  
Richmond, VA 23230  
(804) 219-1426  
[www.imb.org](http://www.imb.org)

**INTERSERVE MEDICAL**

*Elective Program - 4<sup>th</sup> year medical students*  
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PO Box 418  
Upper Darby, PA 19082  
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[www.nazareneworldmission.org](http://www.nazareneworldmission.org)

Interested students/residents/doctors can contact: Andy Bennett MD at

[bennett@melanesianaz.org](mailto:bennett@melanesianaz.org)

Contact for long-term service: John and Sandy Cunningham (816) 333-7000

[scunningham@nazarene.org](mailto:scunningham@nazarene.org)

[jcunningham@nazarene.org](mailto:jcunningham@nazarene.org)

### **LAMB PROJECT**

Rajabashor, Parbatipur

Dinajpur 5250

Bangladesh

Anne Pottkamp, Short-term Coordinator at [annep@lambproject.org](mailto:annep@lambproject.org)

[www.lambproject.org](http://www.lambproject.org)

### **LCMS WORLD MISSION**

[www.lcmsworldmission.org](http://www.lcmsworldmission.org)

### **LEPROSY MISSION INTERNATIONAL, UK**

Joanna Swan, Short-Term Coordinator & Personnel Administrator at [joannas@tlmint.org](mailto:joannas@tlmint.org)

[www.leprosymission.org](http://www.leprosymission.org)

### **LINKING HANDS**

*Student elective program with mission hospitals*

87-A Dunbar Walk

Singapore 459396

[info@linkinghands.org](mailto:info@linkinghands.org)

<http://www.linkinghands.org>

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[www.ashainternational.org](http://www.ashainternational.org)

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[danny@mcwanet.org](mailto:danny@mcwanet.org)  
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**PEACE BE WITH YOU MINISTRIES**

*Short and long-term opportunities in the Philippines (Muslim ministry)*  
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[thebaileys@missionsmail.org](mailto:thebaileys@missionsmail.org)  
011-63-0918-4158773

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San Antonio, TX 78258  
(210) 244-2600  
Contact: Susy Harbick at [susyh@rafiki-foundation.org](mailto:susyh@rafiki-foundation.org)  
[www.rafiki-foundation.org](http://www.rafiki-foundation.org)

**SIM** - Serving in Mission  
PO Box 7900  
Charlotte, NC 28241  
(704) 588 4300  
(800) 521-6449 (toll free)  
[info@sim.org](mailto:info@sim.org)

[www.sim.org](http://www.sim.org)

**TEAM - The Evangelical Alliance Missions**

*Middle East, Nepal, Pakistan, Zimbabwe*

P.O. Box 969

Wheaton, IL 60189

(800) 343-3144

[info@teamworld.org](mailto:info@teamworld.org)

[www.teamworld.org](http://www.teamworld.org)

**TENWEK HOSPITAL**

Visiting Staff Coordinator

P.O. Box 39

Bomet, Kenya

[tenwekvisitors@tenwek.com](mailto:tenwekvisitors@tenwek.com)

<http://www.tenwek.org/twk/default.htm>

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

Hospital in the Middle East

*Medical School students should have completed their third year of medical school. We make exceptions for those who have completed their first year of medical school and want to come for one week or less. However, most come for at least 1-2 months at a time.*

Mrs. Carol Rubesh at [crubesh@tapmail.org](mailto:crubesh@tapmail.org)

Oasis Hospital

P.O. Box 1016

Al Ain

United Arab Emirates

Short Term Coordinator in the USA: Bruce Gregersen at [bgregersen@teamworld.org](mailto:bgregersen@teamworld.org)

**WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE**

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