

FAQ about Short-term Service with PAACS

Q. Who do you need? A. Surgeons of all stripes and types. General surgeons are perhaps the greatest need, but orthopedics, urology, Ob-Gyn, trauma, ENT, vascular, thoracic, neurosurgery and plastics are also needed. Since general surgery in Africa requires a broad base of knowledge, gastroenterologists, pathologists, and radiologists are most welcome.

Q. Who is eligible to serve with PAACS? A. Any board-certified surgical specialist or non-surgical specialist in certain desired fields who loves the Lord is eligible for consideration. All must be willing to sign their agreement with the PAACS Statement of Faith. While not ignoring the issues of Christian liberty, we do require that anyone serving with PAACS be willing to live within the code of conduct required by the hospital where they will serve. PAACS is a training program in partnership with various evangelical Protestant mission hospitals. They are not under our control. Each of those hospitals has different requirements for those who come to work at their mission hospital. If you find that the requirement at one hospital is not something that you can or wish to meet, there is likely a suitable alternative.

Q. Do I have to be an academician or regularly involved with training residents to work with PAACS?

A. No. We do ordinarily ask the short-term faculty to provide a few lectures in their area of expertise, but anyone who has come through a North American residency understands the type of bedside teaching, teaching in the OR and conference (morbidity/mortality, case presentation, topic-oriented lecture) that is an integral part of the PAACS training program. You will communicate with the Program Director to determine when and how you may help.

Q. How do I know where to serve? A. Sometimes we have a particular need for a particular specialty at a particular hospital for a particular time. If that applies, we will notify you of that need and hope that you will respond to it. Most of the time, it is a matter of personal preference. Go to the web, www.paacs.net, and look at the various hospitals. Talk with a contact person at World Medical Mission (wmminfo@samaritan.org) or Medical Teams International (Debbie Doty at ddoty@medicalteams.org). Contact us. Most of all, pray that God will direct you.

Q. How long should I plan on? A. Two weeks is probably the bare minimum. Most of our PAACS hospitals are in rather remote sites and it will take the better part of three days to fly and then drive to the hospital (no one drives in Africa at night). In two weeks, you would only have eight days on the ground working. There is practically no limit on how long you can stay. You can stay for a lifetime if you wish – with a little work ahead of time.

Q. Who pays the cost of the trip? A. You do. You are responsible for all expenses including, but not limited to, passport, visas, airfare, ground transportation, room rent and food.

Q. What is the cost of the trip? A. This varies considerably on where you are going and how comfortably you wish to travel. The best thing to do is to discuss it with your contact person at World Medical Mission or Medical Teams International. However, a very rough estimate for a single person is

between \$1800 – 2600 for economy airfare per person, approximately \$500 - \$800 for food and lodging per month and in-country transportation from \$200 - \$900 depending on mode of transportation. Souvenirs and gifts to the ministry would be additional expenses.

Q. Is my service tax-deductible? A. Yes. That is one additional advantage of working through World Medical Mission and Medical Teams International is that you can set up an account through them with a tax-deductible gift. Your expenses are then reimbursed by them from that account. You also have the option of taking them directly from your own tax return. If desired, PAACS can provide a letter confirming the dates and nature of your volunteer service.

Q. How do I take care of the logistics? A. For most people, we would recommend that you either go through World Medical Mission or Medical Teams International. The majority of our short-term faculty has come through World Medical Mission. If for some reason, you are not a candidate for their services, PAACS will put you in touch with the Program Director at the hospital you prefer and he or she will help you work through the logistics. PAACS will then be responsible for checking your references and confirming that you have the requisite medical credentials.

Q. How much lead time do I need? A. Six months would be ideal in that you would be able to complete a full series of vaccinations and get all your paperwork in order. That much time would increase your chance that an opening would be available at the hospital of your choice during the more popular times (e.g. June – August). Two months is probably the bare minimum (largely because of visa issues) and would require that you already have your passport, have your vaccinations, would be able to provide all documents necessary for your application and there is an opening at the desired hospital

Q. Do I need a medical license in the country where I will serve? A. Most of the countries do not require a specific license in that country. Kenya is a notable exception at the present time. World Medical Mission or Medical Teams International will notify you if one is needed and will help you obtain it.

Q. What about malpractice insurance? A. This is not a requisite for any of our training programs. Special overseas policies are available via the Internet if you feel you require them, but in most countries, the visiting physician is at very low risk.

Q. What is the credentialing process? A. The application process for World Medical Mission and Medical Teams International will take care of this. It is similar to the information required for an application to the staff of any hospital in the US. For all applicants, a supplemental form (BIF – Basic Information Form) must be filled out for the PAACS records (the information is required by the various Ministries of Health for the credentialing of our trainees). If you do not come through those two organizations, PAACS will require you to submit the information directly to us.

Q. Can my family come with me? A. We encourage this. Guest housing is at a premium at most places and so at most places, the sooner you sign up, the more likely that it can happen. Please be aware that the expenses of bringing young children and those in their early teens are generally not tax-deductible.

Q. What about travel insurance? A. Your travel agent or contact at WMM or MTI can direct you toward insurance which will cover trip cancellation, medical care out of your own country (if your own policy doesn't cover you), evacuation in case of severe illness and expatriation of mortal remains. There is also insurance available which will cover you in case you are a victim of terrorism (not usually covered by usual insurance policies). It is your decision as to whether you wish to have these covered, but please remember that while a problem is unlikely, the solution is usually expensive if you don't have insurance.

Q. My question isn't one of those above. To whom should I direct my questions? A. If you are going through World Medical Mission or Medical Teams International, they are likely to know the answer to your question. You are always welcome to communicate with the program director directly if you know where you will be going. All other questions should be directed to info@paacs.net and we will make sure we find out the answer for you.