



**THE SHALOM  
FOUNDATION**  
GIVE HEALING, GIVE HOPE

# MEDICAL MISSION TRIPS – GETTING STARTED

## SURGICAL MISSION TRIPS

Every year, The Shalom Foundation coordinates one-week Surgical Mission Trips across 10 different specialties to reach the underprivileged children of Guatemala. “SMTs” evaluate hundreds of patients for problems that can be treated by a surgical procedure.

The Shalom Foundation, based in Franklin, TN, coordinates these Surgical Mission Trips through helping medical professionals form a team. We work with hospitals and organizations like Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital, Vanderbilt, Hirsche Smiles Foundation, World Pediatric Project, Dell Children’s Global Surgical Outreach, Guatemala Healing Hands, Mending Kids International, Hamilton Eye Institute and Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital. Surgical Mission Trips operate out of The Moore Pediatric Surgery Center – our surgical hospital located in Guatemala City, Guatemala. This facility includes 3 fully-equipped operating rooms, 5 first-stage recovery beds, 20 overnight recovery beds, a pharmacy, sterilization suite, nurses’ station, family waiting area, and a cafeteria. We are also in the process of creating a desperately-needed dental clinic!

Boasting 22 year-round employees, The Moore Center is able to provide superior pre-screening care, surgical care with overnight stays included, and post-op care within our modern facility – all free of charge to our patients! The Moore Center’s English-speaking Medical Director, Executive Director, social workers, and logistics coordinator makes sure each mission week flows smoothly. Before your team’s arrival, The Moore Center facilitates patient recruitment and all necessary patient logistics (transportation, food, temporary housing) so that your team can focus completely on providing medical care within your expertise. In addition to our professional team of full-time staff, The Moore Center can contract part-time staff for each surgical mission trip (depending on your team’s needs) which includes, but is not limited to surgeons, nurses, residents, pharmacists, laundry and cleaning staff and translators. A group of qualified, local surgeons provide the proper pre-screening and appropriate follow-up care for each mission team’s patients. Excellent post-operative care is one of the most important keys to a successful surgical outcome for each child.

## FAQs

### How do we start planning a team?

- **Select a Date:** Confirm availability with The Shalom Foundation and select a date 6-8 months in advance.
- **Identify the Specialty & Team:** Identify a core group of surgeons, anesthesiologists, and OR personnel interested and committed to participate.
- **Nominate a Team Leader:** Nominate a team leader to keep things on track and complete paperwork.
- **Collect Expendable Supplies:** Seek, choose and purchase the necessary medical supplies and drugs to be carried in by the team members and fill out a form request for us of what medications needs you’d prefer be purchased in Guatemala before your team’s arrival.
- **Schedule Flights:** Trips are generally booked from Saturday to Saturday - schedule and book flights to Guatemala City, Guatemala.
- **Ask for Donations:** The cost to host a team at our hospital for one week in-country is \$10,000. More info below.



### **Who should be on the team?**

- We strive to utilize all three ORs to maximize the number of children who can be served during each surgical mission. The ideal team will have surgeons, anesthesiologists, CRNAs, OR nurses, OR techs, and PACU nurses to effectively utilize the three ORs. Non-medical volunteers are also welcome to join the team!

### **What paperwork is required?**

- Each team member is required to complete The Shalom Foundation Application/Consent packet. Each medical team member is also required to submit a notarized copy of their professional credentials, including their license and medical and specialty diplomas 2 months prior to the trip. Retired specialists not actively practicing should not be the primary surgeon or anesthesiologist on any case, but can assist other physicians in the OR. Residents in these specialties are acceptable, understanding that they must function only under supervision.

### **What is the role of the Team Leader?**

- The Team Leader is responsible for overseeing and adherence to all guidelines, and will be the main contact for The Shalom Foundation.
- This person will make the final decision on the number/type of team members, and attests to the competency of all members on the team.
- He/she will also ensure correct supplies are brought and/or the necessary equipment is available, packed, and included in the shipping manifest.
- He/she will participate in pre-trip planning and post-trip follow-up conference calls with The Shalom Foundation as required

### **What does The Moore Center provide and what does the team need to bring?**

- The Moore Center operating rooms are each fully-equipped with an OR table, anesthesia machine, central suction, central oxygen, nitrous oxide & medical air, OR lights, air conditioning, back-up generator, and electro-cautery units.
- The Moore Center will also provide: purified water to surgery suites, scrub areas, a sterilization room, as well as hot water, laundry service, basic surgical instrumentation and supplies to aid in cases as required, resources to purchase medication and gases in-country (purchased by the surgical partner through The Moore Center), building maintenance and up-keep, an onsite bio-med technician during the mission, translators and more. (Detailed list available upon request.)
- The team is expected to bring medicines, prescription drugs, anesthetic gases, surgical supplies and any specialized instruments needed to perform surgeries according to the specialty they will provide.
- Most visiting teams bring goodies for the children (stuffed animals, small toys, crayons, etc.) though this is not required.

### **How can we get the supplies we need donated?**

- Most companies have a process for donating supplies, and the most senior members of the team should approach these companies about a donation (pro tip: start this process early!). We recommend soliciting companies that work with the hospitals of the team members since there is already a relationship typically built.



### **Generic Medicines**

- Drug representatives can of course be approached for donations of non-narcotics, and some non-narcotic medicines may be available for purchase in Guatemala. We may even have some left over from a previous mission trip, so feel free to contact us! Once you have decided to organize a mission, our staff will be able to help you with local resource information. Sometimes, it is more practical to purchase them in Guatemala than to bring them with you from the United States.

Note: Medicines must have at least a 1-year expiration date from the date of your mission trip. *Americares* is an excellent source for donated medicines.

### **Narcotic Medicines**

- Guatemala has a list of medicines that cannot be brought into the country, and in general those medicines are narcotics. Violating Guatemalan law could jeopardize the whole mission. Our staff can purchase the narcotic medicines in preparation for the arrival of your mission, but they need a 6-week lead time in order to get approval from Guatemalan authorities.

### **How do we get the supplies and non-narcotic medicines to Guatemala?**

- Supplies and non-narcotic drugs should be carried on the plane by team members. We recommend that each team member have two large bags to bring the supplies. The supplies in each bag should be listed and made available to customs.

Note: Some airlines may charge you for the second bag.

### **What will the Mission Trip cost?**

- The cost to the team for one week in-country is **\$10,000** - not including airfare, lodging or dinners while in Guatemala.

Your \$10,000 donation includes:

- Daily ground transportation with safe drivers, facilitation through customs with support from a customs agent and The Moore Center staff, local cell phones, lunches, snacks & beverages each day, translators, patient pre-screening including charts, labs, medical license fees, post-operative care, a local physician present for the duration of the mission, pre- and post-op care for patients, five local nurses, local doctors, 24-hour security guards, Wi-Fi and U.S. long distance calling, an in-house pharmacist, medical, executive, and administrative staff, and more!

### **How can we raise \$10,000?**

- Teams can start by asking for \$10,000 from their respective hospitals (many hospitals have philanthropic boards or global surgery budgets). Drug and device representatives should be aggressively approached. These companies usually require a specific amount of their funds to be given to a non-profit organization. Team members who belong to large practice groups should approach their leadership about giving a charitable donation. Some of these organizations may even have a program of matching grants.



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- Personalized events like wine and cheese parties can be very successful. Local businesses and friends could be approached for individual contributions. The key to raising money is to take the peer-to-peer fundraising approach: meaning each team member is involved in soliciting money from a variety of their personal connections! If your team is from the same hospital or group practice, your efforts will more likely be noticed, with many people willing to donate. Volunteers should understand that their involvement in such a worthwhile effort will draw support from many sources.

Pro Tip: Use social media to keep individuals donors involved on your fundraising efforts!

### **What is the typical schedule?**

- The team will fly to Guatemala on Saturday. Then, they evaluate and confirm a diagnosis on all patients on and set-up the ORs on Sunday. Operations will take place from Monday-Thursday. After check-up rounds on Friday morning, the team can leave and spend Friday & Saturday relaxing in Antigua, a lovely colonial town which has excellent restaurants and shopping.

### **Do we need to get vaccinated? Are there Zika Virus concerns?**

- All members should check with their personal physician about vaccinations. Please review the CDC guidelines for information about Zika Virus in Guatemala. <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/zika-virus-guatemala>

### **Will we be safe?**

- Team members should be aware that Guatemala, like many developing countries (and our own U.S. based inner cities), can at times be unsafe and there is some risk involved. However, we have worked diligently over the past decade to ensure that the security provided during your stay in Guatemala is the best available. The Moore Center is equipped with 24-hour security guards and private parking for you and your team. Teams stay in the business district of Guatemala City and are transported in modern, safe vans with reliable and proven drivers.

### **Conclusion**

- Teams are enthusiastic about their experiences at The Moore Center and generally insist that their group returns the next year! We can assure you that it will be a rewarding and unforgettable experience. Like anything worthwhile, there is effort involved in organizing an international mission, but the results and memories are so worth it!

More detailed information is available upon request and once a mission date is decided upon. If you have additional questions, please contact Caylen Santos at The Shalom Foundation ([caylen@theshalomfoundation.org](mailto:caylen@theshalomfoundation.org)) or (615)595-5811.

We hope to see you soon!