

Physician Assistant Role Description

Physician Assistants are always welcome to join any of the organized HTI mission teams. Your advanced training and wide range of skills make you especially valuable and also provides us with a challenge in optimizing your talent and training. Some of you prefer to serve in a consultation and diagnostic setting, while others function in surgery or highly specialized areas.

When joining a surgical team, a physician assistant can split time working with mobile medical teams, assist in recovery or the OR.

**Screening for surgical patients is also an option. However, it is our experience that most surgeons prefer to see their own patients prior to surgery. Our Guatemalan physicians have already provided the initial screening and diagnosis normally provided by physician assistants.*

If you wish to work with a mobile team, and you are not a Spanish speaker, we suggest you try to recruit a translator to join you. Our first priority with surgical teams is to insure we have translators available for the recovery ward, pre-operative consultations and anesthesia.

Mobile work will take place Monday-Thursday...not on Sunday. Departure times vary, but range between 7-8 AM and most clinics will wrap up and return to Clinica Ezell or Clinica Caris between 3 and 5 PM.

Mobile teams work from a different location each day, traveling by four-wheel drive pickup in most instances and provide primary medical care after setting up a temporary clinic in a church building, home or community building. These clinics are the backbone of our ministry and we treat an average of twenty-five patients per day, per clinic location. (We currently have five mobile medical teams. Three working out of Clinica Ezell and two out of Clinica Caris.)

The number of patients varies greatly, some clinics have a handful and others fifty-sixty.

We have a large pharmacy formulary and meds not available from our mobile pharmacy boxes may be available in local pharmacies located in large towns and cities. **We do recommend you bring your own stethoscope and otoscope.**

We charge a minimal fee for consultations and medicines, though free care is provided if necessary. The decision on whether or not a patient can afford the care they need is entrusted to our Guatemala team members, not our visiting US volunteers. The charge for a consultation is equivalent to purchasing two soft drinks, so it is quite reasonable and also allows us to treat our patients with dignity and for them to have an investment in the care they receive.

The late afternoon and evening period after clinic has wrapped up are free and you may help with any tasks related to the surgery or patient care.

A more detailed welcome packet for medical practitioners follows this page.

Health Talents International Mobile Medical Clinics
*(Prepared for US Mobile Teams, but also applicable for
practitioners working with surgical teams)*

Welcome

Clinic Orientation

Welcome to Guatemala! We hope you enjoy your stay here and pray that God will use you to bring many people to him.

This packet is designed to give you some basic information on some of the illnesses commonly seen here. You will see a lot of the things you see at home, and also some conditions not so common in the States. Some illnesses will be present at more advanced stages or with secondary complications as well.

Each patient will have a card file with demographics and vitals. Some patients speak Spanish and others only their indigenous language of K'iche' or other. We will have translators available from the local churches. They are very helpful and most have worked in this setting before, but do not have medical background, so be patient.

Some of the U.S. group has been assigned to the Prayer Team. Patients will be directed to them after their consult. It is perfectly acceptable to pray with the patient in English, as they will probably pray along with you in their own language. Please address health, family and spiritual well-being in your prayers.

Once completed with the consult, they go on to the pharmacy area to pick up their medicines and pay for their visit.

Charge for a Medical Consult:	10 Quetzales
Charge for each prescription:	10-20 Quetzales
Maximum charge per individual patient	25 Quetzales
Maximum charge per family (immediate)	100 Quetzales

Dental patients are handled separately, but also will be directed to the Prayer Team. Their meds are given at the pharmacy as well.

Welcome to the team and thank you for your service. Please be in prayer to God that we glorify Him and strengthen his church through our efforts this week.

Common Illnesses

Here are some of the illnesses (complaints/diagnoses/differential) that you may run into. It is not exhaustive but does give a picture of your typical day.

Cardiovascular disease is not very common here. You will see some diabetes and hypertension.

Various respiratory infections

Bronchitis

Pneumonia (neumonia)

Pertussis (tos ferina)

Influenza (gripe)

URIs

Cough (tos)

Acute—bronchitis/pneumonia

Chronic—Allergic, GERD, Parasites, TB, COPD

Allergies/Asthma are common in children under 5

COPD—smoking cigarettes is rare. Smoking stoves are common—so COPD pts are usually women over 50 yo.

Gallstones (Calculos de la vesicula) Ask us about surgery referral

Nausea/pain after fatty meals (comida con grasa)

RUQ pain referred to shoulder blade sometimes

(dicyclomine tabs are on the formulary)

Gastritis/Heartburn

Heart pain / pain in the “mouth” of the stomach (“me duele el corazon” or “me arde en la boca del estomago)

Bad/bitter/sour taste in mouth

Parasitic (ascaris) infections

Abdominal pain,

Loss of appetite

Dry cough

Itching

Weight loss (children especially)

Distended abdomen in severe cases in children

(Albendazole 400mg X 1 –age>2 years

200mgX 1—age <2years

Not recommended in pregnancy)

Malnutrition (desnutricion)

Poor diet

Parasitic infections

Chronic illness/diarrhea

Diarrhea (diarrea)

Bacterial (acute, usually watery, with fever, +/- blood)

Amoebic (recurrent or chronic, watery (or just urge to defecate),
or acute, bloody/mucous stools

(metronisazole 500mg TID—adults

15mg/kg/dose TID—children)

Giardia(recurrent, watery, rotten egg smell, bad taste in the mouth frothy, no blood)

(metronidazole as above or albendazole 400mg QD x 5 days)

Viral (acute, watery, +/- fever, vomiting/nausea, may be respiratory sytoms too)

Impetigo

“Honey-crusted” skin lesions

Usually a secondary infection of an existing rash (scabies, allergic, insect bites, eczema)

Scabies (Sarna, escabiosis)

Small dry papules usually all over, but especially in axilla and groin area. Ask if there are other family members affected, especially those sharing a bed)

(Benzan lotion available, apply nightly for 2-3 nights, or Ivermectin tablets. Advise family to wash clothes, sheets in hot water)

Lice (piojos)

Very small but visible bugs in the hair and tiny white eggs clinging to the hairs close to the scalp.

(Benzan lotion available) Wash clothes, sheets in hot water)

If chronic, may have a secondary dermatitis and/or impetigo

Allergic dermatitis

Pink, pruritic papules or hives or dry eczematous patches or diffusely in babies.

Seems to be very common in children

Usually **no** other family members with this, if you are trying to differentiate from scabies

Back pain

Arthritis

UTI

Muscular

Fatigue

Anemia

Malnutrition

Pneumonia

COPD

Heart failure

Insomnia (anxiety) pain and weakness all over

Arthritis

Vitamin deficiency

Headache (Dolor de la cabeza)

Musculoskeletal

Anemia

Migraines

Allergies (lots of smoke exposure in homes)

Pelvic pain

Uterine prolapse (ask staff about surgery referral)

PID (history of pain with intercourse, discharge (flujo) cervical motion tenderness on bimanual exam)

UTI

Hernias

All sizes/varieties (ask our staff about surgery referral)

Vision loss (inquire with HTI staff about referral)

Cataracts (catarata)

Pterygium (carnosidad)

Glaucoma