

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC MEDICAL SERVICE TRIP

Packing
Checklist
on Page 2



Medical service trips to Peralta, Dominican Republic have been up and running since 2004. While the trips are staffed primarily by Rush students and faculty, volunteers from other institutions have also participated.

Why the DR, and Why Peralta?

In brief, when this program was initially conceptualized, a number of factors were taken into consideration. These included community need, the existence of strong community leadership in order to foster long-term relationships and eventually a self-sustaining medical system, relative geographic and political stability, and accessibility and proximity to Chicago. The community of Peralta, located in the mountainous area of southwestern DR, met these criteria, and we have since forged strong ties with the people of Peralta.

Work Accomplished

Over the past seven years, the program has sent 4 cross-specialty teams per year, usually comprised of 10-20 people each. These include medicine, pediatric, med/peds, general and pediatric surgery, ENT, urology, urogynecology, anesthesia, nursing, and medical students. These teams work for 1 week at a time, providing primary care, public health services, and a variety of surgical interventions to this community. At this time, the clinic in downtown Peralta is staffed full-time by a local doctor, allowing us to provide support with medications and supplies and to reach out to some less-privileged communities near Peralta. The model we have adopted emphasizes collaboration and the foundation of strong relationships with local town leaders and community members, as well as helping to develop a locally sustainable public health and primary care program.

Funding

Medications and supplies are obtained through a number of sources, including the [AMERICARES Company](#), [MAP International](#), subsidy and donations from the central [Rush Pharmacy](#), and the newly developed [REMEDY program](#).

Personal expenses for the trip are the responsibility of the individual. Depending on airfare, which varies significantly by season, the total cost for a week is approximately \$1,500 per person. This includes everything: lodging, food, on-the-ground transportations services, translation services and airfare. In recent years, we have been fortunate enough to be able to offer scholarships to all participating students and residents in the amount of \$750 per person and to nurses for \$300. While this is not a guarantee, we do anticipate being able to continue to offer some scholarship assistance.

Time Allocation

At this time, fourth year medical students can participate in a Community Health Elective, which will allow them to get credit for the program. Residents may be able to obtain credit but would need to discuss this individually with their program directors. Attendings in the [Department of Medicine](#) may count the trip as CME. Attendings in other departments need to negotiate that issue internally.

What to Expect

Peralta is a beautiful community with gracious, generous hosts and wonderful people. Teams usually stay in a house donated for our use by a local family. Each day is spent working in a clinic-type setting either in Peralta or in neighboring communities, but we return to Peralta each evening. Physical conditions are quite basic, with intermittent running water and electricity. Locally prepared foods (yucca, plantains, bananas, rice, beans, avocado, tropical fruits, chicken, and goat) are served—there are no other culinary options. 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 information 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.

PACKING CHECKLIST FOR THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Personal Items:

- ☐ Passport!
- ☐ Soap/shampoo/deodorant/shaving stuff/toothbrush and paste
- ☐ Brush/washcloth
- ☐ Sunblock/baseball cap
- ☐ Insect repellent (at least 30% DEET per CDC recs)
- ☐ Personal meds (Quinolones, Imodium, Benadryl, NSAIDs, etc.)
- ☐ Travel TP/hand sanitizer
- ☐ Flashlight/batteries
- ☐ Earplugs (loud roosters/housemates)
- ☐ Baby wipes

Clothing:

- ☐ Clinic wear/scrubs (one set per day)
- ☐ Seasonal clothing for time off
- ☐ Socks/underwear
- ☐ Comfy shoes that cover the feet for walking/standing
- ☐ Hat/fleece/sweatshirt/sweatpants (very chilly nights)
- ☐ Raincoat (when it rains, it pours!)

Medical Supplies:

- ☐ Stethoscope
- ☐ Penlight
- ☐ Trauma shears (if you have them)
- ☐ Oto/ophthalmoscope (if you have it)
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Bag to carry instrument in
- ☐ Medical license/copy of hospital ID
- ☐ Medical Spanish dictionary (if needed)

Miscellaneous:

- ☐ Spending money or credit card for souvenirs if desired (ATMs available in Santo Domingo with good exchange rate)
- ☐ Snacks/candy (sealed in Ziploc bags)
- ☐ Plastic bags for dirty clothes
- ☐ Camera/film
- ☐ Travel games
- ☐ Duffel bag (for meds, etc.)

What NOT to Bring:

- ☐ Bottled water (will be provided on site)
- ☐ Expensive jewelry/watches/etc.
- ☐ Bed linens or pillow

Packing Tips:

- ☐ Use duffels or sturdy luggage that can sustain a beating
- ☐ Pack as lightly as possible to accommodate medical supplies
- ☐ Pack snacks, toiletries in Ziploc bags

Survival Tips:

- ☐ Never drink water unless it's from a bottle (including toothbrushing)
- ☐ Dengue fever is endemic; only prevention is to avoid mosquito bites by using insect repellent ($\geq 30\%$ DEET)
- ☐ Hep A vaccine recommended
- ☐ Malaria prophylaxis is recommended by the CDC for all of the DR, but it is not necessary for the places we will visit (zero cases in history of program)