



AcE Service Trip Itinerary

Destination: Petoa, Santa Barbara, Honduras

Trip Date: March 4th – 11th, 2023

Project Directors:

1. Michael Mastroianni, MD
2. Jorge Encalada, RN

Insurance Provider: Gallagher Charitable International Insurance Services

Project Goals

1. **Medical Care** - We provide primary care, dental, and ophthalmologic care to over 1,000 patients on each of our medical service trips. Understanding the inherent flaws in the classic medical mission trip model, we have placed a huge emphasis on providing impactful and longitudinal care to the communities we serve. First, we have collaborated with the Honduran Ministry of Health to provide follow-up care in our three partner regions of rural Honduras where access to healthcare is extremely scarce. To do this, we have established formal partnerships with clinics in each region, creating transportation and follow-up mechanisms for our patients with chronic disease. Second, we have begun utilizing the encrypted, HIPAA-compliant REDCap database platform to serve as an electronic medical record at our clinics. This will enable us to track our patient's health longitudinally. Lastly, we have acquired important medical equipment such as X-ray, ultrasound, EKG, and basic lab equipment to improve the overall quality of care at our clinics.
2. **Health Education** - While waiting for their prescriptions, interested patients can attend our primary prevention health education workshops. These workshops intend to provide accurate and contextualized information to prevent chronic disease such as high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, arthritis, and more. We also emphasize the importance of responsible use of pain medication and antibiotics, water consumption, nutrition, oral hygiene, and family planning. We will conduct longitudinal surveys to assess the impact of our workshops in improving basic health education in our partner communities. These outcomes will allow us to continuously improve our workshops and better tailor our clinics to meet community needs.
3. **Research** - In collaboration with the Honduran Ministry of Health, the Clinica Medica San Lucas Hospital, and our partner clinics we have begun the development of a variety of epidemiological studies in specialties such as orthopedics, ophthalmology, otolaryngology, general surgery, OBGYN, pediatrics, and primary care. Given the scarcity of public health data in rural Honduras, the goal of our research is to fill that void for the Ministry of Health and provide them with important public health data to influence future health policy. Our initial studies focus on identifying the overall disease burden of common health conditions within each specialty, along with any underlying medical or socioeconomic risk factor. We have gotten approval from both affiliated Honduran and USA hospitals to ensure we are following gold-standard ethical guidelines, and utilize the encrypted, HIPAA-compliant REDCap database platform to collect and store our data.

Trip Details

****This is designed to give you as much info as possible so you know what to expect****

Arrival: Participants arrive in the airport of San Pedro Sula on the designated arrival date as close to noon as possible and meet up with other trip participants and AcE's President and Director of Operations in Honduras, Jorge Encalada, at the airport. As soon as your plane lands, you will go through Honduran Customs (please have your passport on you) and grab your luggage, and then Jorge will be waiting for us outside the baggage terminal. There is only one direction to travel in the small San Pedro Sula airport once you get off the plane, so you will be led directly to where Jorge will be waiting (we will also provide you with a picture of Jorge and he will have a picture of you so everybody is easily found). Honduran translators are hired so knowledge of Spanish is not required. Depending on the arrival time of all participants, the group will immediately get straight onto a bus to travel to their clinic destination in Honduras. If most of participants arrive in San Pedro Sula later at night, the group will likely stay at a local hostel (same one as described later) for the first night and will leave for the clinic destination first thing the next morning. Upon arrival at the clinic destination, participants will be immediately dropped off at their respective hotel to unload luggage. Once unpacked, the team will ideally setup the clinic so we are ready to begin.

Lodging/relaxation: Hotels will be in good condition with free Wifi (which can occasionally be spotty as it is throughout Honduras) unless specified otherwise, drinking water, safe meals, showers, electricity, etc. There will likely be one relaxation day either at the beginning of the week or the end, depending on the timing of the arrivals/departures. We often go to a beach or a resort on this day of relaxation.

Clinic days: On clinic days, participants will walk (~5-10 minutes) together in a group or get driven to the community center at 7:00am. We will then eat breakfast cooked by our hired cooks (everything is cooked to ensure we don't get sick, although constipation/diarrhea is common since we aren't used to their food). This breakfast often begins with a morning devotional, where somebody shares a personal story or message to start the day. Please be advised that many Hondurans are devout Christians, so if a Honduran or another on our team gives morning devotion it may be a Bible verse or another faith-based story but there is no requirement to share or partake in anything religious on our trips. AcE welcomes and embraces all backgrounds coming together for a common cause to help the people of Honduras.

The clinic will then open by approximately 8am or a little later depending on travel time. We will travel to a different location every day, and often setup clinic in a local school/community center where we will provide basic medical treatment through our credentialed healthcare provider team for 1-2 full weeks. The clinic will be divided into different stations with the following services: parasite questionnaire/medicine distribution (can combine with triage), triage, provider (physicians and PAs), pharmacy (which is carefully organized), research surveys, and health education workshops. The triage team will collect patient vitals (blood pressure, heart rate, basic list of symptoms, etc.) and see if the patient qualifies to take parasite meds. The provider station is where the patient will be diagnosed and a treatment plan determined (if applicable). Prescriptions will then be filled at the pharmacy by participants, and then double-checked by Jorge (who is a registered nurse) or another member of the team before given to the patient. Research surveys developed in collaboration with the Honduran Ministry of Health may be conducted to help us identify basic disease prevalence and underlying determinants of health in the clinic's community. Students and general volunteers will give health education workshops to interested patients using an evidence-based primary prevention curriculum tailored specifically towards the Honduran communities we serve. To longitudinally evaluate the program's effectiveness, we will collect pre- and post-workshop surveys that we will use to determine our success and modify accordingly.

Students may also get experience collecting vitals if the patient agrees and only after vitals have been collected by a properly trained individual. At the provider station, if able student participants will collect a detailed medical history (which is then presented to/repeated by the provider to ensure accuracy) and shadow providers as they diagnose the patient and write a prescription. They also will help conduct any necessary lab tests. This daily routine will be repeated for the entire week we hold the clinic. During the week nights/evenings, with permission participants can travel as a team to local destinations if desired. On the last day, the clinic may be held if we are able too or we will immediately leave for San Pedro Sula depending on travel time. We will pack up the entire clinic and clean the area.

Departure: After that, participants will pack all their personal luggage and our group will then travel by bus back to San Pedro Sula. If we don't hold clinic on the final day, following our bus trip we will likely be visiting the Action for Education Public School in San Pedro Sula which was founded by our organization. We will be staying at a hostel that we have previously stayed at and with whom our organization has a close relationship. This hostel in San Pedro Sula is in the "privileged" community of the city and entry is only permitted by the hostel security guard. For extra safety, actual house is surrounded by walls and electrical fence, doors are all locked. House is replica of standard U.S. home with electricity, air conditioning, and lukewarm water (albeit not sanitary to consume). On the last night, our group will likely go to a restaurant in San Pedro Sula for dinner to celebrate the week of hard work. Following dinner, all participants will go back to the hostel where they will stay for the night. The following morning/day participants will be shuttled to the San Pedro Sula airport for departure. The Villeda Morales San Pedro Sula airport is located about 25 minutes from the hostel in San Pedro Sula. These plans are subject to change depending on the trip, but this is what a typical service trip with AcE would look like.

Safety: All towns AcE stays in has been vetted by Jorge, which includes getting assurances from the region's mayor/police chief that we will be safe and taken care of. Regardless, we take precautions to ensure everybody's safety, which is AcE's number one priority and have never had any major issues to date. We do purchase international health and evacuation insurance in case of emergency.