
Volunteer Medical Mission to Honduras

under the auspices of AMM
January 17th - 25th, 2025

Information about our mission
to San Benito José Centro de
Medico,
Comayagua, Honduras

Introduction

Aloha and welcome to Honduras!

This mission, scheduled for January, 2025 will be the thirteenth to Comayagua, Honduras under the auspices of Aloha Medical Mission, and personally my ninth to the same locale.

We have always had very successful mission trips, staffing three or four operating rooms, and providing surgical services including general surgery, orthopedics, gynecology, podiatry and plastic surgery.

The types of surgeries we offer depend upon the specialties of the surgeons who volunteer for a particular mission trip. At times, we have also had the opportunity to provide dental care, and if the opportunity exists, to fit amputees with prosthetic hands.

Many of our volunteers in 2025 will be “repeat attenders”, and we are looking forward to another successful mission.

Please take some time to read through this e booklet of information. It should answer many of your questions about how to prepare, and what to expect. And thank you for considering joining our group.

Sincerely,

Celiamarie Moore, CRNA & Julie Hendricks, CRNA

Honduras Mission Coordinators for Aloha Medical Mission

P.O.Box 10221, Honolulu, Hawaii 96816 (808) 386 0122

missionheartsforhonduras@gmail.com

The Volunteer Process

WHAT

A surgical mission to serve the very poorest people in need of care in a central region of Honduras. Our patients have no other recourse to receive medical care....we are their only hope.

WHEN

Friday, January 17th through Saturday, January 25th, 2025

WHERE

St. Benedict Joseph Medical Center (San Benito José Centro de Medico), Comayagua, Honduras

WHO CAN VOLUNTEER?

Our team is small, dedicated and well defined.

We need surgeons, anesthesia providers, surgical assistants, PAs, nurses for the operating room who can scrub or circulate, nurses for the recovery and pre op areas, OR techs, and an anesthesia tech. We would also like to have a dentist and dental assistant. One or two lay volunteers may be included, with specific talents, and possibly one or two experienced medical students and a podiatry resident.

Preference will be given to prior team members, and to persons who are fluent in both English and Spanish.

HOW TO VOLUNTEER

Read this e booklet and decide if mission work appeals to you.

Make your personal commitment to join this mission.

(see “Your Responsibility” below)

Email me or let’s chat so I can get to know you....

missionheartsforhonduras@gmail.com or 808-386-0122

Fill out the appropriate application, Waiver and Memorandum of Understanding (please e mail me for an application packet to “missionheartsforhonduras@gmail.com” if it is not attached to the introductory email) and send all paperwork along with your CV, appropriate professional licenses, your medical school diploma (surgeons only), **two copies** of the face page from your passport and a check for \$150. made out to Celiamarie Moore (Honduras Mission Coordinator) NOT to AMM. Note in the lower left hand space that it is an **AMM mission fee**, for your tax purposes.

Please mail all your paperwork to my by the **15th of November**. I would like **hard/paper** copies of all, not email or text photos.

Mail to:

Celiamarie Moore, Honduras AMM Mission Coordinator

P O Box 342053, Kailua, Hawaii 96734

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR APPLICATION OR YOUR
CHECK TO THE AMM OFFICE.**

We have only a skeleton, part time staff there at this time....it is more efficient for us to keep all the Honduras applications in my office.

**PLEASE BE SURE TO PAY YOUR MISSION FEE IN ADVANCE OF
OUR TRIP, DO NOT WAIT UNTIL WE ARE ON OUR MISSION.**

If you are accepted as a member of the team, at that time, your check will be cashed and that fee will become NON REFUNDABLE. Please consider carefully your commitment to this mission.

(see “Your Responsibility” below)

This \$150. fee is used to cover a variety of group expenses, including, but not limited to, transportation in a van/bus to and from the airport, daily catered lunches, break room snacks and cases of bottled water at the hospital, one all day group outing (park fees, transportation, lunch), some special surprises, miscellaneous tips for driver, hospital and hotel staff who assist us and other ancillary personnel.

Once you are accepted as a member of this team, please make your own plane reservations, within the guidelines set below (see “Transportation”) and send copies of this information (including flight origination, interim stops, arrival time and departure information) to your mission coordinator.

Your responsibility

Our team is comprised of a limited number of very specialized and dedicated individuals. Each volunteer is an equal and integral member of the team, and each of us fulfills a specific role. We all depend upon each other.

Once you make the commitment and are accepted as a member of this team, we are counting on you. No one individual team member is more important than another.

Please carefully consider your choice to volunteer, and do not take this commitment lightly. If you agree to join us and then change your mind, you will seriously jeopardize the effectiveness of the entire team, possibly causing the cancellation of the mission.

Discuss your choice with family members now, and work out scheduling and financial details.

Secure vacation time, schedule house sitters, and talk with your travel medicine provider about recommended travel meds.

Your expenses and fees

You are responsible for the cost and booking of your own air ticket (see important timing information in the “Transportation” section), and the cost of your hotel room (approximately \$60.-\$70. US dollars per night, depending upon whether you choose a single or double room) and breakfast and dinner at the hotel, which will cost approximately \$15.-20 US dollars per day and will be added onto your hotel bill.

Please plan to settle your hotel bill on Friday evening, and bring more than one credit card in case of electronic difficulties, or plan to pay in cash.

A NOTE ON PERSONAL FUNDRAISING

Some of you might find that the only stumbling block to your participation in this mission is the cost. There are many ways to off set these expenses.

For example, ask family and friends to contribute small amounts towards your air ticket. Even \$5. or \$10. dollars from a few people will help. Either verbally ask them or send out personal letters with a self addressed, stamped envelope enclosed. Tell them that you are volunteering and why, and perhaps mention the price of your ticket and expenses, plus your lost wages and the vacation time you must use in order to be a volunteer.

You might also consider holding garage sales, selling your unwanted items on Craigslist, gathering dedicated friends to hold a bake sale, a car wash, a Zumbathon or holding a “Silent Auction” of promised goods and services donated by friends or local businesses.....how does this work??? Have people donate a promised service or experience....a gift certificate to their hair salon, nail salon, dinner for two at a restaurant.....and hold a silent auction.....be creative and begin NOW.

I have had several people mention using “Go Fund Me” to raise funds for their mission expenses. I am not familiar with this website, but if you are and have used it, please do let me know if it has worked for you in the past.

Transportation

WE ARE EACH RESPONSIBLE

for booking our own air tickets. Save your receipts for your tax deduction.

ARRIVAL PLANS

The airport in Honduras is a brand new one just outside of Comayagua. The designator is **XPL**, the airport is called **Palmerola, Honduras**.

There is a wide range of airlines and routes from which to choose.....some volunteers arrive directly from Miami or Atlanta, others connect for the last leg of their flight in Houston.

If you are traveling from Honolulu, you will have to leave Honolulu on Thursday 16th, to connect with the group on Friday, the 17th.

Since we come from various parts of the country, we time our arrivals so that we arrive at Comayagua on Friday the 17th between 1100 and 1300 if possible. We are now able to fly in to the local airport and our amazing José Mario will drive a hospital van to the airport to pick us up. With this in mind, please send me your flight arrival and departure info **ASAP** including your airline, flight numbers, departure city. since there is the possibility that some volunteers may get stuck en route due to snow emergencies, I'd like to know how you plan to get to Comayagua.

In the past we had to closely coordinate our arrivals because we had to drive via bus approximately two plus hours from the airport in the capital to Comayagua. This new process is much easier.

HOWEVER, IF YOU CHOOSE TO ARRIVE at any time other than Friday afternoon between the designated hours, **YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ARRANGING YOUR OWN TRANSPORT TO THE HOTEL.**

Why?

Last year, because of a series of flight delays along with unavoidable personal schedules and some personal choices, our driver made no fewer than NINE airport runs over three days! José Mario has many more duties besides assisting us and so I am asking for everyone's cooperation.....taxis are plentiful, ask me how to arrange for one.

DEPARTURE PLANS

On Saturday, the 25th, we will have breakfast together at the hotel, then physicians will make their last rounds and our trip is done!!

Again since our hotel is relatively close to the airport, we can choose to take individual taxis or the hospital van.

Your health and well being

Please contact your travel medicine professional for advice on travel related illnesses including traveler's diarrhea, other gastrointestinal distress, and malaria prophylaxis.

The following are the recommendations from my travel medicine professional:

“Malaria risk in Comayagua is probably low to moderate. I would recommend antimalarials - chloroquine or Malarone.

Dengue and chikungunya are a significant risk in that area.

Insect repellents will be very important - day and night- DEET 30%
OR PICARIDIN 20%

Rabies is a problem-avoid dog bites!!!!

Travellers diarrhea - Ciprofloxacin or azithromycin plus Imodium for self treatment. Bring Pepto Bismol liquid or wafers too, just in case.

Typhoid vaccine recommended plus all the basic vaccines including influenza and Covid vax plus boosters.

Plan to use DEET routinely to prevent mosquito bites, or wear the mosquito repellent bracelets available at Walmart, and other similar vendors.

An important note about security

The US State Department continues to issue a travel advisory for travelers to Honduras, as it has for many years. We have never had any incidents. We adhere to safety guidelines at all times, so there is NO wandering about, NO walking off the grounds of the hospital or the hotel unguarded, and no other behaviors which could jeopardize the group or SBJ hospital.

Before you plan to join us, please be sure that you are comfortable with these conditions and limitations.

Hotel

We will be staying as usual at looking at

The Comayagua Golf Club Hotel

I will make a group reservation. Please tell me if you prefer a double or a single room. We have stayed at this hotel many times....they have pleasant accommodations, a pool, air con and excellent restaurants, as well as a beautiful golf course.

Our Host Hospital

St . Benedict Joseph Medical Center, Comayagua, Honduras (San Benito Jose) is administrated by the Franciscan Mission Outreach, and directed by Dr. Pablo Castillo and his staff.

(sbjhonduras.com)

SBJ was conceived in 1999, and subsequently established specifically for the purpose of serving the poor in Comayagua, and surrounding areas. It is a modern facility that hosts volunteer surgical missions six times a year. We have modern surgical and anesthesia equipment that has been donated from a variety of sources, and that is kept in good working order by a volunteer team of biomedical engineers from the U.S. who have volunteered to come with our group for the past four missions.

Those We Serve at SBJ:

Families with income of less than \$200 per month
 Single mothers and their children
 Senior citizens with no family support
 The homeless, handicapped, and mentally ill
 Residents of homes for children, youth, and the elderly
 Manual laborers without professional degrees or titles
 The malnourished, undernourished, abused and neglected
 Those who lack adequate housing
 Those who live in remote rural areas, engage in subsistence farming
 for survival, and members of indigenous tribes.

Honduras Packing Suggestions

Casual clothes only

Extra sweatshirt, jacket for field trip (it can be chilly up in the mountain areas), rain poncho

Several sets of scrubsperhaps plan to donate them at trip's end. Or there is a supply you may use at the hospital.

Dedicated OR shoes and a lab coat to wear over your scrubs to and from the hospital

Prescription meds

Passport

Personal toilet articles

Mosquito repellent

Sunscreen...and last but not least A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOR!!!

LEAVE HOME: JEWELRY, VALUABLES

Helpful Hints:

1. Never drink the tap water; use bottled water to rinse toothbrush; if you forget and rinse toothbrush with tap water, throw it away.....bring an extra toothbrush.
2. There is laundry service at the hotel if needed. It is an easy process.
3. You can purchase goods (such as Honduran coffee, rum, etc.) at the airport on the way home.....or when we stop at a local grocery store.
4. As always, we are guests in this country. Please be aware that some of their practices may not be the same as ours. For example, the surgical areas are very strict about not wearing scrubs outside of the OR and we should adhere to their policies, not ours.
5. Please bring dedicated OR shoes, and plan to leave them at the hospital every night, for your use the following day. Perhaps plan to donate them at the end of the mission.
6. In Honduras, as in most of Latin America, toilet paper is disposed of in a trash can next to the toilet. This is because of inadequate sewer lines.
7. Tips are provided by AMM and are included in your \$150. fee
8. Many of us plan to donate clothing and shoes we wear at the end of the mission.

Mission Supplies

We ask each of our volunteers to plan to pack just one bag for personal supplies / clothing, and plan to pack one duffel bag of medical supplies for mission use. These supplies might include items pertaining to your practice, medications, surgical instruments that you might need to borrow from your home hospital (and plan to return to them after the mission), discarded supplies from your institution that might be useful, sutures, dressings, foley catheters, gowns, drapes, etc.

DO NOT BRING ANYTHING WITH OUTDATES ALREADY EXPIRED. They will be confiscated by Customs at the airport.

If you don't have access to supplies, please consider bringing lots of BLANKETS for our patients because the ORs are cold and our patients have few possessions, or bring SMALL, STUFFED ANIMALS for our pediatric patients. Dollar Stores and Goodwill are perfect sources for new or gently used items, blankets, sheets, etc.

Please MARK YOUR DONATION DUFFELS in some identifying manner and MARK INDIVIDUAL ITEMS if necessary so whoever is unpacking your supplies knows what the items are and where they should be placed (ortho, podiatry, anesthesia) in our supply room. On Sunday all physicians will be seeing patients in clinic and constructing an OR

schedule....if you bring a bag of medical instruments/supplies that are not immediately recognizable, please plan to unpack it yourself.

We specify “duffel bags” for transporting supplies because the airport in Honduras does not allow supplies transported in cardboard boxes.

NEW CUSTOMS RULES IN HONDURAS

We are now required to submit a detailed list of medical supplies that we plan to bring into the country and **we must state (if asked) that anything that is not used we will take back home with us.**

The detailed list I will send to you must come back to me by **December 1st** in order to give our hospital administrator time to submit the lists to Customs officials. And even if we do all according to plan, some items may still be randomly confiscated.

The customs list that I will get from the SBJ office and that I will send to you is unfortunately long and tedious. We have no recourse other than to comply with this process. It will take our hospital administrator several weeks to translate our lists onto the official forms.

IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, IF YOU CAN SUBMIT YOUR LIST IN SPANISH THIS WILL SAVE HER A LOT OF TIME!!

I have an alternative method of shipping supplies but this must be done a minimum of TWO MONTHS before the mission. Ask me for details.

The First Three Days

Friday arrival

PLEASE REMEMBER I NEED TO KNOW YOUR ARRIVAL TIMES, AIRLINES AND FLIGHT NUMBERS

Since there are several of you who are brand new to this mission, I want to be sure I team you up with other members arriving on your same flight so no one gets lost or stressed in the process.

After you arrive, clear immigration, collect your bags and go through the Customs process. We will do our best to team you up with our native Spanish speakers if you need assistance. Meet other AMM volunteers who were on your flight there in the baggage area.

After you go through the final X-ray of baggage and clear the baggage area, you will meet either me or José Mario Martínéz, our hospital representative and you will be directed to the hospital van.

If traveling via hospital van

DO NOT TIP THE BAGGAGE HANDLERS as your group leader or José Mario will do this. Overtipping, which is done with a generosity of spirit, ultimately upsets the local economy and creates untenable expectations.

If your flight is delayed or cancelled due to bad weather on the mainland, please “What’s App” me (808-386-0122) and we will devise an alternate plan.

Loading the vehicle(s)

We will either pile all our baggage on the top of the van or will have hired a separate truck to transport the luggage. If you are planning to bring a lot of supplies with you, please LMK ahead of time as the regulations for bringing hospital equipment/supplies in to Honduras have changed and I may need to make special accommodations/preparations for you.

Holiday (usually Saturday....there is a reason for this)

Breakfast at the hotel at 0700

Field trip all day (location TBA) including transportation via van to a nature preserve for hiking, picnicking, possibly swimming, waterfall activities, bird watching.....Carlos and José Mario usually line up a special day for us, it’s always a good time to get reacquainted with our team or to get to know us if this is your first trip.

Possibly a stop into the center of Comayagua to see the cathedral, the town square, the bell tower, and a visit to a local craft shop.

Dinner at the hotel

Breakfast at hotel at 0700

Bus together to hospital

Mass together for those who desire to attend at the Friar's chapel....tour of the Friar's house and gardens afterwards.

Return to hospital for brief, general orientation and tour of facility....Dr. John Kelley usually volunteers to do this as he has been part of our mission family since its inception.

First floor.....

the break room where we have our lunches and take breaks during the day, the adjoining room where we can leave all our backpacks, change of clothes, street shoes, lab coats....there is also a toilet here for our staff use

the outdoor hallway to the patient rooms and the central fountain courtyard

the dental clinic (if we have a dentist with us)

the office for nursing staff and the overnight physician and nursing staff

the front reception area where patients check in with local staff

the waiting halls outside the clinic examining rooms, the pre op patient changing room and waiting area

the clinic exam rooms

the pharmacy and pharmacist (Dr. Fanny)

the entrance to the pre op area, the OR schedule board, and access hallway to the operating rooms

the four operating rooms and recovery area

flash autoclave and instrument area

the three huge OR supply areas

there are two locked closets for anesthesia supplies and medications

Second floor....chapel and administrative offices

Meet the staff.... Margarita (Odile Margarita Montero), Franklin and Denia.....in the autoclave and instrument prep area. When we bring a medical mission to SBJ, we add a lot of extra work to this small staff who work hard to keep up with the extra demand. With this in mind, I hope to recruit a couple of instrument techs to be part of our team whose sole responsibility will be to assist Margarita and her crew....**who do you know** who might be able to fill this role?

Team assignments will be done by the mission coordinator, taking into consideration the needs of the surgeons and the experience of the individual staff members. Surgical teams work together in the same OR for the duration of the mission.

Patient evaluation by surgeons will be done for the rest of the day in the clinic area while all other staff members work together to set up their individual ORs / anesthesia carts/ the recovery area / the pre op area.

Lunch at the hospital (catered)

A note to surgeons re: patient evaluation

During this one evaluation day, you will see all the patients who have been gathered and screened by Dr. Pablo Castillo and his staff . You will be presented with a huge stack of charts, usually sorted by the distance a patient lives from the hospital, not necessarily by the type of surgery nor the urgency.

Some of our previous surgeons have suggested that you briefly look through the charts to find the more complicated cases, or those more urgently requiring your surgical expertise, and ask to evaluate these patients first.

Patients usually come to you with current lab work, possibly ultrasound reports, X-ray evaluations, and other pertinent information.

As you evaluate your potential surgical patients, you will be given five folders, one for each operative day, in which to place your chosen cases for each day, and at the end of this evaluation day, you will be asked to design your operative schedule for the week.

Please keep in mind that we like to end our OR days by no later than 4 or 5 PM, so that the hospital staff can journey home during daylight hours. This is out of concern for their safety.

With these parameters in mind, please only schedule cases that you think can be completed no later than 4 or 5 PM. (our surgical days begin with the first case scheduled to begin at 0730).

Please schedule more complicated cases for the beginning of the week. Know that we only schedule a half day of OR time on Friday since we have to pack up and clear the ORs, leaving them in the same condition in which we found them at the beginning of our mission.

We are usually presented with many more patients than our schedule can accommodate. The rest of these patients will be put on a list for the next subsequent mission

Workday Schedules Monday through Friday

Breakfast at 0600, van to the hospital at 0645

Mass for those who wish to participate in the hospital chapel

Surgeries begin at 0730

Lunch catered at the hospital

Van to the hotel all together at day's end

Dinner at the hotel

Friday half day

Short OR day, pack up any instruments we are taking back with us, and leave the OR cleaned, clear and in good shape for the subsequent mission.

Friday Farewell Dinner

All together at the hotel, with a few surprises in store.

Remember to settle your hotel bill Friday evening before or after dinner.

Recreation

We will schedule one or two evening trips into the town center of Comayagua, to visit the Cathedral and a local craft shop....

a stop at a local grocer to shop for personal snacks and for local foods to take home...

possibly a visit to another local town for sightseeing....

possibly one night at a local restaurant for dinner courtesy of our generous physicians....

a visit to the local orphanage across the road....

Wednesday evening we usually invite the hospital staff to our hotel for dinner and dancing.....

our hospital administrator is also an amateur DJ and he and his staff love to dance.....

sign up for your dance lessons now so you can keep up with our Honduran friends!!

Aloha Medical Mission....

is a volunteer organization based in Honolulu, Hawaii, dedicated to providing free health care to underserved people in Hawaii, as well as many parts of Asia and Central America. Founded in 1983, we have sent more than 4,500 volunteers to serve 150 overseas missions in seventeen countries, and have performed over 22,000 free surgeries.

How can your family and friends contribute to the costs of our mission efforts (including but not limited to anesthesia and post op medications, medical supplies, fees for overnight post op medical

coverage from local physicians, hospital electricity, services of some ancillary local hospital personal, patient lab fees)? **AMM is a secular, non profit 501 (c) (3) so all donations are tax deductible.**

Please have your family and friends make their checks out to ALOHA MEDICAL MISSION and note “Honduras mission” in the lower left corner.

Please send donations to Aloha Medical Mission /Honduras Mission
c/o Celiamarie Moore, CRNA

P O Box 342053, Kailua, Hawaii 96816

I will send your donations on to the office. If you send them directly to the office, they will get lost in a general fund. Thank you for your generous

support!

For your tax records, information, the address of Aloha Medical Mission is

200 N. Vineyard Blvd, B 120, Honolulu, HI 96817

(808) 847-3400

EIN 99-0234811

This “introduction” is a general guide to your mission experience at San Benito Jose. Schedule changes do occur out of necessity.....please be flexible.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. I do hope it will encourage you to join our group!!!!

With aloha,

Celiamarie Moore, CRNA

PS. there will be a test

PPS. not really.....I just want to be sure you read the whole booklet.

