



A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

TO PREPARING FOR MEDICAL MISSION WORK

The globalization of health challenges highlights the need for a global perspective and international collaboration. According to WHO, 5 billion people lack access to safe, affordable surgical and anesthesia services, with only 6.3% of procedures performed in the world's poorest nations, where 37% of the population lives. Medical missions help bridge this care gap, providing essential surgical services to remote areas. CRNAs can play a crucial role by volunteering for these missions, delivering life-saving care to underserved regions. This guide offers CRNAs the knowledge and resources for sustainable medical missions to support vulnerable communities.

1 Location and Organization: Choose the Right Setting and Partner

Find the Perfect Location: Carefully select a destination based on several factors, including your passion, interest, the community's needs, cost, and available opportunities.

Partner with a Reputable Organization: Collaborate with an organization that aligns with your mission's objectives and provides support. Ensure that your partner can facilitate your work and is well-versed in the logistics of medical missions.

2 Documentation: Ensure All Credentials are Up to Date

Secure Important Travel Documents: Obtain and update your passport, visa, and any required immunizations. Make sure to carry copies of all documents.

Professional Credentials: Have multiple copies of your medical license, CRNA certification, and any other essential credentials.

Contact Key Authorities: Reach out to the Ministry of Health and the U.S. Embassy in your destination country to inquire about any specific forms and documentation you may need.

3 Immunizations and Medications: Protect Your Health

Contact a Travel Clinic: Reach out to a World Health Travel Clinic to understand which immunizations and medications are required.

Be Fully Prepared: The clinic can administer vaccinations and prescribe any medications necessary for your destination.

4 Travel Advisories: Stay Informed

Monitor Travel Warnings: Before departure, check for any travel advisories through the U.S. Bureau of Consular Affairs at <http://travel.state.gov>.

Ensure Safety: Stay updated on any potential risks or concerns in your destination country, including health or political instability.

5 Personal Items: Pack Thoughtfully

What to Pack: Take note of suggested items to bring, such as local attire, appropriate uniforms, and essentials based on weather conditions.

Check What's Available Locally: Inquire with your organization about what items are locally available and which ones you should bring.

Anesthesia Adjuncts: Familiarize yourself with the available anesthesia equipment and pharmaceuticals, and contact local suppliers about borrowing advanced airway adjuncts (e.g., handheld McGrath laryngoscopes).

6 Resources and Local Environment: Plan for On-Site Logistics

Understand the Physical Environment: Partner with your chosen organization to get clarity on the local resources available, the physical surroundings, and transportation logistics to and from the mission site.

Ensure Safety: Request names, photos, and phone numbers of individuals responsible for your transportation and support on the ground.

Emergency Contacts: Obtain both local and U.S.-based phone numbers to use in case of any emergencies.

7 Support: Register for Emergency Assistance

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP): Register with the STEP through the Department of State at www.travel.state.gov. This provides your travel information to the U.S. consular office and offers emergency assistance.

Identify Liaisons: Make sure to have a U.S. liaison and identify a local liaison in the country you'll be working in. This ensures you have support both at home and abroad.

8 Local Customs and Protocols: Show Respect for the Culture

Respect Local Traditions: Learn and follow local cultural rules to ensure smooth missions and positive community relations.

Address Language Barriers: If English isn't spoken, arrange interpreter services and familiarize yourself with key medical phrases in the local language.

Embrace the Culture: Engage fully with the local community, appreciating their customs and focusing on providing healthcare without imposing personal beliefs.