



VOLUNTEER INFORMATION MANUAL

For Surgical Missions to

ESPERANZA/BOLIVIA

1911 WEST EARLL DRIVE • PHOENIX, AZ 85015-6095 • TELEPHONE (602)252-7772 • FAX (602)340-9197
TOLL FREE 1-888-701-5150 • EMAIL: clare@esperanca.org • www.esperanca.org

Updated: March 2009



Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Esperança, Inc. Surgical Mission Program. Since 1970 Esperança, Inc. has successfully served the poor of the developing world in over fourteen countries. Presently, our surgical missions are traveling to Tarija, Bolivia and surrounding communities.

The Esperança, Inc. Volunteer Surgical Program is unique among traveling volunteer physician programs. Our model is to work within existing medical systems, in the host country, and rely upon local counterparts to administer the volunteer experience. The surgical mission program is maintained through an arduous process of gaining the respect of the local government, public and private medical personnel, and other non-profit entities providing health care in the same areas.

Please thoroughly review the information we have provided regarding our surgical volunteer missions. I assure you that you will find your experience quite fulfilling. Again, thank you for your generosity in sharing your time, talents, and resources.

Raúl Espericueta
President
Esperança, Inc.



2. Work Environment

A very *basic* schedule will be forwarded to the team leader approximately two weeks prior to the team's mission date. Teams average 40-50 surgeries per 2 week mission. Potential complications of schedule can include: reduced operating room access, substitution of local medical staff for team assistants and/or performance of clinical work versus surgery. We believe that our volunteer surgical teams are in place to serve in whatever capacity possible, with graciousness and flexibility. All our volunteers want to be as effective as possible and perform the greatest number of surgeries possible, and meet our expectations for number of patients served through each mission. However, an integral part of our surgical mission program is the impact in training, education and the exchange of information with the residents in Bolivia. We ask for your assistance in maintaining this delicate balance.

The services provided by our volunteers are invaluable to the poor we serve, but local facility administration and/or local physicians may feel threatened by the volunteer's presence. At times the hospital/clinic administration and local physicians may be less than helpful and possibly unaccommodating. While we cannot ease the perception of some local surgeons that we are encroaching on their potential income, even though the people we serve cannot afford medical services, this will be offset by the many physicians who dedicate their time to our mission and volunteer efforts.

3. Cultural Issues

Our volunteers work in a developing country with social norms that are much different from theirs. The volunteers are guests in the host country and at their facilities (none of the surgical facilities in which we work are Esperança's or Esperanza/Bolivia's). The lead surgeon may be shown deference over other team members, and the same may be true of male versus female team members. This is the impact of their cultural system and ingrained beliefs regarding respect.

The Bolivian people are a demonstrative people and may hug, kiss, or show other signs of appreciation. Each day will be filled with surgical time, clinical time, and educational time. A two hour lunch is observed each afternoon and there may be a scheduled lunch celebration or other small social gatherings or dinners during your visit. These social activities are part of the hospitality the people of Bolivia and Esperanza/Bolivia extend our volunteers. While most of our volunteers want to schedule as much surgical time as possible during their mission, it is important to engage in festivities organized in appreciation of the surgical team's efforts as this is the culturally accepted behavior of the host country.

4. Budgetary Considerations

We appreciate our volunteers and the time they sacrifice away from their medical practices and families to serve the poor of Bolivia. Volunteers may spend \$2000 ± on air travel, lodging while in transit, and gathering additional surgical supplies. Each surgical mission costs Esperança donors an average of \$5000 (hospitals, meds, labs, transportation, etc.) including the food and lodging for each volunteer while at the program site. Keeping in mind that each specialty is different, we budget the value of anticipated services at an average of 43 surgeries per mission. This is important to keep in mind as it relates to the funding of this program.

V. PROFESSIONAL DOCUMENTATION

All volunteers must have current medical licenses with no disciplinary action resulting in suspension or revocation in any state. A retired volunteer who does not have a current medical license must provide two current letters of recommendation (see below). *Due to the adaptations necessary in the rural, developing countries in which we work, Esperança, Inc. reserves the right to decline volunteer status to those suffering from certain physical, mental or emotional afflictions.*

The following information needs to be forwarded to our office in order to begin each volunteer's file. Please be sure to mail **clear, first generation copies** to us or email scanned copies to christina@esperanca.org (mail the original signed health form, liability release, and photography/communication release).

1. LICENSE

A clear copy of the volunteer's current, valid medical/nursing license. If the surgeon is retired and not renewing their license, they will need to send us current letters of recommendation from two surgical volunteer organizations. Licensure would still need to be without disciplinary action prior to non-renewal.

2. DIPLOMA

A clear, clean 8.5 x 11" copy of the volunteer's medical/nursing school diploma.

3. CURRICULUM VITAE

A copy of the volunteer's current CV or resume, no greater than three pages.

4. PERSONAL HEALTH FORM

Please complete all questions on the health form. This form includes emergency contact information for our files, so neat printing is best.

5. PASSPORT FACE SHEET

Six months validity from the date of entry to Bolivia is required for each volunteer's passport. A scanned or color copy of the face sheet is requested.

6. LIABILITY RELEASE

The volunteer's signature and that of their spouse/significant other (next of kin) will need to be notarized prior to returning this form to our office.

7. PHOTOGRAPHY/WRITTEN COMMUNICATION RELEASE

The volunteer's signature will need to be notarized prior to form completion.

8. CURRENT PHOTOGRAPH

This photo should be current and in a medical setting if possible.

VI. TRAVEL

1. PASSPORT/VISA

A valid U.S. passport is required to enter and exit Bolivia. Passports may be applied for at a local county courthouse or U.S. Government Passport Office. Each volunteer's passport must have six months validity from their date of entry to Bolivia. Visas are also required. Visas cost \$135 and are good for multiple entries

over 5 years. Esperança will provide you documents required for the application process.

2. IMMUNIZATIONS

Visa applicants must submit an International Vaccination Certificate for yellow fever. No other immunizations are required to travel to Bolivia. Other vaccinations are recommended. For more information regarding vaccinations and other health precautions, log onto www.cdc.gov Travelers to Bolivia should take one of the following antimalarial drugs (listed alphabetically): atovaquone/proguanil, doxycycline or mefloquine. If out-of-doors, prevent mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats; apply DEET insect repellent to exposed skin.

3. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

If a volunteer intends to claim their airline ticket value (\$1200-\$2000) as a donation, travel arrangements must be made by Esperança, Inc. Credit card information should be provided to Esperança at the time of air travel ticketing. If reimbursement is made by check, this should be sent immediately following the ticketing process. Volunteers need to provide their frequent flyer numbers prior to ticketing air travel, and should review the frequent flyer information with an airline official upon check-in. Volunteers planning to fly to Bolivia frequently can register with AeroSur for a frequent flyer number at the counter in Santa Cruz. *Please note that there is a \$30.00 exit fee from Bolivia, paid by each traveler upon departure.*

Volunteers who prefer to make their own arrangements or use their own travel agency need to send a copy of their travel itinerary to Esperança, Inc. Any lost luggage, delays or related expenses shall be handled by the volunteer as we cannot intervene in travel we have not booked.

Volunteers are urged to pack early, and schedule an extra day or two off at the beginning and end of the trip. This allows flexibility for airline delays or changes beyond our control (flight changes or weather issues). Increased costs due to flight changes/rescheduling are the responsibility of each volunteer. AeroSur may change their scheduled flights, resulting in missed connections/changed domestic flights and increased fares. The additional expense and inconvenience is something volunteers should be prepared to address. We suggest every volunteer pack one carry-on with a few changes of clothes in case their luggage is lost or delayed.

We have a letter available for those volunteers who wish to solicit local donations toward their volunteer expenses.

4. LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS

The luggage restrictions for the entire journey are dictated by the **international carrier**, American Airlines.

BAGGAGE PER PASSENGER:

1 piece of carry-on luggage that is no more than 10 lbs and
2 pieces of luggage checked-in, that are no more than **50 lbs each** / 115" each (length + height + width totaling 115" each).

Well packed boxes are allowed, and carry the same restrictions as baggage above. Additional checked-in pieces are not allowed.

5. INVENTORY / SUPPLIES

Any supplies that may be needed for the surgical medical mission should be taken *with the volunteers, at the time of travel* (See Section VIII, Item 7). Place supplies in luggage or boxes, following the above baggage restrictions.

We will provide the Team Leader with our *Mission Inventory Form* and Instructions. This needs to be completed and returned to Esperança, Inc. 2 weeks prior to the mission. We utilize this information for the *Letter of Donation* and supporting documentation we prepare for authentication by the Bolivian Consulate in Washington DC to aid in customs processing and to document tax deductible donations to Esperança, Inc.

6. CUSTOMS

Generally, Customs agents are very supportive of Esperança volunteers. Although some travelers have passed through Customs without opening a single suitcase, one should expect a thorough inspection. Please present the *Letter of Donation* (authenticated documentation referred to in Section 5 above). As our ambassador, please be patient with any delays or extra tasks.

7. ARRIVAL IN TARIJA, BOLIVIA

Once in Bolivia, the team leader should present the *Letter of Donation* to the Director of Esperanza/Bolivia, who will meet the volunteers at the airport upon their arrival. For those who have flown all night, the first day is usually reserved for rest. Final selection and testing of patients will be scheduled for the following afternoon (See Section VIII, Item 2).

VII. INSURANCE

1. MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

Esperança, Inc. does not provide malpractice insurance for medical volunteers abroad. All of the hospitals in which we operate only require a current, valid medical license to practice. It is not customary in the countries in which we provide services to litigate medical issues resulting from operations. We do take steps, however, to ensure that our patients understand that their medical care is received at their discretion, and that our donors, volunteers, and Esperança, Inc. will not be held liable for any negative effects resulting from medical care provided by the Esperança, Inc. volunteer surgical program.

2. LIABILITY / EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Esperança, Inc. performs a due diligence procedure for every country in which we provide medical services. This procedure includes safety issues which may result from traveling abroad. Travel can present unexpected risks to health and safety. American citizens are not protected by U.S. law when abroad. We make every effort to ensure that our volunteers are not placed in jeopardy while traveling or working in a foreign country. It is each traveler's responsibility to educate themselves about the countries and areas they will visit and the potential dangers. Travelers are expected to make every reasonable effort to protect their belongings, health and safety, and to respect the local laws and customs. We suggest each

traveler obtain emergency assistance insurance for their trip, which offers help in any medical or legal emergency while abroad. Our paperwork will include a *liability waiver* that requires the volunteer's notarized signature (and that of their significant other or next of kin), agreeing not to hold Esperança, Inc. liable for anything which may occur to the traveler or their belongings while performing volunteer services on our behalf.

VIII. THE SURGICAL EXPERIENCE

1. TEAMS

Our volunteer surgeons usually recruit their own surgical team. A typical team consists of a surgeon, anesthesiologist, and an operating room tech/nurse. If a surgeon is not able to recruit their own team, we may be able to assist in the completion of the team, but only complete teams can execute a mission.

All visiting surgeons are paired with local surgeon volunteers from the host country. It is customary for the visiting surgeon to take the lead in the surgery process. Since Esperanza/Bolivia utilizes local medical volunteers, the visiting team's surgery tech/OR nurse may have to exercise flexibility in the operating process. This flexibility involves allowing the utilization of local medical volunteers during the operating process. It is possible that a PA or assisting surgeon would be supplanted by a local surgeon at the operating table. Esperança, Inc. encourages training opportunities for local medical counterparts, especially medical residents. Visiting surgeons are encouraged to teach and train the residents in the operating room. We must balance the quantity of surgical procedures with surgical experiences for local personnel.

Surgeons may be asked to prepare a presentation for their Bolivian colleagues in an area pertaining to their specialty or published articles noted in their CV.

We are unable to accommodate non-surgical personnel such as students, ancillary staff or family members on our surgical missions. Our resources are limited to licensed surgical volunteers only (MD, OD, DO, DPM, PA, RN, BSN) and certified surgical technicians.

2. PATIENTS

Our volunteer surgical program is in a developing country where medical care and the transportation to receive care can be insurmountable. We have found that patients that may present for a prescreening appointment weeks before the surgery visit may not be able to make the long return when the surgical mission team is in residence. Thus, we cannot provide a patient list prior to the team's departure or specific information as to the types of surgeries that will be performed (refer to Section 3 below for general procedures). Patients are gained through announcements alerting the local people that the visiting US surgeons will be in town. Since this is a very rudimentary method of announcing possible surgical care, it is possible that fewer patients than expected may present to the hospitals outside of Tarija. Some of the patients that do show up may be in need of clinical treatment rather than surgery; we ask that volunteers provide as much medical care/assistance as possible.

Shortly before the surgeries begin, the visiting surgeon, accompanied by local medical volunteers, will hold a clinic for all patients scheduled for surgery. Lab work and limited diagnostic testing is available. The visiting surgeon reserves the right to refuse surgical procedures for any patient.

3. **SURGERIES**

Patients are selected based on the volunteer's specialty, need, level of success, etc. and Esperanza/Bolivia has the criteria for patient selection. The following are procedures that have been performed during previous missions:

SPECIALTY	SUREGRY TYPES	DAYS IN SURGERY
General Surgery	Hernia repair, cholecystectomy, saphenous vein stripping, appendectomy, thyroid/goiter removal	8-10 (Will operate in at least 2 hospitals)
Gynecology	Incontinence - bladder repair (TVT, TOT) Hysterectomy, cystectomy, herniorrhaphy, colporrhaphy, tubal ligation,	5 (Tarija only)
Ophthalmology	Cataracts and pterygia	5-7 (Tarija only)
Orthopedic	Trauma, fracture repair	5-7 (Tarija only)
Plastic Surgery	Burn/injury reconstruction (lip and palate repair in remote hospitals only)	5 (Tarija only)
Urology	Prostate resection, radical prostatectomy	5-10 (Will operate in at least 2 hospitals)

4. **HOSPITAL IN TARIJA**

The population in Tarija is approximately 183,000 with an altitude of 1.924 m above sea level.

Our surgical volunteers operate at the San Juan De Dios Public Hospital in Tarija. The medical staff is supportive of the visiting surgical teams, but the administration can be bureaucratic at times. The Tarija Hospital has four operating rooms, two of which are completely equipped while two have equipment limitations. All elective surgeries are postponed when the volunteer surgical teams are in Tarija ; they have exclusive use of Operating Room One.

The Tarija Hospital operating rooms have many equipment limitations, such as electrical scalpel equipment, cardiac monitors, occimeters, and mostly very old surgical instruments. One of the major difficulties in the Hospital is the sterilization material, the autoclave and steam / dry heat ovens are dated and take a long time to sterilize surgical instruments, gowns, etc. The anaesthesia machines are dated, but functional. There is a cautery unit and occimeter. The facility has heating, cooling, and adequate lighting. General Surgeons may operate for no more than 5 days at this facility. Specialists usually operate here.

5. **HOSPITAL IN SAN LUCAS**

San Lucas has a population of 3,000 and the surrounding community is over 30,000. The city of San Lucas is approximately a seven hour trip from Tarija. The trip is on a narrow dirt road that coils through the Andes Mountains, up to an elevation of 10,000 feet.

Esperanza/Bolivia has initiated a surgery program with the city, by invitation of the mayor. The hospital has 20 beds, one basic laboratory, and a newer but barely equipped operating room, with one resident surgeon. We have obtained a cautery unit for the hospital, but volunteer teams must bring the occimeter from Tarija when they travel to San Lucas. The anesthesia machine is dated, but functional. The operating room does not have heating or cooling and the lighting is very poor (bring a head lamp). The operating room is able to handle the surgery program with flexibility in mind. Only certain surgical specialties are needed at this facility.

6. HOSPITAL IN ENTRE RIOS

The population is about 25,000 people with a surrounding community of 19,000

The city of San Lucas is approximately a three hour trip from Tarija, on a narrow dirt road. The hospital has 14 beds and one operating room, minimal equipment, and no surgeon. We have obtained a dated, but functional anesthesia machine for the hospital. The volunteer teams must take the cautery and occimeter from Tarija when they travel to Entre Ríos. The operating room does not have heating or cooling and the lighting is very poor (bring a head lamp). The operating room is able to handle the surgery program with flexibility in mind. Only certain surgical specialties are needed at this facility. The Entre Ríos Hospital is the most recent addition to our program and has a great need for volunteer surgeons.

7. HOSPITAL IN CAMARGO

The city of Camargo has a population of 10,538 people with a surrounding community of 14,872.

The city of Camargo is a 5 hour trip from Tarija on a narrow dirt road which winds up through the Andes Mountains to an altitude of 10,170 feet. Esperanza Bolivia has initiated a Surgical Program with Camargo, through an invitation from the Director of the Hospital, Dr.Gustavo Soberon. The Hospital is new and small. It has 30 beds, a basic laboratory and a new, but scarcely equipped, operating room. We have obtained a cautery unit for the Hospital, but the volunteer teams have to take the occimeter when they travel to Camargo. The anaesthesia equipment is dated but functional. The heating and cooling function, but not very well. The lighting is poor (bring a head lamp.) The operating room is able to handle the surgery program with flexibility in mind. Only certain surgical specialties are needed at this facility.

8. BRING YOUR OWN MATERIAL

We cannot and do not use expired medications in Bolivia. Supplies needed may include such items as oral antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, pain meds, sterile gloves in your size, instruments, scrubs, shoe covers, caps, masks, suture, staplers, drains, procedural kits, and anything else normally used that the volunteer is able to bring. Cold sterilization is utilized and an autoclave was recently added. We do not send supplies to Bolivia by postal service – teams must plan to take their supplies as carry-on/check-in items.

The completed *Mission Inventory Form* should be returned to Esperança, Inc. one month prior to the scheduled mission. This aids in the customs process and provides documentation required for each mission.

We urge volunteers to bring their own supplies – there are limited supplies at Esperanza Bolivia.

9. PREVIOUS VOLUNTEERS

We are pleased to provide contact information for previous surgical volunteers upon request.

IX. MEDICAL AND HEALTH ISSUES

Any person traveling to the tropics should have a physical examination before departure. Since the same diseases that afflict humans in temperate climates can be magnified in the tropics, all travelers should be in good health. **Any person with a chronic ailment should not consider volunteering for work in this remote region.**

Most infectious diarrhea is caused by fecal contamination; therefore, it is absolutely necessary that proper hygiene be maintained during a trip to the tropics. Regular hand washing is a must, as are precautions with food and drink, especially in public places. Fresh salads and ice should be avoided when eating in restaurants; if it is not cooked, bottled or something that you can peel, do not eat it.

It is best to take an anti-diarrheal drug, effective insect repellent with DEET, SPF35 sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat. If a volunteer is prone to altitude sickness, preventative measures and/or remedies are suggested. We suggest volunteers not consume cocoa tea for this ailment, however.

X. HOUSING AND FOOD

Currently, Esperanza pays these expenses while volunteers are in country; some volunteers elect to donate toward this expense. The voltage in Bolivia is 220V - a generic voltage converter for international travel should be purchased prior to travel.

Tarija: Volunteers stay at the Hotel Loma de San Juan, which is a modest bed-and-breakfast type facility (*see page 14*) with individual rooms and bathrooms. The hotel provides a generous breakfast and laundry service for their guests. Guests may also choose to have other meals prepared, but need to request them as they are not usually provided. There is an internet café close by that charges about \$0.50 per hour.

San Lucas and Entre Rios: Lodging is dormitory style. Guests will not have their own room, nor will they have a bathroom in their room. Most rooms have several beds and a shared bathroom. The beds have clean linens. There are no meals provided; all meals are served at a local restaurant.

Camargo: There are single and double rooms with private baths, but they are not very attractive. The meals are prepared elsewhere. There is a small market that sells sodas.

XI. MONEY

US dollars may be exchanged for Bolivianos (Bolivian currency) upon arrival at the airport. There are 3-4 ATM's near the hotel in Tarija that dispense both US and Bolivian currency. US dollars are accepted in quite a few instances, in small denominations. Credit cards are accepted only in some places. Traveler's checks are not recommended. A typical mission volunteer can take \$150-\$200 in cash and still have money upon their return, depending on individual spending habits. \$30.00 cash will be needed for the exit tax out of Bolivia. We suggest using calling cards for maximum savings when telephoning home

from Bolivia. Volunteers do need to pay for their food and lodging for any layovers in transit between Tarija Bolivia and their departure/arrival airport.

XII. TRANSPORTATION

Volunteers are picked up from the airport by Esperanza Bolivia staff. Transportation is provided between the hotel and hospital. Low fare taxis are always available and walking is another option that is relatively safe in Tarija.

XIII. STORIES AND PICTURES

We ask our volunteers to try to take pictures when possible and learn as much as they can about their patients. Shared stories and impressions are a priceless means of conveying our work to our supporters and potential donors, and their contributions fund the surgical mission program.

We ask each volunteer to sign a photographic/communication release so we may use their comments, emails, survey responses, photographs or photographs containing their likeness in our media relating to the mission of Esperança and/or the surgical program.

XIV. CONTACT INFORMATION

Christina Araiza, Program Director, coordinates the surgical mission and surgical supply donation programs. In her absence, any questions or issues that require immediate response can be directed to Raúl Espericueta.

ESPERANÇA, INC.

1911 West Earll Drive
Phoenix, AZ 85015
Phone: (602)252-7772 or 888-701-5150

Surgical Program Coordinator

Christina Araiza, MPH - Extension 111
christina@esperanca.org

President

Raúl Espericueta, MSW - Extension 103
raúl@esperanca.org

ESPERANZA BOLIVIA * Please include Christina in any correspondence with our counterparts in Bolivia

Cajon Postal 425 (mail can take 2-4 months)

Tarija, Bolivia
South America

Physical Location

Ingavi St corner Sevilla St #606

International Telephone Numbers: 011-591-4-664-8563 & 011-591-4-664-7890

International Fax Number: 011-591-4-663-4352 Local Fax: 4-663-4352

Local Fax Number: Website: www.esperanzabolivia.org.bo

Palmira Villarroel

National Executive Director

Administrative oversight of all programs.

Office: (591-4)664-7890 Home: (591 4)663-8531 Cell: (591-7)186-1531

Guadalupe Rodríguez

Volunteer Surgical Program Coordinator

(Lupe) Support and organization of all activities for the Volunteer Surgery Program.

Email: gurodriguez@esperanzabolivia.org.bo

Office: (591-4) 664-7890 Cell: (591-7) 298-5946

MEDICAL SUPPORT AT SAN JUAN DE DIOS HOSPITAL AND ANET
(ANET is a collaborating children's organization)

Dr. José Vargas **Local Medical Volunteer**
Director of Surgery at San Juan de Dios Hospital
Assistance and support as needed for surgeries; pre and post. Selection and coordination of patients.
Office: 664-5555 Home: 664-2186

Dr. Mauricio Barrios **Local Medical Volunteer**
Director of Anesthesiology at San Juan de Dios Hospital
Assistance and support as needed for surgeries; pre and post. Selection and coordination of patients.
Office: 664-5555 Home: 664-2096 Cell: 71864357

Eva Echeverria **Local Nurse Volunteer**
Surgery Coordination and Support
Office: 664-5555 Home: 663-0499

Hotel Loma de San Juan *(see brochure on next page)*

Address:	Bolivar Street across from the Loma de San Juan church.		
E-Mail:	hostalls@cosett.com.bo		
International Telephone Number:	591-4-664-4522	or	591-4-663-6101
International Fax Number:	591-4-664-4206		
Local Telephone Number:	4-664-4522		
Local Fax Number:	4-664-4206		

We look forward to building a relationship with you as a member of our Volunteer Surgical Program. Your generous donation of time, talents, and resources is truly appreciated. We thank you for joining us in this precious life changing work.

The staff at Esperança, Inc. and Esperanza/Bolivia



HOTEL LOMA DE SAN JUAN TARIJA, BOLIVIA



Nuestras románticas habitaciones
ampliamente diseñadas le haran sentirse
como en casa.

Todas nuestras habitaciones cuentan
con camas king, queen y full size e
incluyen los siguientes servicios:



- Desayuno buffet chapaco.
- Televisión por cable.
- Música ambiental.
- Calefacción.
- Discado directo nacional e internacional.
- Impuestos de ley.



Calle Bolivar, frente a la Iglesia Loma de San Juan
Telfs: 4-6636101 / 6644522
Fax: 591-4-6644206
Tarija - Bolivia