

PROJECT AMAZONAS – MEDICAL SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES



Medical, dental and other volunteers are welcome. Contact us well in advance of desired dates of service as coordination with Peruvian health authorities and considerable logistic arrangements are required. Two types of medical service opportunities are available:

- 1) **Boat-based medical service trips.** These are generally anchored by Peruvian medical personnel, but include the participation of national and international medical professionals, students, and other volunteers. Such trips have translation capabilities (for non-Spanish speakers), and include accommodations and meals once the boat departs from Iquitos. Unless specifically noted, hotel and meals in Iquitos before or after the trip are not covered by participant contributions. A few boat-based trips may be anchored by a national or international medical school in which case open slots may be limited. Costs depend on destination (remoteness) and length of each trip. On some trips, it may be possible for participants to be on-board for just one week, but additional transportation costs will then apply (to bring the participant from, or to return them to Iquitos).

Expedition dates are subject to verification and approval by the Peruvian Ministry of Health, so volunteers should have a relatively flexible schedule and plan to be in Peru for a couple of days on either end of a given trip. Should dates change, we will notify any persons scheduled to participate as soon as possible.

Boat-based trip costs: Minimum participant contributions may be subject to change due to changing fuel prices and other considerations. Project Amazonas will provide a receipt for contributed funds that can be used for tax purposes for US tax-payers.

- 2) **Service at urban or rural government or private clinics and hospitals.** Arrangements are made directly with the directors/staff of such facilities for service periods ranging from 2 weeks to several months. Conversational Spanish ability is essential, as is the ability to adapt to different working, living and social conditions. Accommodations may be at the facility itself, or at a small hostel, hotel, or with a local family. Meals can be arranged with local families, at small store/house-front restaurants, or volunteers may wish to do some of their own cooking. Clinic and hospital hours are generally 7 AM to 1 PM, with emergencies attended during other hours of the day. Accommodation, food, and travel expenses are taken care of directly by the volunteer, though Project Amazonas staff are happy to provide guidance, orientation and introductions.

The greatest need for volunteer assistance is in the more remote clinics and health posts, which are understaffed and always underfunded. Longer-term volunteers can make the greatest contributions serving in these clinics/posts, but there can be opportunities for short-term volunteers to do the same. For senior medical/dental students, it may be possible to arrange rotations in larger hospitals in Iquitos, but note that the host institution (i.e., the hospital) may assess administrative fees. Potential service locations include:

- **Centro de Salud de Mazan** – 45-60 minutes from Iquitos by speedboat. Power 3-4 hours nightly, 24 staff members (but not all on duty at any given time). Cell phone access and internet (when power is on) service are available in Mazan.
- **Centro de Salud de Yanashi** – 4-16 hours from Iquitos depending on boat and river conditions. Power 3-4 hours nightly, 6-8 staff members. Cell phone service (Telefonica), but currently no internet access.
- **Centro de Salud de Pevas** – 5-16 hours from Iquitos depending on boat and river conditions. Power 2-3 hours every morning and 3-4 hours nightly, about 20 staff members. Cell phone service available. We don't know about internet service currently.
- **Puesto de Salud de Huanta** – 5-16 hours from Iquitos. No power, no cell phone service, 1 technician has operated the post for the past 7 years. If you want to have the opportunity to do everything, this is the spot for you!
- **Centros de Salud – Iquitos** – Various health posts are spread throughout the city, including ones in very poor sections of town. There is possibility of serving in any of these.
- **Hospital Regional de Iquitos** – The large public hospital in Iquitos where cases which cannot be handled elsewhere are sent. Large ER and busy operating schedule. The hospital may assess an administrative fee on medical students who conduct rotations there.

Clinic/Hospital-based costs: Volunteers at local clinics or hospitals currently cover their own room and board directly - payment is not handled through Project Amazonas. Costs vary with the location of the clinic/hospital, but for rural clinics, we suggest that volunteers budget about \$25/day which should cover lodging, food, and most transportation costs. Volunteers in Iquitos should budget \$5 or \$10 additional per day. Project Amazonas cannot provide receipts for tax purposes for expenses paid directly by volunteers.

Contributions vs Costs? Project Amazonas is a not-for-profit organization, and as such we ask for a minimum contribution (rather than a payment) for participation on medical service trips. Your contribution is used for the purchase of trip supplies (medicines, fuels, food), boat maintenance and crew staffing, and for the provision of medical services to patients identified during the expedition (bringing patients to Iquitos for surgery, sending medical supplies back to specific patients, etc.). The minimum requested contribution is calculated to cover expedition operating expenses in a sustainable and long-term fashion. Participants are always welcome to contribute more than the minimal amount required for participation.

Requirements for Participation in Medical Service Activities

- 1) Medical, dental and other volunteers must be over the age of 18 years.
- 2) Send a current Curriculum Vitae (CV or resume)
- 3) Send a scan/photocopy of your current passport photo page.

- 4) Send a scan/photocopy of your most recent/highest medical certification or licensing.
- 5) Ask one reference to send in a short email statement of support. This step is not necessary for volunteers with advanced medical certification (MD, DDS, RN, etc.).
- 6) For boat-based medical trips, once you have received notification that you have been accepted for a trip, send in a non-refundable deposit of US \$100 to save your slot. As trips may fill rapidly, we suggest sending in a deposit as soon as you are certain that you will be able to participate on a given trip. In the event of trip cancellation, Project Amazonas will refund the \$100 less any processing fees that might have been incurred (PayPal fee, bank fees, etc.). If a participant cancels, the \$100 will be considered as a donation and for US residents we will send a receipt of donation for tax purposes.
- 7) For clinic-based medical service, send in a non-refundable deposit of US \$25 at least 45 days prior to the scheduled start of service. This fee is used to offset administrative and communications costs in Peru.
- 8) All volunteers must show proof that they are up-to-date on recommended vaccinations (as recommended by the CDC website – see below).
- 9) All volunteers must sign and return (via mail or scanned-email attachment) a Project Amazonas waiver.
- 10) Payment in full for participation on a medical service trip is due 30 days prior to scheduled departure. In the event of trip cancellation, this payment will be returned in full.

Medical and dental volunteers who may be interacting directly with patients generally require approval from the Peruvian Ministry of Health prior to the initiation of volunteer work. Intermediate (i.e., conversational) Spanish skills are essential for volunteers who wish to interact directly with patients or serve in local clinics. There are no restrictions on nationality except for those which may be imposed by Peruvian immigration authorities.

Vaccinations: All prospective participants should familiarize themselves with the information on the Centers for Disease Control website, and it is each participant's responsibility to be up to date on the recommended vaccinations and preventative measures.

Visit: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/peru.aspx>

Scheduled Medical Service Expeditions*

2012:

- **12-23 Feb 2012:** Apayacu, Orosa, Matahuayo rivers and adjacent areas (12 days). Core medical team: University of Mississippi School of Medicine (Teaching and Service

Expedition). Cost: \$1700 (includes hotel/meals in Iquitos at beginning and end of the expedition).

- **2 SPACES ONLY LEFT! - 15-27 Apr 2012:** Ampiyacu River (13 days - remote). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health. Cost: \$945 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1790 for other participants.
- **27 May-8 Jun 2012:** Maniti River (13 days). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health and Florida International University Pre-Med Society. Cost: \$845 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1690 for other participants.
- **CLOSED OUT – FULL! - 29 Jul-9 Aug 2012:** Nanay & Pintoyacu Rivers (12 days-remote). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health. Cost: \$880 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1660 for other participants. **Contact us if you wish to be put on a waiting list.**
- **2-14 Sep 2012:** Lower Napo River (13 days). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health. Cost: \$845 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1690 for other participants.
- **14-23 Nov 2012:** Mazan River (10 days). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health. Cost: \$650 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1300 for other participants.
- **2-14 Dec 2012:** Tigre River & area (13 days). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health. Cost: \$845 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1690 for other participants.

2013: (Dates are tentative only – additional dates have been added!)

- **10-22 Feb 2013:** Apayacu, Orosa, Matahuayo rivers and adjacent areas (12 days). Core medical team: University of Mississippi School of Medicine (Teaching and Service Expedition). Cost: \$1700 (includes hotel/meals in Iquitos at beginning and end of the expedition).
- **14-26 Apr 2013:** Ampiyacu River (13 days - remote). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health. Cost: \$945 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1790 for other participants.
- **26 May-7 Jun 2013:** Maniti River (13 days). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health and Florida International University Pre-Med Society. Cost: \$845 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1690 for other participants.
- **28 Jul-8 Aug 2013:** Nanay & Pintoyacu Rivers (12 days-remote). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health. Cost: \$880 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1660 for other participants.
- **1-13 Sep 2013:** Lower Napo River (13 days). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health. Cost: \$845 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1690 for other participants.
- **29 Sep-11 Oct 2013:** Upper Napo River (13 days – remote). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health. Cost: \$945 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1790 for other participants.
- **13-22 Nov 2013:** Mazan River (10 days). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health. Cost: \$650 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1300 for other participants.

- **1-13 Dec 2013:** Tigre River & area (13 days). Core medical team: Peru Ministry of Health. Cost: \$845 for currently enrolled medical/dental students (documentation required), \$1690 for other participants.

*If you don't see any dates that might meet your schedule, suggest alternate ones! If we have enough time, it may be possible to schedule a trip that will better meet your academic or professional schedule.

Activities of Medical, Dental and other Volunteers

On service trips, volunteers assist with collecting patient histories and data, collecting community-level health information, photographic documentation, dispensing of prescribed medicines, and instructing patients on the proper use of medicines and preventative health care techniques. Qualified volunteers also directly attend, or assist with attending patients. Volunteers interested in dental, pediatric, internal and general medicine will have ample opportunities to interact with patients and medical personnel in those fields. Opportunities for more specialized fields (surgery, neurobiology, etc.) will be restricted largely to the Iquitos area. In most remote clinics and health posts, the full range of patients and medical conditions are seen, but some patients will be sent to larger centers (i.e. Iquitos) for diagnosis or treatment due to the local lack of specialized equipment and lab facilities. Most rural clinics have power only a few hours daily (if at all), and facilities and equipment are limited. Such clinics are the only medical facilities available for the populations of most riverine communities.

There is a high demand for dental attention in all riverine communities, and dental caries/cavities and poor dental care are chronic issues. In most cases, dental attention means extraction of teeth. Except in Iquitos and a few other larger centers, there is no capacity for restorative work and during expeditions it is often impossible to attend to all of those who request extractions. A critical role for dental and other volunteers is education on oral hygiene in the communities visited.

Funding of Medical Service Trips

Expeditions are funded by private donations and by participant contributions. Teaching/service expeditions are organized by specific medical schools that send their staff and students. These trips accept volunteers on a space available basis, but volunteers contribute at the same rate as other participants - such trips range from \$1500-\$1800/participant (which includes accommodations and meals in Iquitos at the start and end of the trip). For medical service trips staffed mainly by Project Amazonas and Peruvian medical/dental personnel, volunteer contributions allow us to cover the participation of Peruvian medical personnel and students, as well as to purchase medicines for use during the clinics. Donations for support of medical service trips are tax-deductible (for US residents), and most participant contributions may also be tax-deductible.

Unless noted otherwise, participant contributions toward a trip do not include:

- Transportation to/from Iquitos, Peru (this will be by air for most volunteers)

- Lodging for one or more nights in Iquitos (a wide range of places are available)
- Food and other expenses in Iquitos

Inquiries

To apply or for questions, email medical@projectamazonas.org