



## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND MISSION ORIENTATION**

### *EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEALTH MISSION OUTREACH (HMO) VOLUNTEER*

The following Memorandum of Understanding explains to the volunteers of what is expected of them while on a dental mission. It is crucial for the volunteers to abide by the rules and regulations of HMO to ensure a smooth and efficient mission.

*You are volunteering to participate in a dental mission to a third world country. You are not going on a holiday. HMO is about helping the less fortunate, as equals, under difficult conditions. Expect to be challenged, to work hard, make sacrifices, and exist outside your comfort zone. We work long hours under difficult conditions and we help as many people as possible.*

*For many there might be a spiritual connection to what we do, however HMO is a non-political and non-religious charity. We will help anyone in need!*

*We take great pride in the diversity of our volunteers. They come from all walks of life. Volunteers are welcome, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation or religious beliefs. All we ask is a willingness to work hard and from the heart, devoid of your own agenda.*

### **Age of volunteers**

A VOLUNTEER MUST BE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OLD BEFORE THE DEPARTURE DATE. The only exception to this rule is if parents partake in the mission.

Being chosen for the HMO team is a privilege, not a right. Completion and submission of a Mission Destination Form with a \$100 administration fee does not guarantee placement on an HMO team roster. Your \$100.00 donation, like any donation to a registered charity, is non-refundable. Once you are accepted to attend the mission you will be informed. When you are accepted for the mission your application fee will go towards your trip if you so wish.

### **Changes of destinations**

Despite every attempt to complete and fulfill all the bureaucratic hurdles for entry into the country we are planning to go, including visas, practice permits, criminal background checks, etc., complications can and do arise. Last minute changes in entry requirements are a frequent occurrence. Proper completion of official paperwork in third world countries is often a moving target. Cooperation of the volunteer to provide additional documentation on short notice, when requested, is mandatory.

## Equipment

We bring most or all of our own equipment, disposable supplies, medicine and instruments with us into the country. Foreign governments often request a thorough inventory of what we are bringing in, with serial numbers, expiry dates, and container weight. Despite the fact that we provide all this information if it is requested, clearing customs can still be problematic. The impact on the subsequent care delivered during your trip is impossible to predict, things may be confiscated so be prepared.

## Other details

**What is included in the fee you pay:** There are certain things that are included in your fare and certain things that are not

Included: Flight, Transportation in the country we are in, security detail, and food are all included in your fee.

Not Included: Alcoholic beverages and excursions are not included in your fee. Please bring money if you wish to partake.

**Security:** In most countries we travel, we have a security team with us all the time. They pick us up at the airport and take us to our hotel. They are with us from the morning until we go back to the hotel to sleep. It is vital that you ensure you do not wander off on your own, leave the compound we are working in, or wander away from the hotel. Always ensure if you need to go somewhere you take a security guard with you. Your safety is our main concern, this is non negotiable.

**Transportation:** Be very clear that transportation can be an adventure depending on where we are going. Cancellations and delays of airline flights are totally beyond the control of HMO, the same is true for lost baggage.

**Luggage:** Normally most of our volunteers bring a carry on and donate their one luggage allowance to HMO to bring all the necessary sundries, medicine and equipment we need for the mission.

**Accommodations:** For the most part, your accommodations will be at 5-star hotels but in some remote areas it is hard to find 5-star hotels and we have to make do with what is available.

**Sharing a room:** Sharing a room with someone is the norm. Usually the list of your roommates is done in advance and will be emailed out prior to the trip.

**Showers:** Most times this is not a problem but sometimes Hot showers are a bonus.

**Food:** We try to go to the best restaurants of the town we are in however sometimes if the town is remote and small, we might not have much of a choice. If you are a picky eater, bring lots of granola bars.

**Alcoholic Beverages:** Even though your food is inclusive in the fair you pay, it does not include alcoholic beverages. If you would like to have a beer, a glass of wine or anything alcoholic please ask for a separate bill as HMO will not pay for alcoholic beverages.

**Immunizations:** Check the immunizations needed for the given country. Its good to travel with Hep A&B vaccinations. Taking Dukoral is a good idea prior to the trip. Please consult you pharmacist.

**Clinics:** Depending on where we are clinics can be an adventure. The facilities where we deliver care can be challenging. Power is unpredictable, even with generators. Some times it is very hot and we might or might not have fans. Usually we are swamped with patients. Treatment of patients might be at a local medical clinic, in a school or community hall. They may be on a bench, a stackable chair or a table. Sometimes it's stifling hot and often very humid. Make sure you bring bug spray. Sometimes the portable dental equipment is temperamental you have to be patient. Toilet facilities at clinic locations are rustic and often in need of maintenance. Remember to bring your own hand sanitizer and roll of toilet paper.

**General Volunteers:** Be prepared for sights and sounds that you have never experienced before. As a non-dental volunteer, you may be delegated to assist a dentist with oral surgery or possibly fillings, sterilizing dental instruments, run crowd control, help with triage, or patient education. Dispensing or counting of medicine maintenance upkeep or stocking etc. Several of these assignments involve handling sharp, pointy dental instruments ... instruments that have been exposed to blood and saliva. Although extremely rare, accidents do happen. Be alert and pay attention. Even though you are not professionally trained, HMO dental volunteers could never function without people like you.

**What does the week look like:** A one-week trip is usually 4 days of clinic and two to three days of sight seeing; The 4 days are very difficult back breaking work. The clinics start early in the morning and finish later in the day with a half hour lunch.

**Treating as many patients as possible:** We try to see as many people as possible. Our days are full and we hardly break. Look within yourself and ask, "Can I keep up?" At the risk of sounding demanding, slackers should not apply. Prima Donnas are denied. If you are high maintenance, please reconsider.

We do not want quitters. If you abandon your team for any reason other than illness while on a trip, that lets down the rest of your team and you will not be welcome back. Take into consideration any personal health issues, as you may be a long way away from modern health care.

**Excursions:** They are not paid by HMO. If you want to partake in the excursions please bring money with you.

**Shopping:** If you wish to shop for the local crafts and souvenirs please bring money with you as this is not part of your fee.

## GENERAL INFO

1. ALL THE TREATMENTS DELIVERED DURING AN HMO MISSION: Must be done according to the standard of care we have at home. Sometimes depending on where we travel this is not possible, in those situations we have to take all the precautions and care we can to ensure the best care possible. Obviously, there are compromises that have to be made, such as the inability to diagnose and treat each and every patient with radiographs.

2. ALL INSTRUMENTS USED DURING INVASIVE PROCEDURES MUST BE STERILIZED NO EXCEPTIONS.
3. SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST BE RESPECTED. IF YOU CAN'T DO A PROCEDURE AT HOME, YOU CAN'T DO IT ON AN HMO TRIP. Every effort should be made to establish informed consent.
4. TREATMENTS MUST BE ACCEPTED BY THE PATIENT, NOT FORCED UPON THEM. You are not going on a trip to establish a new high for the number of teeth extracted in a day for the Guinness Book of Records.
5. You will travel with, but the whole HMO Team.
6. You will be required to take one (1) piece of checked in baggage with you for HMO. If you wish to bring a full suitcase then you have to pay for that one. Obviously, most of the supplies will be used up during the excursion, and there will be less returning home than went.
7. EVERY VOLUNTEER COMMITS TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING AN HMO CONTAINER OR SUITCASE. Once a suitcase has been assigned to you, you will be responsible to get it there and back. It is required that all team members must help each other with the transporting of extra equipment not only the one assigned to you. HMO will reimburse you for any fees incurred from HMO luggage, upon receiving the invoice.
8. Organizing the travel arrangements for several individuals can be a daunting task. THE DYNAMICS OF BOOKING A GROUP OF TRAVELERS TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME, IS MUCH DIFFERENT THAN ORGANIZING A JOURNEY FOR YOURSELF. YOU MIGHT FIND TICKETS ONLINE THAT MIGHT BE CHEAPER HOWEVER YOU CAN NOT BOOK AIRLINE TICKETS ON YOUR OWN. ALL AIRLINE TICKETS FOR AN HMO EXCURSIONS ARE BOOKED THROUGH THE HMO TRAVEL AGENT. The reason is to have the team arrive to clear customs and get picked and with security all at the same time.
9. If you want to go on holiday, you must do so AFTER the dental mission is over. The HMO travel agent will only book airline tickets to the country where you are working and your return ticket home.

**Refunds:** Once you pay your fee THERE ARE NO REFUNDS. If you change your mind and decide not to go (with exception of serious illness) Any monies sent to HMO by a volunteer are considered a donation to a charity registered with Revenue Canada. HMO will issue a tax receipt for the amount donated. Returning the donation after the fact, regardless of the circumstances, puts our status as a registered charity at risk. The charitable receipt must match the name on the donation cheque. Donations are not transferable between individual volunteers.

**Privacy Statement:** We live in an age of internet, social media, and smartphones. When you sign up for an HMO team you consent with the understanding that photos or videos taken of you during clinic can be placed on our website or Facebook page. You also agree not to post any images of others taken **away** from the clinic without getting prior approval from the people involved.

*The Health Mission Outreach Missions are much more than a trip to an impoverished, third world country, to fill, clean, and extract teeth.*

*These missions are the adventure of a lifetime, that will change your world view forever. Volunteers tend to be unique, proven by the fact that they are willing to do what they do. After spending a week or two with like minded teammates, whose sole purpose for participating is to selflessly help those less fortunate than themselves, special life long bonds are formed. This is manifested by the number of HMO "repeat offenders", or HMO "lifers". The bonds are very similar to those that are formed between the players on a championship sports club, or soldiers who have been in combat together. In a special way you will always be brothers and sisters.*

*We can all learn a great deal from the patience and dignity that our HMO patients show. They could be waiting for hours or days outside in the blazing heat with no food or drink having their children in tow. We see children falling asleep on the floor as the parents get treated. One thing is for sure, their appreciation is clearly expressed, even though there is often a language barrier. You just don't get such sincere gratitude on a day to day basis back home.*

*It sometimes is tough to return home, and ask someone "How is it going?". The complaints that you hear very often seem trivial, and material. The life situations of the locals who we provide care for, opens one's eyes to how fortunate we really are to be able to live where we do. What is really important in the big scheme of things becomes more focused. The overall picture becomes clearer, because of the global exposure an HMO trip gives. You tend to not sweat the small stuff so much.*

By changing other people's lives, you can't help but change your own. These missions are not resume builders they are for giving back and making a difference.

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Mission Destination

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Date of Mission

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Volunteer Printed Name

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Volunteer Signature

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HMO Board Member Signature

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Date of Mission Trip