

The Boletín

Medicos-en-Accion Antigua Fall 2019



Planning for the 2020 mission

1. Book your flight!



Team members are responsible for booking their own flights to and from Guatemala. While the airport is just over an hour's drive from Antigua, it would be very helpful if you could book your arrival for Friday evening, January 24. Most team members from the west usually arrive between 2200-2300. For that time, we will have shuttle buses to move you, your luggage and supplies. If you are arriving at other times, we will arrange transportation. But, we need to know when you are arriving.

As flights to Guatemala City (airport code GUA) are generally at capacity, it is important you book **now**.

We need to know when team members are arriving. After you have made your flight booking, please send us your flight number and arrival time to:

medicostravel@gmail.com

If you have any problems booking your flight, please let us know ASAP. While we aren't travel agents, we can make suggestions.

2. Donation

Our missions are self-funded. Our per participant cost for the two-week Guatemala mission is usually about \$1000 USD. Your donation helps cover medications, surgical supplies, intravenous lines & fluids, post-operative care and pre and post-surgery housing for patients travelling from distant villages.

Your donation also includes your breakfast and lunch at the hospital, accommodation, and airport transfers.

The total cost to each volunteer for the 2020 mission for two weeks is \$900 USD. For team members joining us for one week, the cost is \$500 USD.

When you applied, each team member made a donation of \$300 CDN. Your application donation will be converted to USD using the currency exchange rate on January 26, 2020. You will need to pay the balance owing (USD) in Antigua — please bring sufficient cash with you to do this.

Volunteer opportunities

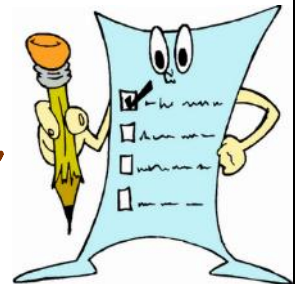
Antigua 2020

- ♦ General Surgeon
- ♦ OR nurses
- ♦ Audiologist

San Benito March 2020

- ♦ OR nurses
- ♦ PA Recovery nurses
- ♦ Anaesthetist

Plan for Mission 2020!



- ♦ Travel day: Fri, January 24
- ♦ Welcome party Sat. Jan 25 (evening)
- ♦ Setup/orientation Sun. January 26
- ♦ Patient assessment Sun. Jan 26
- ♦ Operating
 - Week 1 Mon. Jan 27 - Fri. Jan 31
 - Week 2 Mon. Feb. 3 - Fri. Feb 7
- ♦ Pack-up: Fri. Feb 7
- ♦ Farewell Party Fri. Feb 7 (evening)
- ♦ Travel day: Sat. Feb 8

Deadline for submission of travel expenses for your tax receipt: Friday, March 20, 2020

Email:

Medicoscanada@gmail.com

Continued page 2

Fundraising

If friends, family or colleagues offer to support your volunteer costs, these donations should be given directly to you. Please record donor name, mailing address, e-mail address, and donation amount. Include this information when submitting your tax receipt request form.

Tax receipts are issued for donations of \$25 or more.

3. About US Cash

When requesting US dollars from your bank or credit union, inspect each bill before accepting them. Any bills with folds, tears, ink marks or any signs of wear, are rejected by merchants and banks. Most things in Guatemala run on a cash basis and your attention to this will make life much easier!

Very Important!

Please bring only crisp, new US bills.

You will need additional funds for evening meals, entertainment, shopping, and local travel. USD can be exchanged at local banks (with passport) or withdraw local currency (the quetzal) using a debit card at an ATM.

Need a Christmas idea?



Make a difference to a life: Sponsor a surgery!

Sponsoring a surgery costs just \$80 CDN

1. Direct donation

Send a cheque for one or more surgeries to:

Medicos-en-Accion
c/o 1431 Frontier Place
Nanaimo, BC V9X 1P5

Make cheques payable to:
Medicos-en-Accion Society

Tax receipts are issued for donations supporting this project.

2. Online via Canada Helps

Go to: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/medicos-en-accion-society/>

Find: Apply your Donation ...
Scroll to: Option 4 - MeA Antigua Surgeries

Canada Helps will issue your tax receipt immediately after your credit card transaction is processed.

About Medicos-en-Accion Canada

Formed in 2001, Medicos-en-Accion's volunteers provide surgical services, community health and education support in Guatemala and The Gambia.

Medicos-en-Accion
450 Greenstone Drive
Kamloops, BC V2C 1N9

Medicos-en-Accion/Guatemala
1431 Frontier Place
Nanaimo, BC V9X 1P5

Medicos-en-Accion Board

President: Koos Meijerhof
Vice President/Team Leader The Gambia: Gareth Eeson
Vice President Surgery Guatemala: Brenda Uhrynuk
Vice President /Team Leader Medicine Guatemala : Brian Poelzer
Treasurer: Dennis Wallis
Secretary: Bill Beaton
Website: Blake Farren

Medicos-en-Accion/Guatemala Surgical Team

Vice President: Brenda Uhrynuk
Team Leader Surgery Guatemala: Norm Weir
Secretary: Cindy Reimer
Communications: David Hill-Turner
Volunteer orientation: Nadia Beaumont

Email: medicoscanada@gmail.com
FB: [medicos-en-accion Canada Guatemala Surgical Team](#)
URL: www.medicos-en-accion.com

Medicos-en-Accion Society is a registered charity in Canada.

What to do in Antigua



The core of Antigua, the former Spanish colonial capital, is a World Heritage Site and there is much to see and do.

January's edition of **The Boletín** will include information and links to help you with planning your trip to Guatemala and making the most of your time there.

Medicos-en-Accion Annual General Meeting

Our annual general meeting was held in Kamloops, BC on August 31. Reports were received on the society's missions to The Gambia and Guatemala. The annual meeting was attended by over 20 members and supporters.



Medicos en Accion Society executive 2019-2020. l-r: Dennis Wallis (Treasurer), Gareth Eeson (VP The Gambia), Brenda Uhrynuk (VP Guatemala Surgery), Koos Meijerhof (President), Bill Beaton (Secretary), Blake Ferron (Webmaster).

Report from The Gambia

Deborah Brauer

Editor's note: Many of our volunteers and supporters may not realize that we work in two regions of the world. At our AGM, we informally discussed how The Boletín could report on all our activities. This is the first step in expanding our area of coverage about the work of MeA.

The Gambia is the smallest, and the poorest, country in Western Africa. Medicos en Accion medical surgical volunteers have been working there since 2010, when a small team performed the first-ever surgical procedures at the long-dormant Serrekunda General Hospital and collaborated with local staff to train OR nurses, ward nurses, cleaning and sterile supply personnel.

Over 9 years and 12 missions, Medicos teams have seen many changes. Serrekunda General Hospital, recently renamed Kanifing General Hospital, now is the second largest hospital in The Gambia and serves a catchment area of more than 600,000 people. It has a busy local surgical program staffed by Gambian and Cuban surgeons, and hosts a number of international surgical teams in addition to Medicos.

Our work at the hospital also has changed. While the team continues to focus on capacity building, the service component has evolved to concentrate on procedures Gambian surgeons presently do not provide, mainly complex thyroid, pediatric and cancer cases.

In recent years there has been an increasing number of referrals for children either born without an anus or with Hirschprung's, a congenital bowel condition. For these

children, surgery truly is life-changing, and one of the rewards team members experience comes from the knowledge that children who pre-surgery lived lives of seclusion are now making friends, playing and going to school.

Also life changing is the treatment and, often, surgical options, that Medicos offers goitre patients. Thyroid disease is common in The Gambia yet historically has been not well understood or managed. In 2015, Medicos collaborated with Gambian colleagues to create a thyroid clinic at Kanifing General Hospital. Currently, the clinic has more than 900 registered patients and with the strong support of the hospital administration is well on its way to becoming a national referral centre.

The 2020 mission is scheduled for April 7-25, and the team welcomes new members. We're looking for experienced healthcare professionals who are adaptable, willing to work long hours under occasionally challenging conditions and who enjoy being part of a team. For more information, contact Medicos en Accion President Koos Meijerhof koos.meijerhof@gmail.com

Photo: D.Brauer

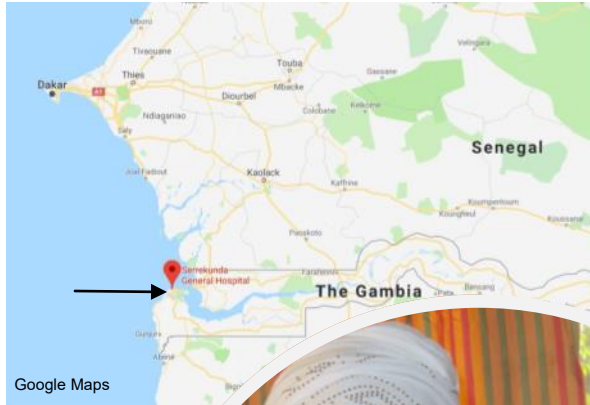


Photo courtesy: Foroyaa



Photo: D.Brauer