

Welcome to the Dominican Republic!

Who is Community Empowerment?

Community Empowerment is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that was formed in 2016 to function as the logistics partner to the Office of Global Health at Rush. Medical teams made up of PA, nursing and medical students, medical trainees, attending physicians, pharmacists, PAs, nurses and dentists from the US work with local leadership in our partner communities to provide essential primary care while developing a sustainable medical infrastructure.

Where will we be traveling?

The Dominican Republic is a Caribbean nation that shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti to the west. It is made up of 29 provinces, and it is run as a representative democracy, with elections every 4 years. The country is the home of Merengue music, is predominantly Christian, the national language is Spanish, and the national pastime is baseball.





Santo Domingo: We will be staying in Santo Domingo, the capitol, approximately 40 minutes from Las Americas Jose Francisco Pena Gomez International Airport. Santo Domingo is located in the Distrito Nacional province, which is on the southern border of the country on the coast of the Caribbean Sea and is home to the Zona Colonial (a historic and beautiful colonial district), and nearly 3 million Dominicans. We will be staying at the CE guest house. It is a comfortable and secure house: shared airconditioned bedrooms with bunk beds; reliable wifi on the first floor; comfortable bathrooms (not always hot water).

Primary teams work in either Villa Verde or Duquesa:

Villa Verde: Located on the northern outskirts of Santo Domingo, it began as a squatter community formed by urban overflow. Villa Verde lacks a sanitation system and consistent electricity. There are a few family-sized vegetable gardens, but no agricultural fields. The houses are primarily constructed out of wood and sheet metal with dirt floors. Government health fairs provide sporadic care and there's a hospital 30 minutes away by public transportation, but the community lacks a centralized health clinic. Therefore, health education, chronic disease management and preventative care are virtually non-existent. CE partnered with Rush Global Health and community leaders to provide primary medical care and begin to build a model of sustainability.

Duquesa: Duquesa is home to mostly undocumented Haitian immigrants and one of the largest garbage dumps in the country. With no pathway to citizenship, the Haitian residents earn a living by picking through the garbage to sell cardboard, metal, glass and plastic to local recycling businesses. The community lacks access to basic medical care except in the case of emergency or labor and delivery, but has strong leadership and communal bonds. We are partnering with a local organization that is entrenched in the community, having already built improved housing for single mothers, a community center, and several wells.

Food: Food is an important part of Dominican culture, and much of what we will eat during our time is traditional Dominican fare. Rice and beans, plantains, fruit, scrambled eggs, chicken and pork are dietary staples. We will provide three meals a day but many team members have found it helpful to bring granola bars or fiber supplements. There is a modern grocery store two blocks from the guest house. Snacks and alcohol can be purchased with cash or credit cards throughout the week. We are able to accommodate vegetarian diets. And please make us aware of any food allergies or other dietary restrictions.



Water: As in most developing countries, the tap water is not potable. Please refrain from using it to drink or brush your teeth. We will provide bottled water. Do not flush toilet paper down the toilet, remember to place toilet paper in trash.

Communication: Cell phone service will be available in Santo Domingo. If you plan to use your cell phone service while abroad, contact your cellular carrier about the global service plans offered. It is useful to download WhatsApp, an app that allows users to text via the internet even when they don't have cell service. 911 is still the first contact in case of emergency, and 1411 is directory services. There is reliable Wifi at the Guesthouse.

Money: The official currency of the Dominican Republic is the Dominican Peso, denoted as RD\$. If you would like to have cash on hand, contact your local bank prior to travel to order \$50-100 in pesos. However, there are not many opportunities to make purchases outside of the grocery store and team dinner out at a local restaurant—both places that will take credit cards. Alert your credit card company that you will be using it in the DR if required.

Photo Ethics: Travel in other countries provides for many opportunities to take photos, but when taking photos of individuals in communities, we need to be mindful of our intentions and usage of photos. **Any images that have faces of individuals that you intend to use require spoken/written approval.** Please be thoughtful about why and how you choose to share these photos. View a video tutorial on items to consider when taking photos abroad: <https://www.radiaid.com/social-media-guide>

Contact Information: Community Empowerment & Rush Global Health Contacts

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Packing List

- **Please pack all personal belongings in one carry-on bag as you will be responsible (carrying & cost) for 1-2 checked bags of medication and supplies.**

Personal Items:

Passport
(2) copies of passport & airline tickets
Toiletries: soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush & paste, feminine products, sunscreen
Insect repellent with 30% DEET per CDC recommendations
Personal meds: NSAIDS, Benadryl, allergy meds, antacids/antidiarrheals
 o Zofran (for nausea); Malaria prophylaxis
Earplugs (shared rooms)
CE Reusable water bottle

Clothing:

Scrubs for clinic (one set per day)—scrub bottoms & t-shirt is also okay
Seasonal clothing; sweat wicking material is great, as it is very hot/humid
One outfit for a night out
Socks & underwear
Comfortable, close-toed shoes for walking (tennis shoes or work boots)
Bathing Suit and flip flops for possible beach day
Sweatshirt or jacket for nights

Medical Supplies:

Stethoscope
Penlight
Copy of medical license or hospital ID
Oto/ophthalmoscope (if you have them)

Miscellaneous:

Spending money or credit card for souvenirs (if desired- there are ATMs in Santo Domingo with good exchange rates)
Snacks/granola or meal bars and fiber supplements
Travel games, books, headphones for downtime after clinic

What **NOT** to Bring:

Bottled water
Expensive jewelry or other personal valuables
Bed linens, towel, or pillow

Travel Smart. Travel Safe

Evacuation Insurance:

Per policy, evacuation insurance is required for all Rush trainees in all programs, and strongly encouraged for everyone else. Depending on your trip, the cost is usually about \$60-\$80.

Malpractice Insurance:

The policy provides medical professional liability coverage for indemnity, defense costs and regulatory defense costs up to \$1M per claim, subject to a \$3M group aggregate limit. The policy provides coverage for such claims in particular countries included in the policy that arise out of the Global Health Initiative's (GHI) operations in that country. In order for the coverage to apply, each provider must be included by name in the policy (to be added before departing for a trip), and the provider must be engaged in the scope of their duties with GHI. All volunteers of the GHI are considered providers and will be covered by this policy. The policy has a per claim retention (or deductible) of \$50,000.

Malaria, Cholera, Dengue, Zika: What You Need To Know

First, understand and minimize your risk: ensure that all of your routine vaccines are up to date- these include the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine (Tdap), varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot- and wear insect repellent with at least 30% DEET per CDC recommendations. The CDC does recommend that medical personnel travelling to the Dominican Republic be vaccinated for Hepatitis A and Typhoid as well as take malaria prophylaxis; that said, many experienced trip leaders opt not to take prophylaxis because risk in the areas we work in is very low.

Travel Advisory

We recognize that travel to the Dominican Republic poses certain risks and that the U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory recommendations change fairly often. We take maximum precautions and do everything we can to ensure your safety, however you do travel at your own risk. We are in constant communication with our partners in the DR, and if we feel that the current climate poses grave danger to our team members, we will cancel a trip. You can stay up to date on the U.S. Department of State's warnings here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/dominican-republic-travel-advisory.html>



Information & Resources

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMra1508815#t=article>

<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/>

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/dominican-republic>

Money Matters

Your Amenities Budget includes:

- Lodging (2-8 persons per room)
- Transportation to/from the DR airport
- Daily transportation to the work site
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Purified water
- Tips/gratuities

Your Administrative Budget includes:

- Orientation materials
- Organization, planning, and visits to clinic sites, hospitals, lodging
- Planning & evaluation with full time coordinator for pre and post trip, telephone, fax, internet
- Interpretation

Your Budget DOES NOT include:

- Telephone calls or phone cards.
- Any R&R activity or dinner out
- Any alcoholic drinks
- Food outside meal times
- Any other transportation service



Deposit and/or Logistics Fee Payment

Please complete payment at least 2 weeks prior to departure date.

Include your NAME and TRIP on your payment.

Venmo, Quick Pay or Zelle transfer to Babs Waldman:

Quick Pay or Zelle: info@community-empowerment.org or (224-999-3235)

Venmo: [@C_empowerment](#)

OR

Send a Check or Money Order:



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