

# Dental Community Fellowship



*“Providing opportunities for international service as well as personal growth”*



Team Member Handbook



Dental Community Fellowship  
P.O. Box 13407  
Charleston, SC 29422

[www.dentalcommunityfellowship.com](http://www.dentalcommunityfellowship.com)

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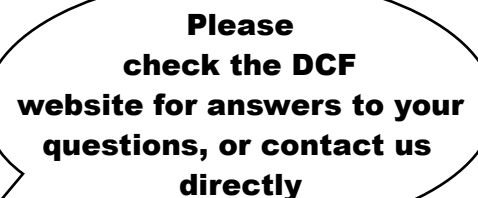
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**Please  
check the DCF  
website for answers to your  
questions, or contact us  
directly**

# Welcome!

The entire *Dental Community Fellowship* organization (DCF) is excited that you are considering a short-term mission trip. We are prayerfully making plans for upcoming travels and trust that our Lord is pleased by these efforts.

In the Bible, the apostle Paul tells us that "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35). This truth is never more evident than when we offer our time, money, and talent to serve people who have limited access to dental care or, who lack the financial resources to pay for services. Helping those in need not only brings tremendous personal satisfaction, but it also fulfills the admonition of Jesus to serve in His name.

*"... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

*Matthew 5:16*

*"... whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."*

*Matthew 25:40*

You and your teammates are in our prayers. We also ask you to pray for the leadership of **Dental Community Fellowship**, and for the people we serve. DCF's desire is to be in God's will and to do our best to facilitate a wonderful short-term mission trip. We look forward to the Christian fellowship that accompanies work in the field and for the opportunity for you to share in DCF's ministries.

Serving Christ and His children,

*'Dr. Bill'*

William C. Sasser, DMD

DCF Founder



"Dr. Bill" and "Dr. Don"  
Honduras

# Who Are We?

Dental Community Fellowship (**DCF**) is a nonprofit organization that was chartered in 2002 at the Medical University of South Carolina as a local chapter of the Christian Medical and Dental Association (CMDA). CMDA's expressed goal is to impact healthcare by following Biblical principles. DCF exists to provide dental students with opportunities for international service as well as personal spiritual growth. We also encourage non-dental friends to join us. (see "Why Go ..." on next page)

By using portable equipment, **DCF** teams are able to deliver needed dental care to under-served people around the world. **DCF** activities in the United States also provide a platform for Christian development for pre-doctoral dental students.

In recent years dental students, dentists, and other volunteer participants have served in *Honduras, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Uganda, and Burundi (Africa)*. *DCF has also facilitated trips to Ukraine, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Rwanda, Liberia, Indonesia, and South Africa, East Timor, Djibouti, India, Kenya, and China.*

Typically, short-term dental mission trips last 1 week, but others can extend up to 4 weeks or longer. Through our visits, we hope to serve a community's dental needs, and to impact the culture by our Christian witness.

Each year, many people choose to experience short-term, cross-cultural mission experiences through organizations like Dental Community Fellowship. **DCF** began hosting dental teams in 2003 with one team of 10 people. The popularity of this life-changing venture has increased over the years, and DCF now organizes or participates in international service most months.



MUSC dental students serving  
in Quito Ecuador

# Why Go on a Mission Trip?

*To enhance personal spiritual growth*

*To cultivate a servant's heart*

*To increase mission awareness and involvement*

*To broaden worldview*

*To worship God with other cultures*

*To encourage others*

*To share Christ's love abroad*

*To bond with team members and nationals*

*To exercise faith*

*To obey "The Great Commission"*

*To be open to the possibility of full-time service*

## ***Participants have opportunities to:***

- ▶ Provide direct dental patient care (depending on the experience or dental school training level of the operator); care may include preventive, restorative, surgical procedures, as well as chair-side assisting
- ▶ Disinfect/sterilize dental instruments \*
- ▶ Provide oral hygiene instruction to children in school settings \*
- ▶ Lead/participate in recreational activities for children\*
- ▶ Interact with children who may visit the clinic as patients or with parents\*
- ▶ Pray with patients\*
- ▶ Evaluate patients for reading glasses (training on site)\*
- ▶ Interact with other team members in small group settings, skits, worship services, daily devotionals, etc.\*
- ▶ Rest, journal, read\*
- ▶ Use musical talents during worship activities \*
- ▶ Shop for native cultural crafts and artwork\*
- ▶ Pitch in where needed\*

By providing a well-rounded mission experience, DCF hopes that participants will return home with a better understanding of mission operations, different cultures, God's love for the world, dentistry, and themselves.

*\* tasks that can be performed by dental and non-dental team members*

## *Talk to those who have been.*

If you have an interest in a mission experience, **DCF** first encourages you to prayerfully seek God. Then, perhaps, talk with past trip participants. Chances are, their testimonies will touch a place deep in your own heart and stir a desire to reach out in a Christ-like fashion to aid those less fortunate. The surprise for many mission participants, though, is that very often they (“the servants”) are blessed far more than those being served.

*DCF welcomes you into a ministry partnership with us and prays that you, too, will experience God’s blessings!*

## **You *MUST* have the following documents** as proof of U.S. citizenship:

1. **Passport** (must be valid for at least 6 months *after* you enter the country where we will be providing mission aid)
2. **PHOTO I.D.**, (e.g. driver’s license)

## **Luggage Requirements**

Airlines are currently streamlining luggage allowance for passengers in an effort to cut costs. We encourage team members to pack lightly. There are 3 reasons for this:

Current rules allow each international passenger to check 2 bags, up to a weight of 50 lbs each, without charge. (Please refer to the webpage of your air carrier for up-to-date information). In addition, a roll-on suitcase or backpack is allowed. Place any prescription medication and a change of clothes in the carry-on in case your **checked** bags are delayed.

Often, team participants will be required to check one bag of dental items in addition to their personal effects. **DCF** luggage tags will be provided to assist in bag recognition.



# Your Financial Contribution Covers

The fee for a **DCF** mission trip usually covers all fixed expenses such as airfare (if you wish to have **DCF** make your flight reservation), airport taxes, travel insurance, most meals (excluding those in airports), accommodations, ground transportation, translators, dental supplies/equipment, and a ministry donation to our international partners.

## *Non-Covered Expenses:*

- Passport and immunizations
- Flight interruption costs such as hotels, meals, tips, etc. that are unexpected and not part of the original cost projection
- Cancellation penalty imposed by airlines if you cancel your trip after ticketing
- Spending money for souvenirs and food while in transit

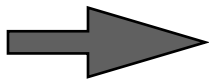
## Communication

Efforts will be made to provide notification to family and friends of our safe arrival, however, frequent communication with home may be difficult. An emergency contact telephone number will be broadcast to all team participants prior to departure. Disconnecting from the distractions back home generally provides a richer setting for us to examine faith issues and to reflect on God's intended purpose for our lives.

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# What to Bring (Personal Items)

- A Copy of your Health History form ... include blood type
- A Copy of your Passport photo page (*store in separate location from the original*) and 2 extra passport-size photos
- Bible/devotional and other reading materials
- Camera, extra batteries
- Clothing; (modest apparel for women and men); see next section, “Climate and Dress”
- Comfortable shoes (athletic shoes are fine), shower shoes
- Plastic water bottle (e.g., sport’s bottle)
- Flashlight (small, with extra batteries)
- Insect repellent (aerosol containers not allowed on airlines)
- Medications (pack in your carry-on bag!)
- Pens, pad, journal
- Phone numbers (emergency #s and Email addresses for parents, guardians, etc.)
- Snacks
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Swimsuit (depending upon trip location)
- Toiletries (toothbrush, paste, floss, shampoo, deodorant, etc.)

## Climate and Dress

Most team members working in or around the clinic area prefer to wear scrubs. Since there are usually 4 ½ clinic work days on a 1 week trip, you may want to pack 2 scrub bottoms and 4 tops. Non-dental team members may also wear scrubs or casual clothes. Remember that you will be an ambassador of **DCF** and your country. Avoid expensive jewelry or clothing as we do not wish to draw undue attention to ourselves. We are going to serve, not to be envied.

**Temperatures** vary widely depending upon trip locale. Check online for daily averages and plan accordingly. For instance, in Ecuador, nighttime temperatures can be cool, so “layering” is appropriate.

**Ladies:** Please wear conservative clothing to work, to worship services, and whenever leaving our place of lodging. Plan to bring a dress or skirt for wear when visiting churches. Shorts can be controversial in some foreign cultures. Knee-length apparel is acceptable in the evenings. Jeans are allowed.

**Men:** Pack one set of ‘nice casual’ clothing in case we attend a local church. Typically, a sport coat or tie is not required. (In Africa, however, a dress shirt and tie are customary). Comfortable/causal to meetings. Jeans are allowed.

# Typical Daily Routine

## *The first day:*

For most participants, the first full day at a mission location or dormitory will be designated for orientation. This will include worship (Sunday) and a time to get to know other team members. Small groups are established so participants can interact with one another on a deeper level. It is always fun to see how a group of people from diverse backgrounds come together as a team before the end of the week.

Unless excused, we ask that ALL team participants attend each organized activity (including meals and worship), as this is when information about upcoming schedules and changes is disseminated. It also fosters team unity.

A small contingent of team leaders and a few helpers will likely travel to the work site for clinic “set-up” on the day after arrival.

## *Devotions:*

Throughout the week, team members may be asked to present a brief devotional message at mealtime or other meetings. This can be a special experience for those willing to share as well as for those receiving the message.

## *Typical Day:*

Breakfast - time of fellowship while eating, followed by a short devotional, brief singing, and announcements for the day;

Lunch - usually eaten in the clinic area;

Supper - after clinic has ended, the room cleaned, and team has returned to area lodging;

(Every effort will be made to provide food which is nutritious and safe. Be careful about eating salads or unpeeled fruit. Only bottled water should be consumed.)

Evening Gathering - experiences/highlights of the day shared; teaching, praise and worship; a time of debriefing, sharing, and possible problem solving; (breaking into small groups typically follows);



# Health Information

Dental Community Fellowship (DCF) can provide general information relative to health issues, however, you should consult your personal or travel medicine physician for specific advice tailored to your individual situation. Refer to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website for detailed information for traveling abroad, and specifically to your chosen mission locale. [www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/)

## ***Frequently Recommended Vaccinations/Precautions:***

Hepatitis A Vaccine

Hepatitis B Vaccine (for healthcare workers)

Tetanus (up to date)

Yellow fever (Africa)

Prescription for malaria prevention (depending upon the country to be visited)

Typhoid

Over-the-Counter medicines (e.g. Pepto-Bismol, Imodium, and activated charcoal)

## **Malaria**

Since mosquitos carry the parasite responsible for transmitting malaria, we highly recommend that our team members apply insect repellent to both skin and clothing in order to lower the risk. The most effective repellents are those containing DEET.

Note: Mosquitos are not a problem in Quito, Ecuador because of the elevation (9,000 feet). On many trips (e.g. Haiti, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Africa), mosquitos are an issue.

## **Hepatitis A**

The hepatitis A virus is transmitted via a fecal-oral route, which might occur in areas of poor hygiene, or close contact with infected individuals.

*Vaccine for Hep A:* Requires 1 injection at least 1 month prior to travel and a booster 1 year later. This vaccine is permanent. The vaccine is suggested for frequent international travelers and healthcare workers.

## **Hepatitis B**

Hepatitis B virus is spread through contact with the blood and body fluids of an infected person.

*Vaccine for Hep B:* The hepatitis B vaccine is the most effective way to prevent infection with the hepatitis B virus (HBV). The vaccine is up to 95% effective against HBV infection if you receive all the shots in the vaccination series (three shots given at different times). The vaccine provides protection against HBV infection for at least 15 years.

(A combination vaccine (**Twinrix**) for Hep A and Hep B also is also available. The **Twinrix** dual vaccine combines protection against both hepatitis A and B. It is taken intramuscularly in the deltoid muscle on a schedule of 0, 1, and 6 months. See your physician regarding the appropriate choice for your individual needs.)

### **Travelers Diarrhea (TD)**

TD is usually a self-limiting illness lasting several days. The most common cause of TD is a bacterial infection with enterotoxigenic E. coli. Other bacteria such as salmonella, shigellae, and campylobacter are responsible in some cases.

*Prevention:* In general, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) does not recommend taking antibiotics to prevent TD, but many travelers take Pepto-Bismol as a precautionary measure.

*Treatment:* Ciprofloxacin (Cipro) 500 mg twice daily for 3 days.

Pepto-Bismol 2 tablets taken every 30 minutes for 8 doses. (Do not take Pepto-Bismol if you are allergic to aspirin, if on anticoagulants, or have kidney problems)

Activated charcoal pills may be obtained from health food stores. Take at the onset of diarrhea and continue as needed.

Diet should be reduced to clear liquids, soups, and toast. Maintain fluid intake.

### **Dengue Fever (DF)**

DF is a virus transmitted by the Aedes mosquito. This mosquito carrier is a “daytime” biter ... only occasionally does it bite at nighttime. There is NO vaccine or prophylactic medication available. Therefore, prevention by wearing protective clothing and applying insect repellent containing DEET is a must in tropical countries where mosquitos are prevalent.

### **Tetanus and Diphtheria**

Persons should receive a primary series of immunizations against tetanus and diphtheria (if not previously done ... usually in childhood) and a tetanus-diphtheria toxoid booster injection every 10 years.

### **Typhoid**

A live oral vaccine is as effective and better tolerated than the available injectable vaccine. The dose is one enteric-coated capsule every other day for a total of 4 capsules, beginning at least 2 weeks before departure. **DCF** travelers are at a very low risk for exposure to typhoid.



## Other General Health Considerations:

**Needle sticks:** If you should you receive an accidental needle stick or other clinical injury while treating a patient, report it **immediately** to one of the team leaders. The available scientific literature supports the contention that the chances of contracting HIV from a single percutaneous exposure (needle stick) are extremely rare. As a precaution, though, rapid H.I.V. tests and starter doses of an anti-retroviral medication are carried on each trip.

**Hand washing/Disinfecting Gels:** Frequent handwashing or the use of hand gel disinfectant is a good preventive measure for avoiding G.I. trouble or traveler's diarrhea ... especially after interaction with children and locals outside of our group. Always clean hands before eating.

**Drinking Water:** Be sure to drink plenty of bottled water in order to stay hydrated., especially in hot climates or high elevations. Do NOT, however, drink the local water unless your team leaders assure you that it is safe.

**First-Aid:** DCF does carry basic first-aid supplies for minor injuries, medications for routine travelers diarrhea, and I.V. fluids for dehydration . Even a minor cut, minor abrasion, or insect bite should be cleaned, dressed, and covered. **Please notify a team leader if you feel you need attention**, or if you have questions about yourself or a fellow teammate.

**Showering:** We recommend that you consider wearing a pair of shower shoes or flip flops when bathing. Remember to avoid swallowing the water or getting it in your eyes or nose.

**Toilets:** In most countries we visit, you DO NOT flush toilet paper down the commode because of the potential for blockage. Place soiled paper in waste baskets.

**Brushing teeth:** Only use bottled water. **DO NOT** rinse your toothbrush under the faucet.

**Sunscreen:** Pack it and use it. No sense in ruining your trip because of a bad burn.



# Insurance

Most U.S. healthcare insurance plans through an employer DO NOT cover health care or emergencies medical assistance outside the United States. DCF will purchase emergency “*evacuation*” insurance for most trips.

# Personal Safety

In all the years DCF has been in existence we have never had any serious issues with personal safety. But, we remain vigilant and cautious because we believe it is wiser to “prevent” danger than “react” to it. The following advice is applicable to anyone traveling internationally nowadays, not just to those on a mission trip with DCF:

***Valuables:*** It is wise to leave your precious valuables at home. Keep up with the items you do choose to bring. Cell phones, jewelry, I-Pods, cameras, and the like are easy targets for theft.

***Carry a minimal amount of cash:*** It is wise to use a neck or undergarment travel pouch for cash and passports.

***Sharing your addresses, phone numbers, email:*** One of the joys of a mission trip is meeting and interacting with foreign nationals. Be very cautious, however, with sharing your personal information. Otherwise, you may be solicited for money or favors once you return home.



# **DCF Mission Policies and Covenant** (please download from DCF website; read sign, and return with application)

## ***Not Permitted***

The following are NOT PERMITTED AT ANY TIME during the trip, or traveling to or from with our group:

- ❖ The consumption of alcoholic beverages
- ❖ Arguing or conflicts - If a conflict should arise between team members or others assisting our group, it should be resolved privately and in a mature fashion. If necessary, please solicit the help of mission team leaders.
- ❖ Cell phones/electronic devices – You can use them during travel to and from the mission country destination, but don't "tune out." Take the opportunity to share your thoughts and experiences with that person sitting next to you on the bus or plane.
- ❖ Loud, obnoxious, lewd jokes, and unwholesome conversation is a poor witness.
- ❖ Be considerate of those on your team and other hotel guests that have retired early.
- ❖ Derogatory conversation about the local people, working conditions, or sleeping environments. Even constructive criticism, should be reserved for discussion with team leaders in a private setting.
- ❖ Bikini swimsuits
- ❖ Males in female rooms after bedtime, or females in male rooms after bedtime.
- ❖ Pairing off of couples that are dating. Please, no handholding or any other public display of romantic attachment.
- ❖ Smoking or smokeless tobacco is discouraged.
- ❖ T-shirts that display violence or sexual innuendos, pictures, or slogans that would negatively impact our Christian witness
- ❖ Discussing political issues, doctrinal positions, or any other controversial topics with team members or with the local nationals

## ***Personal Witness and Conduct/Impact on Host Culture***

All conduct by DCF team members during a mission trip must be such that Christ is honored and glorified, especially as it relates to the interaction with the people we are serving. We must be enthusiastic, positive, and supportive of all team members and others whose help we have enlisted during our mission stay. Even body language conveys a powerful message. When attending a religious service, please follow the conduct of the locals.

## ***Respect for others***

- ▶ At mealtime, remember to receive with gratitude what is served. Do not ask for “something else.” Accommodating special dietary requests cannot always be met.
- ▶ Please eat what you take. Wasting food is a poor witness to people who have little.
- ▶ ***Be on time!*** It is rude to keep others waiting.
- ▶ ***Conserve water*** Because hot water (when available) runs out quickly, be considerate to your teammates by taking brief showers
- ▶ ***Encourage others*** A kind word, gentle touch on the shoulder, or a short prayer can lift another’s spirit.
- ▶ ***Respect the local people/staff.*** Refrain from asking personal questions about their job, salary, marital status, etc.
- ▶ ***Do not give gifts to the local staff.*** Be careful of giving individual gifts to locals. Even small items should be given by the team leader or local missionary contact. Never make promises of future help or give money to locals. Even a well-intentioned gift can lead to harm.

*\* Dental Community Fellowship is a Christian-based organization open to all who desire to come alongside our mission efforts. No matter your background of faith, it is DCF’s expectation that every team member be an active participant in all aspects of our mission - including meals, team meetings, and worship gatherings.*





# Things You Need to Send to DCF (Check-List)

- Health History
- Release Form
- Personal Information
- Completed Application
- Covenant form signed, dated, witnessed
- Copy of your passport
- Fees



DCF clinic in Quito Ecuador where 1,500 patients were seen in 4 1/2 days

*Do not fill out this copy of the covenant. Please go to DCF's website to download and print it.*

*Return completed Covenant form with your application*

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Team Member Covenant** (read, date, witness, and sign)

I, \_\_\_\_\_

(please print your name)

have read the entire **DCF** Team Member Handbook and agree to abide by all of the rules and recommendations stated within. I understand that **DCF's** (Dental Community Fellowship) underpinnings and mission outreach are Christian-based, and I will attempt to attend all team meetings prior to and during the mission experience.

Signed:

Date:

Witness:

Date:

(keep a copy for your records)

