

Faculty / Physician Volunteers

The Botswana-UPenn Partnership has a Memorandum of Agreement with the Ministry of Health to provide collaborative clinical care, education, and research on HIV/AIDS and other medical conditions in Botswana. Under this agreement, BUP clinicians and faculty volunteers may obtain permits to work in the clinical setting in Botswana and provide patient care under our group indemnification waiver.

The Partnership may accept certified medically trained professionals as volunteers to work with our in country faculty or our healthcare partners to further our clinical mission in Botswana if it is deemed that the services offered will be welcomed and appropriate. In particular, obstetricians/gynecologists, infectious diseases specialists (particularly HIV/TB), emergency medicine physicians, pediatricians and family practitioners may be positioned to provide significant service. The experience of specialists can also be useful, provided they can comfortably work without the equipment and diagnostic tools that are commonly available in the United States.

Non medical volunteers generally cannot participate in the work of the Partnership since our mission is primarily a clinical one. All volunteers must be approved by the BUP Director, Harvey Friedman, MD, in consultation with key staff and contacts in country, and the UB School of Medicine.

Program Costs

- Understanding that the Botswana-UPenn Partnership is a non-profit that must obtain outside funding to support all of our programmatic areas, volunteers are asked to support their own travel to Botswana. In some cases, we may be able to offer housing at no cost or at a subsidized rate (~\$30 per night) to volunteers.
- Volunteers who can give both time and financial support towards the work of the Partnership, are encouraged to do so.

Volunteer Requirements

- Physician and faculty volunteers must be fully credentialed and have at least two years of experience in the area in which they intend to practice and will need to successfully register with the Botswana Health Professions Council (BHPC) upon arrival.
- Volunteers must be available to spend at least two months working in the clinical setting in Botswana. (It takes time to become registered to practice medicine in Botswana, and time to become familiar with the local systems. Rotations of less than six weeks simply are not useful.)
- Volunteers must agree to work full work weeks Monday through Friday while in country. (Vacations during the volunteer rotation are not permitted on non-holidays. Volunteers who wish to take a vacation while in country are encouraged to do so either before or after the volunteer rotation.)

- Volunteers must sign a BUP Risk and Release and complete an Emergency Contact Form and adhere to the Codes of Conduct of both the University of Pennsylvania and the Botswana-UPenn Partnership.
- There is no age limit for volunteers but anyone working in the clinical setting in Botswana must be aware of the risks (See the BUP Risk Reduction Policy). In particular, anyone with an underlying immune deficiency or chronic disease that would predispose the individual to a higher risk of TB disease should not work in the clinical setting in Botswana. All clinical rotators are required to obtain the necessary immunizations prior to travel and take a baseline and follow-up PPD test.

What Volunteers can Expect

- Volunteers will be met at the airport by a Partnership staff person and oriented upon arrival with guidance provided to register with the BHPC.
- Volunteers are housed in communal, comfortable, and well-maintained flats within walking distance of Princess Marina Hospital and the BUP Office in Gaborone. Maid service is provided for routine cleaning and laundry. Volunteers must procure and prepare all their own meals.
- Partnership staff are available to provide guidance and assistance where possible and reasonable but volunteers are expected, for the most part, to be self-sufficient and take care of their own needs.

What we Expect of Volunteers

- Successful volunteers will be courteous, dependable, patient and flexible.
- Volunteers should have some experience of living or working in different cultural contexts and must be willing to adjust to and respect a different healthcare system which may at times appear inefficient and understand that diagnoses often cannot be confirmed and patients may, and often do, die of things that they would not die of in the United States. The work can be both physically and emotionally exhausting.
- Volunteers must accept that they are guests and are expected to adhere to all requirements of the Botswana-UPenn Partnership and our partners at the University of Botswana, and the Ministry of Health.
- Volunteers will spend their time working on the clinical and educational goals of the BUP and our partners and should not plan to work on personal research while volunteering.
- Volunteer faculty are expected to give lectures at the University of Botswana and/or within the clinical setting when possible and should make efforts to contribute to the continued education of trainees in Botswana.
- Volunteers are expected to do background reading on the history and culture of Botswana, review basic Setswana prior to their visit, and where possible, attend a pre-departure orientation. Material to review prior to traveling includes the "BUP Handbook" and "Culture Smart: Botswana."
- Volunteers need to understand that good intentions can be harmful and be conscientious of the ideas behind "medical tourism" and "philanthropic colonialism." A good introductory global health course is available online at the Unite for Sight Global Health University (<http://www.uniteforsight.org/global-health-university/>).

How to Apply

Interested volunteers should send the following information to

hcalvert@mail.med.upenn.edu:

- CV
- A basic statement outlining your area of expertise and the setting in which you think you are most able to contribute and what you would like to contribute to our work
- A general idea of the timeframe for when you would like to work in Botswana (e.g., months and year)

Once we receive your information, we will review it for how it meshes with our mission and needs, and we will contact the UB School of Medicine (or other key contacts) to obtain their input. We will contact volunteer prospects who we may be able to place by phone or return email.