



# Pre-Travel Training for Global Health Programs

Pre-travel training is an important component of international and global health service learning programs. If the training is well organized, it can maximize global health electives and rotations for trainees and the communities they serve. It can ensure that trainees are safe and socially accountable during their time abroad.

The list of suggested pre-travel training topics has been put together by the AAFP Subcommittee on Global Family Medicine (SGFM) to offer some guidance to medical schools and residency programs planning and implementing global health service learning programs. The topics may interest physicians, residents, and students planning their own global health experience.

## TOPICS FOR PRE-TRAVEL TRAINING

- **Travel**
  - ~ To/from and within country
  - ~ U.S. Government, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and World Health Organization's travel warnings and alerts
  - ~ Medical and travel insurance
  - ~ Emergency evacuation insurance
- **Cultural Issues**
  - ~ Religion
  - ~ Media exposure
  - ~ Appropriate interaction with hosts, especially in their home and related to food and alcohol
  - ~ Appropriate dress
  - ~ Cultural faux pas vary by country
- **Logistics**
  - ~ Lodging: homes, hotels, guest houses
  - ~ In-country transportation: car, bus, train
  - ~ Communication: in-country and back to the U.S.
- **Safety Issues**
  - ~ Personal safety and health
    - ✓ Personal vaccines, medicine, and prophylaxis
    - ✓ Pre-departure vaccines
    - ✓ Malaria prophylaxis
    - ✓ Pros and cons of diarrhea prophylaxis
    - ✓ Personal medications to take
    - ✓ HIV precautions
    - ✓ Violence and theft prevention
    - ✓ Accident avoidance, especially motor vehicle
    - ✓ Access to adequate health care
  - ~ Food and water safety, including ice in the water
- **SGFM Guiding Principles for Global Health Service Learning Programs**
  - ~ [aafp.org/gh-principles](http://aafp.org/gh-principles)
- **Professional and Personal Behavior**
  - ~ Alcohol and drugs
  - ~ Appropriate dress
  - ~ Personal behavior reflects on the whole group and the U.S.
  - ~ Listening is more important than speaking
- **Analysis of one's role in the project, rotation, or elective**
  - ~ Personal and project primary goals
  - ~ What you have to offer and learn
- **Gender Issues**
  - ~ Appropriate ways to greet and address the opposite sex
- **Privacy/Confidentiality**
  - ~ Sensitive photos
  - ~ Awareness of privacy/confidentiality issues during the pre-departure period, onsite, and on return
- **Language Proficiency**
  - ~ Learning how to work with interpreters
- **Limits of Skill and Knowledge**
  - ~ Respect of and access to in-country and group expertise
- **Political Risk**
  - ~ Access to the U.S. Embassy and Consulate
  - ~ Awareness of the national and local political climate and "hot" issues
  - ~ Avoidance of crowds and demonstrations
  - ~ Avoidance of photos of sensitive subjects, such as the military