

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q & A)

### IMMUNIZATIONS

**Are there any immunization requirements?**

*Yes. Required by BMM*

Hepatitis A and B

Typhoid

If you haven't had one for a while, a Current Tetanus booster.

*Not required by BMM.*

Malaria

Yellow Fever

These are optional, at your discretion since these are not prevalent in our area.

### SPECIFIC BMM/La Vida REQUIREMENTS:

**Are there any specific material requirements.**

**Yes.** Each member of the surgical team, participating in the surgeries is to bring a box of surgical gloves in his/her size and surgical masks.

### TRAVEL to Ecuador.

**Does Ecuador require a visa?**

A visa is not required for visits lasting less than 3 months.

**What is the destination airport? How do I get there?**

Your destination **airport** is Manta, Ecuador. It's the only one in our area.

Check with COPA airlines who provide flights from Panama City to Manta on certain days.

Other companies have flights through Quito, some schedules require overnight stay in Quito.

**NOT RECOMMENDED:** Guayaquil Airport which is over 3 hrs. away.

**How do I get from the airport to the guest house or the clinic on arrival?**

Arrangements are made for you to be picked up at the airport. The driver will have a sign to identify himself to you. He is contracted by La Vida and is a safe and conscientious driver.

***Do not hire or ride in any other transport.***

**Do I need to notify you of my travel arrangements?**

**Yes!** As soon as you make your reservations, **immediately forward the e-mail** from the airline which show all the details of your airline reservation.

This is an Ecuador requirement.

**Who may I contact in Ecuador in an emergency or for assistance? All 4 contacts have WhatsApp**

Dayana Cobeña Adm. Assist BMM. Whatsapp +593 98-953-8780

Mariela Varen ( Exec Director La Vida) Ecuador +593 998362615

Mafe Santos ( Administrator) +593 988116177

Flor Fellers (in the US) +1 251-680-3003

### PERSONAL ITEMS

**What personal items should I bring?**

Medications

**Flashlight. Power can go out. Bring a flashlight since you'll want to save your phone battery.**

Charging cords for your electronics

Toiletries, Sunscreen, Mosquito repellent.

Reusable water bottle.

Travel coffee mug if you want for the morning trip. (leave at 6 a.m. arrive 6:45)

### **Are there any suggestions regarding cell phone use?**

Check with your carrier prior to traveling. May want travel plan or other options.

Turn your phone to Airplane mode and use wi-fi calling.

**\*\*We ask all our volunteers to obtain the app: WhatsApp as soon as they register for the trip since that is how we will communicate with you during the trip.**

## **INSURANCE**

### **Do I need any type of insurance?**

If it is a personal concern, you may want to consider the following:

\*Check with your health insurance company for any coverage they provide while abroad.

\*Travel insurance for loss of baggage, trip cancellations, emergency evacuation, etc.

Which you can purchase when you make your airline reservation or other sources.

### **Do I need professional liability insurance?**

Coverage for the week is provided for surgeons, anesthesiologists and CRNA's.

### **What should I expect when arriving in Ecuador?**

You'll claim your luggage, then go through immigration with your passport ready.

Then you'll go through customs. Have the Invitation Letter in your carry-on. Only show if agent wants to open a suitcase and questions you about supplies you may be taking.

### **What is the climate in Ecuador?**

Ecuador weather varies with its regions, from the Andes to the tropical Galapagos. The clinic is in the city of Portoviejo, the guesthouse is in Crucita on the Pacific where the climate is arid and because of ocean breeze it's very comfortable most of the year. Two seasons, Rainy and Dry.

You can look up specific facts depending on the time of year you will be there.

## **LODGING**

### **Where exactly is the guest house located?**

In a small town on the coast called Crucita in the province of Manabi.

Address is: Dr. Paul Fellers, Urbanizacion Las Dunas, Malecon, Crucita, Manabi. It's In a gated community in front of the beach, with swimming pool, tennis and volleyball courts.

### **What are the accommodations at the guesthouse?**

There are 4 guest rooms,

3 rooms are **shared by 2 persons**. They have 1 queen bed & one single bed & a full bathroom.

1 room has a Queen bed. This room is for one individual or a married couple.

For larger teams, the living room is designed to be closed off, providing 3 single beds. There is a full bathroom there as well.

### **Are there any guesthouse rules? Yes.** For your consideration:

1. As soon as you enter your room, **be sure to read the posted information.**  
Each room is slightly different and thus has specific information you need to know.
2. Please, "Keep all 4 on the floor." Please don't rock back on chairs at the house or the clinic.
3. Refrain from leaning on or sitting on armchairs of outdoor furniture. They'll break.
4. Take care of furniture. Please don't hang bags, backpacks etc. on chairs.

### **Is there hot water available?**

**Yes.** We have flow-through propane gas heaters. No hot water tank. Hot water is created as needed.

The following paragraphs on next page are important to understand.

When you want hot water, turn the left knob **ALL THE WAY ON**. Then WAIT.

“Why wait ? “ Is asked frequently so we’re providing the reason below:

It is the **water pressure** that turns the heater on. If the knob is not all the way open there will not be enough pressure created for the heater to light. Result: no hot H2O

- a. Why “the wait”. Water also has to travel far since the heaters are outside.
- b. Note that the water will eventually get very hot. Don’t turn it back, instead add cold water. If you turn the hot water knob back TOO MUCH, the pressure will lessen and the hot water will stop flowing. If you get a sudden burst of cold water, you’ll know.

**Any special instructions about toilets?**

Only thing you may add after use, is toilet tissue. All else, in the wastebasket please.

**Is wi-fi available? Yes**, there is wi-fi at the guest house as well as at the clinic.

While the service is good, please understand that there can be outages.

**Is there air conditioning at the guest house? Yes**, each bedroom has own A/C.

**What is the transportation method between guest house and the clinic?**

We charter a bus for daily transfers to and from the guesthouse.

**Reminder:** the team stays together at all times. Any deviation from this must be pre-approved by La Vida leadership staff.

**FOOD/MEALS/WATER**

**What is the recommendation for drinking water?**

Do not drink tap water. All drinking water should be from purified water. Large dispensers are available at the clinic as well as at the house.

We discourage use of disposable plastic bottles. Consider bringing a water mug.

**Are meals served at the guest house?**

**Yes. Breakfast** is self-served continental style: cereal, milk, almond milk, bread, butter, jam. (rise early and cook your own eggs.....)

**Lunch:** provided at La Vida Clinic. Prepared safely by staff cook.

**Dinner:** provided at the guest house. Prepared safely by housekeeper/cook and Self-served when team decides.

Note: **On Sunday, meals are on your own. Both lunch and dinner.**

There are many small restaurants around and 2 Italian restaurants.

**NOTE:** It is important that you be sincere about your food tastes when completing your application. When creating menus, we consider that information.

**SAFETY Are there any safety concerns I should know about?**

We highly recommend that you register in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) through the State Department at <https://mytravel.state.gov/s/step>

When you travel internationally it is a means to receive notifications should an unexpected event happen, whether weather or human related, and help may be needed. This is mentioned in the application that you will complete but done independently. When traveling away from home or when you are in any large city, you should always be aware of your surroundings. In our case, the La Vida staff organizes activities such as transportation with utmost care regarding your security. We ask you to agree to follow the guidelines of staying with the team. During the week you will be participating in surgeries and not deviating from the daily plan. On the weekend you can enjoy the beach, the restaurants or the fellowship with each other on the rooftop at the guesthouse. Any additional travel you may want to do in Ecuador or surrounding countries should be scheduled, if at all possible, after your trip and not prior.

*For selfish reasons, we want you to arrive rested, healthy, and ready for the week in order to help all those who eagerly await the arrival of our teams.*

## **CLINIC INFORMATION:**

### **Is there a Dress Code at the LA VIDA CLINIC & SURGERY CENTER?**

Yes. The guidelines for daily dress are to wear comfortable street clothes when leaving the guesthouse for the clinic. **Please do not wear shorts to the clinic.**

When going into the Surgery Suite area, you must first change into fresh scrubs. Shoe covers are required at La Vida. **If you leave surgical area you are required to either wear a gown over your scrubs before exiting or change into clean ones on return. Shoe covers are required as well.**

### **What should we expect the first day? The Evaluation of Patients day.**

The chartered bus will pick up the group at the house. It will take between 40 and 45 minutes to arrive at La Vida.

The staff will be eager to greet you. After unloading any bags with supplies, Yuly will gather you for a group photo outside, at the front of the building.

**This is a tradition and the first thing we do prior to starting the day.**

Patients who will receive surgeries during the week will all be at the clinic. They will have been previously examined, treated, and cleared for surgery.

1. Each patient will first be evaluated by the surgeon, who will determine the procedure he will perform and enter information on a form .  
There will be a translator, the chart and x-ray studies will be available.
2. After visiting the surgeon, the patient will be brought to the anesthesia providers. During the examination there will be a translator familiar with the paperwork and process.  
**(SECTION WITH MORE DETAILS FOR ANESTHESIA PROVIDERS FOLLOWS AT THE END.)**

At mid-day lunch will be served, in a staggered fashion. Our staff cook follows safe cooking practices and the food is good, and is safe.

At the end of the day, we will go back to the guesthouse in the bus.

Tradition is for the team to go out to eat together on this night, usually for Pizza at Rico and Norma's Restaurante "Genoa"

However, each team may decide where they want to go.

***We are certain you will feel fulfilled and will look forward to being involved during the week helping those patients who have come to us! Keep in mind that if not for this team, many would never receive the surgical corrections they need.***

WISDOM FOR EVERYONE PARTICIPATING: Keep in mind the latest beatitude.....

**"Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be bent out of shape"**

**THIS SECTION IS DEDICATED TO ANESTHESIA PROVIDERS: You will have a translator at all times. Patient Evaluation forms are in English. The content is very similar to that in the US**

**PLEASE NOTE: The patients will not be given a day or date for their surgery at this time.**

We wait until all patients are evaluated to create the surgical schedule for the week.

Patients will be notified later, by the staff, of their surgery day. **Also**, our patients will be asked to arrive at the clinic at the same time early in the morning. This provides flexibility to change start time or schedule that morning, due to various reasons which may come up.

**On this Evaluation Day**, since the patients will first be evaluated by the surgeons, you'll have some time to visit the O.Rs. After changing into fresh scrubs, you'll go to the O.R.s to familiarize yourselves with equipment and **with our Specific Institutional Procedures. This is the time to ask questions about our procedures, equipment, etc. and ensure you understand everything with the goal of being ready to start on Monday.**

**Supply Needs**, La Vida sends a periodic list of supply needs. We will be sending you this list with the hope that you may be able to obtain and bring some of them. Depending on where you work, and your colleagues, you may be able to obtain them for your trip. Some providers begin saving partial vials of medicines on the list. As long as you know they are safe to use, please bring them! Also, any other supplies that you use will be the very supplies we need. Depending on your institution, you may be allowed to save unused supplies for missions.

**Clinic Guidelines**, We ask everyone to follow the guidelines so that LA VIDA procedures can flow smoothly. While the purposes of delivery of care to patients are the same, the means of achieving them will be different than you are used to, but not difficult.

**This is a special one-on-one time between you and the staff. Questions are essential, welcomed and encouraged** so that you understand the procedures we ask you to follow.

**Important to note:** During the week, if there is anything not working, anything you need or don't understand, **please avoid consulting each other** instead ask Crucita, Nidia or your staff circulator. They will have the answer.

*If you think we don't have a particular item , we probably actually do.*

Open communication during the 5 days you are with us is paramount in great patient care.

After 14 years, we have developed what works well for us. As you work with us, we invite suggestions for our consideration, if possible, in writing or text to Flor Fellers at 251-680-3003 or e-mail [volcord.bmm@gmail.com](mailto:volcord.bmm@gmail.com)

These will be considered at our post-brigade evaluation and is how we learn and grow. We look forward to knowing you and appreciate your service with us, as together:

***We seek to serve with love and compassion those whom God places in our reach and each other to provide the best care possible, enhancing the lives of the people we serve.***