

Resources for finding a global health elective

Many US pediatric residency programs participate in ongoing partnerships with institutions in resource-limited settings, and thus are able to offer global health (GH) electives at these sites to their residents. Other programs allow their residents to travel abroad for electives, but leave the work of finding and setting up the elective to the resident. If your program doesn't offer global health electives, the resources presented here can help you get started in finding an appropriate elective.

Remember to start early! While most global health faculty strongly recommend that you complete at least 18 months of residency before going on an elective abroad, the planning for the elective must start much earlier. Once you determine this is something you wish to pursue (usually in the first year of residency), seek out a faculty mentor who will work with you as you plan out the elective.

When choosing a site (for a 4 week or longer elective), ask the following questions:

- Who is the clinical preceptor on-site, and will he or she be there for the duration of the elective? (if not, who will the other preceptors be?)
- What are the expectations of the visiting resident at the site? (patient load, caring for children and/or adults, hours of work, call, etc)
- What are the languages spoken at the site, and what access is there to translators?
- What cultural, economic or political barriers might influence the experience for a visiting resident?
- What is the clinical environment for the site? (inpatient/outpatient/community-based; high or low acuity; etc)
- What are the clinical resources for the site? (lab, radiology, pharmacy, medical library, intensive care unit, etc)
- What are the common diagnoses and medical problems for children at the site?
- What are the logistics for the site? (dress code, accommodations, internet, communications, transportation, food, water, safety, health risks, etc)
- What have been the experiences of prior visiting residents at the site? (review evaluations if available)

I. Explore options available at your residency program, hospital, medical school or university.

- If your residency program does not offer a global health elective, investigate what global health projects or partnerships exist in other hospital departments. Surgeons, emergency medicine physicians, ophthalmologists, anesthesiologists, infectious disease physicians and many others often participate in global health work or volunteer projects overseas.
- Investigate what programs are available to local medical students; such programs can often offer clinical, public health, community-based or research opportunities for residents as well.
- Other departments at local universities may have global programs for their undergraduate and graduate students. If there is no multidisciplinary global health center or division, consider contacting schools of nursing, pharmacy, engineering, agriculture, veterinary medicine, etc. Efforts to improve global health do (and must) involve other disciplines beyond medicine.

II. Partner with other area training programs that have established global health electives.

- Find out what other residents are doing in global health: emergency medicine, family practice, internal medicine, surgery, ob-gyn and other pediatric programs may have partner sites for electives abroad, or at least may have had some residents arrange overseas electives. Contact their chief residents or program directors to learn more.

III. Network through professional organizations in which students, residents, fellows and faculty are involved in global health work to identify elective opportunities.

Listed below are many such organizations:

- **CUGH**, the Consortium of Universities for Global Health, <http://www.cugh.org/> Website has many free online resources for teaching global health, including a list of global health training programs worldwide.
- **AMSA**, American Medical Student Association, www.amsa.org Click on the “Take Action” tab, then “Committees and Interest Groups,” then “Global Health Action Committee.” For information on possible electives, see “Global Education & International Opportunities” then “International Health Opportunities” for a searchable database (by region, country, type of work). Also, scroll down to “University International Programs & Interest Groups” for many links to international electives.
- **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Section on International Child Health (SOICH)** <https://www2.aap.org/sections/ich/index.htm> Access many resources, including travel grants for international electives.
- **AAP Section on Emergency Medicine (SOEM)** <http://www2.aap.org/sections/pem/default.cfm> Click on “PEM Network.org/PEM Fellows.com” then International PEM (iPEM) on the left. Access requires user registration, but it’s free and open. Many resources including list of overseas opportunities.
- Two other groups important to resident education, though residents are not generally members, are the global health groups within the **Academic Pediatric Association (APA)** and the **Association of Pediatric Program Directors (APPD)**. Members in each of these groups are pediatricians with expertise in the practice and teaching of global health, and make excellent mentors for residents with GH interests. Find out who in your area belongs and reach out to them.
 - APA Special Interest Group on International Health <http://www.ambpeds.org>
 - APPD has a **Global Health Leaders** group with representation from most pediatric programs. This group is developing GH content for residents, and advocates for and helps prepare residents embarking on overseas electives. <https://www.appd.org>
- The American Pediatric Surgical Association has a **Global Paediatric Surgery Network (GPSN)** <http://globalpaediatricsurgery.org>
- The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) Section on International Emergency Medicine <http://www.acep.org/InternationalSection>

IV. Investigate established electives offered by other training institutions

The programs listed below are just some examples. Of course you will need to seek approval from and coordinate with your own program advisor. (Note: inclusion in this list does not constitute endorsement by the authors).

- Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine, SHARE Kenya program: <http://www.oucom.ohiou.edu/international/index.htm>
- Baylor Medical College, Electives Abroad/Elective Locations: <http://www.bcm.edu/medschool/internationaltrack/index.cfm?pmid=11376>
- Medical Student Elective at Gudalur Adivasi Hospital (rural India) <http://www.medicalstudentelectives.in>
- University of Maryland Belize Institute for Tropical and Wilderness Medicine http://medschool.umaryland.edu/osr/training_belize.asp

GHLO, Global Health Learning Opportunities (pronounced “glow”) is an international elective application service offered through the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). The service is available to those at participating institutions. For further information: <https://www.aamc.org/services/ghlo/>

V. Investigate established electives offered by organizations (generally nongovernmental organizations, NGOs)

Frequently, electives offered by NGOs are associated with elective fees, which support the NGO and training costs. The programs listed below are just some examples. You will need to seek approval from and coordinate with your own program advisor. (Note: inclusion in this list does not constitute endorsement by the authors).

- CFHI, Child Family Health International (Bolivia, Mexico, India, Ecuador, S. Africa) www.cfhi.org

- Roatán Volunteer Pediatric Clinic, Roatán Public Hospital, Honduras <http://www.roatanclinic.org> Takes senior residents (second years if near end of year) for 4 week+ rotations.
- INMED, Institute for International Medicine <http://inmed.us> For international electives, click on Service-Learning on the left, then Electives.
- International Health Central American Institute <http://www.ihcai.org> Click on “International Medical Students Clinical Rotation...” then scroll down to Community Based Clinical Rotation for Residents, P 08.
- International Service Learning (ISL), Kenya and Uganda programs www.islonline.org
- OmniMed Program (Uganda) www.omnimed.org Website also offers a database of global health service opportunities.
- Association of Reproductive Health Professionals; see their Go Tool: <http://www.arhp.org/publications-and-resources/student-and-educator-resources/global-opportunities-tool>
- Student National Medical Association: <http://www.snma.org> This group focuses on the needs and interests of medical students of color. See opportunities under International Affairs <http://www.snma.org/index.php?plD=24> or from the home page, click on Programs, then National Committees, then International Affairs.
- Christian Medical and Dental Associations <http://www.cmda.org/wcm> Scroll to the bottom, and check links under Serve, then Center for Medical Missions. See pdf of *Student and Resident Mission Opportunities*. Scholarships available also.
- Ghana Health and Education Initiative: <http://www.ghei.org> Program began at the University of Maryland, and is geared for undergraduate students, but opportunities for residents can be arranged.
- Health Horizons International <http://hhidr.org> Click on Get Involved, then Internships for information about their 7-week long programs in the Dominican Republic for health professionals.

VI. Contact NGOs and medical volunteer organizations that permit residents to participate in their programs.

The following websites offer lists of organizations that, in addition to their overseas work, also may accept residents for short-term elective periods.

- American Medical Association’s International Health Database (very comprehensive): <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/our-people/member-groups-sections/medical-student-section/opportunities/international-health-opportunities.page> or go to the homepage: <http://www.ama-assn.org> and type in International Health Database in their Search box.
- Operation Giving Back; the American College of Surgeons <http://www.operationgivingback.facs.org> Click on Resource Center, then Resources for Surgeons in Training. Click on Residents. Numerous resources listed, with a long list of agencies that provide volunteer opportunities for residents (not just surgical residents).
- International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA). Has an extensive database (searchable by country) that can be accessed from the AMSA website: <http://www.amsa.org/AMSA/Homepage/EducationCareerDevelopment/Clinical.aspx>
- International Health Electives for Medical Students: on AMSA website <http://www.amsa.org/global/ih/ihopps.cfm> (great searchable database)
- University of Massachusetts International Healthcare Opportunities Clearinghouse <http://library.umassmed.edu/ihoc>
- Massachusetts Medical Society’s Global Medicine Network lists many links www.globalmedicine.org Click on Resources on the left, then Resident Section
- Family Practice Residencies with International Rotations: <http://www.aafp.org/cgi-bin/ihcop.pl#search> See also Global Health Service and Educational Opportunities on left sidebar.
- Mission Finder.org <http://www.missionfinder.org/medstudentsb.htm> Extensive directories of Christian oriented mission opportunities, including scholarships.
- University of Washington’s International Health Group <http://depts.washington.edu/ihg/beyond.htm> Lists opportunities by global region.

VII. Consider participating in a short-term medical mission appropriate for residents.

The type of work carried out varies, and groups should be carefully examined to ensure that proper supervision will be available, and that the work provides an appropriate educational experience.

- Operation Smile: Plastic and reconstructive surgery teams that also offer educational experiences for pediatric residents (and 4th year medical students). www.operationsmile.org Apply for their Regan Scholarship http://www.operationsmile.org/get_involved/medical-volunteers/medical-students.html
- MEDICO, Medical, Eye, and Dental International Care Organization, conducts short-term trips to Honduras www.medico.org

VIII. Contact religious/missionary groups that you would be comfortable working with.

These are just a few of many:

- American Jewish World Service www.ajws.org May need a 2-month commitment, assignments are individualized for the volunteer.
- Christian Medical and Dental Association <http://www.cmda.org/wcm> See Serve at the bottom of the home page, then Center for Medical Missions. Scholarships for residents are available. See the pdf booklet on Student and Resident Mission Opportunities.
- Catholic Medical Mission Board www.cmmb.org click on What We Do, then Medical Volunteer Program. Look at specific opportunities under Current Volunteer Opportunities to find rotations one month in duration (many require a 1-year commitment).
- World Medical Mission/Samaritan's Purse www.samaritanspurse.org Click on What We Do, then World Medical Mission, then Serve With World Medical Mission. See their Resident Assistance Fund.

IX. Consider a foreign language study/clinical care combined elective.

- Interhealth South America, International Health and Medical Spanish (4th year students and residents; and summer program for 1st year medical students) www.interhealthsouthamerica.net Elective takes place in Ecuador, different levels for beginner/intermediate speakers.
- Mayan Medical Aid. Medical and Dental Spanish, combined with clinical care, in Guatemala. http://www.mayanmedicalaid.org/global_health_ed.htm See Global Health Education Projects.
- SALUD Medical Spanish and Portuguese Programs <http://www.amerispan.com/salud> Programs also offered in India, Kenya and Brazil.
- University of Nebraska Medical Center's "[Medical Spanish/Global Health](http://www.unmc.edu/isp)" program www.unmc.edu/isp See heading on right side of webpage. Course is in Leon, Nicaragua; clinical component involves primary and community health care.

X. If research is your passion, potential projects and mentors might be found among global health research organizations.

Help address the **10/90 Gap**: Work on matters relevant to resource-limited settings—only an estimated 10% of the total global funding for health research (\$160+ billion annually) is used for research into the major health problems affecting 90% of the world's population.

- Ohio University Tropical Disease Institute, Tropical Disease Research Program; and International Research Training Workshop (one month in summer). <http://www.oucom.ohiou.edu/tdi/InternationalResearch/InternationalResearch.htm>
- See the Global Forum for Health Research <http://www.globalforumhealth.org> Click on About, then Our Team for a network of researchers.
- Participate in the Programme for Global Paediatric Research, started by Dr. Alvin Zipursky, Toronto. www.globalpaediatricresearch.org Meets at the PAS meetings each spring.
- Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research <http://www.ccghr.ca/>

XI. Consider a "local global" health elective.

You may be able to work in your own community at a clinic or program that serves the needs of immigrant or refugee populations. Or consider a border health elective, or working with the Indian Health Service (see below).

- **STEER Program**, South Texas Environmental Education and Research, allows you to have an international experience without leaving the US. One-month community-based educational experience in the study of border health. Students, residents and practicing physicians interested in learning how environment, public health and medicine shape health for those on the US-Mexico border. Two sites, with over 25 contributing expert faculty. <http://steer.uthscsa.edu/index.aspx>
- **Indian Health Service (IHS)** <http://www.ihs.gov/physicians/index.cfm?module=opportunities#state>
Offers medical student and resident elective opportunities on or near Alaskan Native or Indian American reservations.
- Participate in the **AMSA Global Health Scholars Program**
During residency in the US, work with an assigned program mentor to broaden your views and experiences in global health education. Program is 6 months and consists of conference calls, attending a national conference and advocacy work.
<http://www.amsa.org/AMSA/Homepage/EducationCareerDevelopment/AMSAAcademy/GHSP.aspx>