

Mercy Medical Teams

Who We Are — Mercy Medical Teams

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's Mercy Medical Team (MMT) program works to enhance international programs and Lutheran church partnerships. Team members volunteer their time and expertise to work in conjunction with LCMS partner churches and missionaries overseas to help serve their local communities.

Each team consists of approximately 7-15 volunteers and may include medical professionals, LCMS pastors and non-medical volunteers. Groups carry some or all the medications that are used during their time of service and work in established medical facilities, IDP settlements or remote areas where facilities are not available.



In conjunction with our church partners, we identify levels of need and gaps in current or anticipated availability of medical services within the targeted community. In cooperation with our partners, we then identify possible sites for MMT clinics and medical care sites. For this reason, our locations are generally determined in response to an expressed desire from our partners to help build their capacity as medical care providers and executors of Christian mercy.

With the help of our generous donors, our MMT program is able to purchase and bring along large amounts of medical supplies and our own full-service pharmacy of medications. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod makes every effort to work alongside international customs officials in anticipation of acceptance of our humanitarian donation of medications in country.

To date, we have donated and administered more than \$1,000,000 (retail value) of prescriptions and over-the-counter medications to our overseas partners through reduced prices and charitable donations.

We deploy two types of medical teams

Primary Care Teams: Primary care teams regularly serve the needs of church partners in areas where there are underserved areas in meeting health needs. These teams usually provide mobile, primary-care clinics for 2-6 days per location in a region.

Since 2006, our Mercy Medical Team (MMT) primary care program has served the international health needs of more than 20,000 clients in far away countries such as Kenya, Haiti, Guatemala, Indonesia and Madagascar. During primary care clinics, volunteer medical professionals, LCMS pastors and



lay workers offer high-quality health care to some of the world's most vulnerable people suffering with HIV or AIDS, malnutrition, parasites, dysentery, serious wounds, infections, malaria and other tropical diseases, and illnesses associated with unhealthy drinking water and sanitation.

Emergency Teams: Emergency teams are deployed following various stages of a disaster. Team medical personnel are chosen from specialties based upon the particular needs following the incident. When an Emergency Mercy Medical Team is deployed following sudden interruption in infrastructure due to disaster or tragedy, the team makes every effort to arrive as a self-contained unit. This frees local partners from having to deal with additional worries of caring for guests. The team will arrange for food, water and individual sleeping arrangements.



For example, our Emergency Mercy Medical Team program responded immediately to the earthquake crisis in Haiti in 2010 by mobilizing, outfitting and accompanying four back-to-back teams of 38 highly-skilled physicians, surgeons, trauma nurses and other medical professionals from all over the United States onto the field in Haiti to provide field clinics for free medical care to those affected by the tragedy. More than 2,200 patients were seen on the field.

A comprehensive approach

While the locations, methodology and approach to the MMT program is ultimately determined by the beneficiaries, we also take a comprehensive, customer-care approach towards the volunteers experience.

Each team is accompanied by an experienced team leader. Additionally, we take care of every detail of the trip from providing pre-trip preparation materials to arranging for lodging and ground transport.



Team leaders hold orientation and debriefing segments during each of our trips, with an emphasis on the physical and emotional challenges faced by volunteers.

When possible, each of our teams is accompanied by an ordained LCMS pastor. We do this not only because of the potential value of having a pastor in terms of evangelism, but also for the spiritual care of our volunteers who are often facing the challenges presented by culture shock and the impressions of poverty, calamity and disease.

Because of our two-pronged approach to achieving a sustainable impact on the targeted community along with a high degree of professionalism and customer care for our volunteers, we send a limited number of teams each year. We want to help improve services and skill sets within our partner medical facilities and their staff; and we have found that this does not come from an assembly-line approach to treating as many people as possible. Mere volume has never been our goal or focus. Rather, we attempt achieve positive impact through a well thought out and deliberate series of interactions combined with an emphasis on high-quality, professional teams.

Visit our website to view current opportunities or register with us at www.lcms.org/mercyteams.

“Let your mercy come to me, that I may live” (Psalm 119:77 ESV).

888-THE-LCMS | infocenter@lcms.org | www.lcms.org/mercyteams

