

# Pre-Departure Guide

**A Resource for WVU HSC Faculty, Residents,  
Students, and Staff going overseas**

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# Introduction

This handbook has been created to be a resource for you as you prepare for your overseas experience. Be sure to take it with you as it contains useful information which you will need while out of the US. We have selected practical information on required pre-departure WVU procedures, as well as suggested pre-departure and host country considerations. Add this handbook to copies of essential information you need to take with you.

This handbook is subject to change. As the purpose of this is to inform you of practical tips and to relieve some of your and your family's concerns, we are constantly revising the information and looking to you for assistance with information from your experiences abroad.

The faculty and staff of the Global Health Program (GHP) would like to wish you an exciting, rewarding, educational, and cultural international experience!



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# BEFORE YOU LEAVE

## 1. Required Documents

### A. Passport

If you do not already have a passport, apply for one immediately. Applications for a U.S. Passport are available at the Morgantown Post Office, located at 75 High Street, (304) 291-1035.

You can also download an application, or a renewal application, via the world wide web at: <http://travel.state.gov>. For more information contact the Morgantown Post Office or the WVU Global Health Program office at the Health Sciences Center.

If you already have a passport, **please check that it has not expired and that it will be valid for at least six months beyond your planned return to the United States.** If you applied for a passport when you were 18 years old or older, it should be good for 10 years.

**Keep a Xerox copy of the first two pages of your passport in a separate location from the passport itself. You should also leave a copy with your parent or guardian, and the Global Health Program office at the HSC. This will help you if your passport is lost or stolen.**

### Directions on How to Apply for a U.S. Passport

- *Read the instructions located on the back of the Passport Application* on how to apply for a U.S. passport.
- Fill out the white areas on the front of the Passport Application. Answer all questions, but **DO NOT SIGN. Do not fold, staple, or erase on the form.**
- **Passport-size photos** can be purchased at Biomedical Communications/Photography on the ground floor of the Health Sciences Center and also at the UPS Store on Patteson Drive.
- Locate acceptable ***Proofs of Identity***. The Passport Application requires an original or certified birth certificate (**NO COPIES!**) and a valid state or federal photo I.D., such as your driver's license. Consult the instructions on the back of the passport application for special instructions regarding Naturalized citizens, U.S. citizens who were born abroad, and citizens who have no birth record.
- Take the completed Passport Application, two passport-size photos, 2 proofs of identity to your local **main Post Office** to complete the application. The Morgantown Post Office is located at 75 High Street. **HOURS: 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. YOU MUST DO THIS IN PERSON.** Please contact the Post Office for cost. It should take about 4 weeks to receive your passport.
- **Other Useful Information:**The Passport Agency normally takes from ***six to eight weeks*** to process your passport. If you are under a time constraint, there is an available ***Expedited Service*** that can process your passport in three working days upon receipt at the Passport Agency. Contact the passport Agency for cost of expedited service. You may also be asked to provide additional documentation proving your identity. In case this occurs, you should ***locate*** other acceptable documents in order to save time. Suggested documents include high school and college transcripts, tax records, marriage certificates, and enlistment papers for the U.S. military service.

## **B. Visa**

A visa, usually a stamp on a page of your passport, is the official permission to visit or study in a country granted by that government. There are different types of visas; the most common are study, work, and tourist. Be sure that you understand the type of visa you need and are issued. Generally, if you are going abroad on a U.S. college or university summer program that is not affiliated with a specific university or college abroad, you are not eligible for a student visa because even though the purpose of your visit is “for study”, you will not be enrolled in a college or university of that country. In these cases, the correct visa type is normally a tourist visa. Check with the Office of International Students & Scholars to make absolutely sure what is the correct visa procedure. Fees for visas vary from country to country. The Global Health Program coordinator will give you specific information relevant to your elective site and host institution. You can also check out the Travel Documents website at <http://www.traveldocs.com>.

## **C. Customs**

You will be given customs information on the country you are visiting. More information should be available from your travel agent.

## **2. Optional Documents**

The following documents are optional and are described in detail in the “Travel” section.

- International Driving Permit
- International Youth Hostel Card

## **3. Things to Think About**

### **Power of Attorney**

If your signature will be needed for any official or legal documents, such as financial aid monies, you should make arrangements for “power of attorney” to be held by an appropriate person to act on your behalf. You can do this by writing out in detail the **specific** duties that the person you choose will execute. Take this to a notary and have it notarized.

## **4. Health Issues**

When studying abroad, your health and nutrition is of primary concern. Health and disease conditions change from place to place. Natives of other countries have natural immunities against the bacteria and viral infections common in their areas. Often travelers carry with them diseases to which local inhabitants are not immune. Likewise these visitors are not immune to the diseases already present in their new host country. Bacteria foreign to the visitor can have a detrimental effect on his or her health abroad.

### **Things to Take with You**

- Health Insurance Identification
- Health records (list of illnesses, surgical history, drug allergies, blood type, special medications, record of any allergies)
- International certificates (e.g. vaccination record). These are available through the University Health Service (student health) – International Travel Clinic
- Copies of your prescriptions

- Personal travel health kit (calamine lotion, antiseptic, insect repellent, sun screen, painkillers, diarrhea and constipation medication, bandages, motion sickness preventive, prescription medicines)

Everyone's body reacts differently to new foods and eating habits, as well as to new environments. Some people gain weight, others lose it. Some get a little sick from trying new foods, others can eat anything without getting sick. It may take a few weeks for your body to adjust to the new ingredients you will be eating. But don't let your fears get in the way of tasting new foods; that is half the fun of learning a new culture. Pepto Bismol or other medications usually do the trick when you are sick. You may want to take your favorite over-the-counter medicines (i.e. aspirin, upset stomach tablets, antihistamines, etc.). If you are ill the first few days, it may be too stressful to try to find the items you need while attempting to negotiate your way in a new country. **Make sure all medication is in its original sealed package when traveling overseas.**

Women, check with returnees concerning the availability and quality of feminine hygiene products in the country to which you will be traveling. You may find them difficult to purchase and/or extremely expensive in particular regions of the world.

#### **A. Immunizations**

Some vaccinations may be required to enter certain countries. Other vaccinations may not be required, but suggested. U.S. State Department issues Consular Information Sheets that include information on entry requirements and medical facilities. Check out their website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention also provides detailed information on the vaccination requirements and suggestions for foreign countries as well as a list of vaccinations recommended by the CDC for Americans traveling overseas. A foreign country's regulations are usually more concerned with the health of their own citizenry than with your health C they primarily want to insure that you are not a carrier of a disease, not whether or not you will contract a disease while you are there. See Appendix B for more information.

- **Where can I get them?**

In the local Morgantown area, travel vaccinations, informational seminars, and informational packets are available at the WVU Health Service International Travel Clinic located at the Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center; P.O. Box 9247; Morgantown, WV 26506. They can be reached at (304) 293-2311. If you do not live in the Morgantown area, you should contact your local Health Department, local Hospitals, and/or your family physician and inquire about availability, locations, costs, and how to make an appointment.

- **When should I get them?**

You should make an appointment for international travel vaccinations at least two months prior to your departure date. Vaccinations may need 4-6 weeks to take effect.

- **What should I bring with me to my appointment?**

You should bring information on travel dates, itinerary, and type of accommodations. You should also bring your past immunization record including information on tetanus shots, past travel immunizations, and a yellow international certificate of vaccination if you have one. The doctors will also need a list of any allergies you might have and medications you are currently taking. In addition, you should bring any recommendations

for travel vaccinations from your travel agent or other sources.

## **B. Medication**

If you are currently taking medication, be sure to take enough for the duration of your stay. You may not be able to find the same medication overseas. **For customs purposes, it is advisable to leave all prescriptions in their original labeled containers.** Also, keep an original copy of the doctor's prescription with your passport. These materials should assist your processing through customs and insure that you won't break any laws of the country you are entering. If the medication you are taking contains narcotic substances, you may want to consult the consulate of the country where you will be studying to see if it's legal.

- It is advisable that you take your own syringes if you require regular injections.
- If you have a special medical condition (including allergies to medications), it is a good idea to buy a medical alert bracelet.
- If you use any kind of specific, over-the-counter medications, take enough to last your entire trip.

## **C. Staying Healthy**

To help insure that you have a healthy study abroad experience, please follow the following guidelines suggested by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

- **Do:**

Wash hands frequently with soap and water.

**Drink only bottled water or carbonated drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes.** Cholera, Hepatitis A, and Typhoid Fever are some diseases carried by food and water.

Eat only thoroughly cooked foods or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself.

**Avoid fruits and vegetables that do not have peels.**

If you are visiting an area where there is risk for malaria, take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed.

Protect yourself from insects by remaining in well-screened areas, using repellents, and by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants from dusk to dawn. Many diseases, such as malaria, are transmitted by mosquito bites.

To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry and **do not go barefoot.**

Always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

- **Don't:**

**Don't** eat food purchased from street vendors.

**Don't** drink beverages with ice.

**Don't** eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.

**Don't** share needles with anyone.

**Don't** handle animals, especially monkeys, dogs, and cats. Avoid bites to prevent serious diseases such as rabies and plague.

**Don't** swim or wade in fresh water. Salt water is usually safer.



- **What you should take with you:**

Long-sleeved shirts and long pants to wear while outside whenever possible to prevent illnesses carried by insects, such as malaria.

Insect repellent containing DEET (diethylmethytluamide), in 30% - 35% strength.

Travelers who will not be in air conditioned or well screened housing should purchase permethrin impregnated bed netting.

Over the counter antidiarrheal medicine to treat traveler's diarrhea.

Iodine tablets and water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available.

Sun screen, sunglasses, etc.

Prescription medications: make sure you have enough to last your entire trip as well as a copy of the prescription(s).

## 5. Support Services

### HIV Infection and Sexual Safety

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a severe, often life threatening, illness caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The incubation period for AIDS is variable, ranging from a few months to years. Currently, there is no vaccine to protect against HIV infection, nor is there a cure.

HIV infection and AIDS have been reported worldwide. The number of persons infected with HIV is estimated by WHO to be approaching the range of 47 million worldwide. Because HIV infection and AIDS are globally distributed, the risk to international travelers is determined less by their geographic destination than by their sexual and drug using behaviors. HIV infection is preventable. The HIV virus is fragile, and can only be transferred through blood or other body fluids: sexual intercourse, needle or syringe sharing, medical use of blood or blood components, and perinatally from an infected woman to her baby. **HIV infection is becoming increasingly heterosexual.** HIV is not transmitted through casual contact; air, food, or water products; contact with inanimate objects; or through mosquitoes or other insects.

While studying abroad, and even in the US, we receive mixed messages about sexuality. Be aware of the messages you are receiving and have enough self-respect to take care of yourself.

While studying abroad, you will no doubt be exposed to all kinds of new experiences that you may want to try. Remember that AIDS is everywhere around the world, and only your behavior can prevent you from acquiring the disease. **Specifically, students studying abroad should be aware of condom quality, HIV antibody testing, clean blood supplies, sterile needles, and medical facilities in the target country.**

**Condom Caution:** Condoms, when used consistently and correctly, prevent transmission of HIV. Condoms can be difficult to acquire, particularly in Eastern Europe and in parts of the developing world. In addition, the ones you do find may be of lesser quality that you are accustomed. Take responsibility for yourself. The best prevention is abstinence. However, you may want to bring condoms with you, even if you are not planning on being sexually active while abroad.

**HIV Antibody Testing Requirements:** Some countries screen incoming travelers (especially those on extended visits and students) and prohibit entry of those students with AIDS and those who have tested positive with HIV. Any country may reserve the right to require HIV testing

from any visitor. Make sure you are aware of each country's policy to which you will be traveling. This information is available from the consular officers of individual countries or by calling the US State Department Office of Public Affairs at (202) 647-1488. The website [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) also has information on HIV/AIDS screening.

**Clean blood supplies and sterile needles:** In the USA, Australia, Canada, Japan, and western European countries, the risk of infection with HIV through a blood transfusion is greatly reduced through mandatory testing of all donated blood for the presence of antibodies to HIV. Other countries may not have a formal program for testing blood or biological products for antibodies to HIV. Sterile single-use disposable needles may not be available. **Diabetics and other persons who require routine or frequent injections should carry their own supply of syringes and needles sufficient to last their entire stay.**

If you do need a blood transfusion due to blood loss while abroad, the blood should be tested, if at all possible, for HIV antibodies by appropriately trained laboratory technicians using a reliable test. If this is not possible, you should ask for a **Colloid or Crystalloid Plasma Expander**, which increases blood volume without the use of possibly contaminated blood supplies. If you provide assistance to an injured person while abroad, vigorous handwashings have been shown to be very affective against HIV. Students may also use gloves for protection.

**Additional Resources for Information:** In addition to those already mentioned, the following hotlines are valuable sources of more detailed information:

- US Department of Health and Human Services: 800-342-AIDS
- US State Department AIDS Hotline: 800-367-2437
- Center for Disease Control National AIDS Information Clearinghouse: 404-332-4559, 800-458-5231

The website for the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention also has detailed information for travelers about HIV and AIDS: <http://www.cdc.gov>

## 6. Health Insurance

All WVU faculty, residents, students, and staff at the HSC going overseas on business are required to show proof of international travel insurance in addition to your group or student insurance coverage. In addition to health insurance, you may **elect** to purchase **trip cancellation, baggage loss, and travel accident insurance in the same package.** You will want to carry your insurance policy card and a copy of the insurance coverage with you. The following websites provide useful information about study abroad health insurance:

- International Student Identification Card:  
<http://www.counciltravel.com/idcards/index.htm>
- CMI Insurance Specialists: <http://www.studyabroadinsurance.com>
- CISI Cultural Insurance Services International:  
<http://www.aifs.com/java/US/aifscisi/cisiapg.htm>
- International SOS Assistance: Scholastic Overseas Services:  
[http://www.intsos.com/mem\\_schol.htm](http://www.intsos.com/mem_schol.htm)
- VISIT-ISIS Health Programs: <http://www.visitinsurance.com>
- CSA through National Travel: <http://www.csatravelprotection.com>

## 7. Safety Issues

**Leave a copy of the following information at home** and keep a copy with you in this Handbook. Items include: the first two pages of your passport, traveler checks numbers, credit card numbers, medical prescriptions, medical records, including allergies, immunizations, and medical history (from your physician) and any other essential documents.

**Register with an American Embassy (This is required by the GHP)** when you arrive so they know you are there in case an emergency arises. This is especially important in high-risk areas. **If your passport is lost or stolen**, report the loss immediately to the nearest Foreign Service post and to the local police. If you can provide the consular officer with the information contained in your passport, it will speed the issuance of a new passport (memorize your number). **Keep a Xerox copy of your passport data page in a separate place from where you keep your actual passport.** The GHP will also have a copy of your passport information.

**If you are concerned about safety issues abroad**, or are worried about the status of student travelers in times of national crises, you may phone the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Office of Emergency Citizen Service in Washington D.C. at 202-647-5225 for a recorded message, or 202-647-5226 to talk with a Department official. Do not be alarmed when you hear travel advisories at first. Many of these advisories are nothing more than information the government has received and is obligated to make it publicly known. Listen to and read all travel advisories carefully. Then make the best judgment with a clear head whether or not to be alarmed. Due to the relationship between the United States and some countries, advisories may be misleading. For example, you will always find an advisory for the Middle East; however, you will seldom find an advisory for the United Kingdom, even though there has been continued violence associated with the presence of the IRA for many years. Travel Advisories can be accessed from the world wide web at:

- The U.S. State Department: <http://travel.state.gov>
- Knoll Associates Travel Watch Advisory: <http://knollassociates.com>
- Air Security International: Hot Spots: <http://airsecurity.com>
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade C Canada: [http://www.dfait-maeci.gc/travelreport/menu\\_e.htm](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc/travelreport/menu_e.htm)
- Foreign & Commonwealth Office C London: <http://www.fco.gov.uk>
- Pinkerton Global Intelligence: <http://www.pinkertons.com>

**Give yourself time to adjust to jet lag.** This may affect you anywhere from one to five days after arrival. Eat nutritious foods and exercise moderately to assist with jet lag.

### A. Crime Prevention Hints

- Do not take valuables on your trip which you may have difficulty replacing.
- Take a major credit card or travel checks, **NOT** large amounts of cash.
- Find out which parts of town the locals consider “risky”.
- Stay alert in large crowds, especially in areas frequented by tourists.
- **Carry your money and passport in a neck-purse or hidden pouch.**
- Be alert to the possibility of being under surveillance and report anyone loitering around

your residence, following you, or acting suspicious.

- Dress and behave inconspicuously in public.
- Try not to advertise that you are a foreigner by wearing your college sweatshirt or hanging out in typically American bars and pubs.
- If an action or behavior could be considered dangerous in the United States, like walking alone at night, then it is also dangerous abroad.
- Above all, use common sense at all times. If something does not feel safe, it probably isn't.
- Ladies should wear a cheap ring on the fourth finger of their left hand—**Leave expensive jewelry at home.**

## **B. The American Embassy Overseas**

American embassies overseas will assist you in times of national crisis or threatening circumstances. **Embassies will not assist you if, by virtue of your own actions, you break the laws of the country in which you reside.** If you are arrested and taken to jail for a crime you have knowingly committed, the embassy is not responsible for your release. The US government has no funds for your legal fees or other related expenses. If you experience difficulties with the local authorities, remember that American officials are limited by foreign laws, US regulations, and geography as to what they can do. Should you find yourself in need of legal counsel, contact the nearest consular office and they can provide you with a list of attorneys and other services. Consular offices will do whatever they can to protect your legitimate interests and insure that you are not discriminated against under local law. **But they can not get you out of jail.**

Information concerning international legal assistance can be viewed at <http://travel.state.gov>. If you are arrested, immediately ask to notify the nearest US embassy. You have the right to contact the American Consulate. If you are unable to do this, try to have someone contact the embassy for you. The Consulate should visit you, contact family and friends and assist in the transfer of money, clothing and food.

## **C. Office of Overseas Citizens Service**

Should your family need to contact you while you are traveling (e.g. after the program is over), the GHP would be happy to assist them. Emergency assistance is also available through the Citizen's Emergency Center of the Office of Overseas Citizens Services (OCS) operated by the State Department's Bureau of Consulate Affairs. Call 1-888-407-4747 (from overseas: 202 501-4444). They can, for example, transmit emergency messages from your family, provide protection in the event of an arrest or detention while abroad, transmit emergency funds to destitute nationals when commercial banking facilities are not available, etc. It would be wise for you to provide your family with at least a tentative itinerary so that in an emergency, they can give the State Department some idea where to begin looking for you.

## **D. Drug Arrests**

Drug arrests and convictions among Americans are on the rise. If you are caught with illegal drugs overseas, **you are subject to local, NOT U.S., laws.** If you are arrested, prepare to find the following:

- Few countries provide a jury trial
- Some countries employ the death penalty, with no questions asked
- Most countries do not accept bail
- Pre-trial detention can often last months

- Inhumane conditions may exist in the prisons
- Officials may not speak English

## 8. Money

### A. Banking

The safest way to travel with large amounts of money is via traveler's checks. Keep a list of the serial numbers of your checks (and give a copy to you parents/guardian) and record where and when you spend each one. If you lose them, you will then know which are missing in order to have them replaced easily.

It would be very wise to carry at least one credit card with you in case of an emergency. You may even carry two, i.e. AmEx and Visa, but put them in two different places. That way if you are robbed at any time, you will have a "*Plan B*". You may be able to use your Visa card for cash advances in ATM machines and at banks overseas with no additional cost or use actually your ATM cards at major foreign banks. Call a Visa office and your bank to inquire about these options. American Express also offers many services to travelers including quick and easy replacements of traveler's checks and the cashing of personal checks, if you are a cardholder.

Some large banks and American Express offices provide foreign currency traveler's checks. Mellon Bank, located at 525 William Penn Place, Pittsburgh PA (412) 234-5000, provides this service for British Pounds, Canadian Dollars, Swiss Francs, French Francs, and Japanese Yen. Mutual of Omaha, located in the Pittsburgh Airport provides a similar service. This service can alleviate high conversion fees and waiting in lines.

### B. Wiring Money

Simply put, it's usually very fast and very expensive. You could receive money from home within several hours to several days, but most banks worldwide will charge you to receive the money. In addition, most banks charge to send money. Charges at either end usually run between \$15- \$30, depending on the amount of money to be sent. For information about wiring money through Western Union, call 800-235-6000.

### C. Common Sense = Security

You can never be too careful with your money and belongings. **Use extreme caution at all times.** "When you least expect it - expect it". Don't just set your bags down next to you; make sure they are touching some part of your body. You may want to wrap the strap of your bag around your ankle when seated. It will be your first instinct to trust many people you meet, but using common sense is not distrust – it's smart. Fanny packs can be easily cut off of you on crowded trains and buses. Even in church/religious sites, never let your belongings out of your sight. Be especially careful when taking pictures as your attention is focused on your subject and camera, rather than your belongings. Be sure to wrap the strap of your camera around your wrist when taking pictures, and carry your camera bag and other bags shoulder to hip, across your chest. Possibly, the best way to carry your money and passport is in a belt tied around your waist in the **inside** of your pants, or around your neck, **under** your shirt. Be careful if a stranger offers to take your picture with your expensive camera.

## *Documents:*

Take good care of passports, travel tickets, and any other important documents.

- When traveling, keep your passport with you at all times, preferably in a money pouch that you can wear on your body. You should keep proof of citizenship (a passport copy or a copy of your birth certificate) and proof of identity (a photo ID), as well as a note of your passport and serial number, in a separate location; this will expedite the administrative process in the event that your passport is stolen. At your program site, it is advisable to carry photocopied information with you at all times. When cashing traveler's checks, you will need your passport.

## *Personal:*

- **Don't stand out:** while "safety in numbers" is a good rule to follow, traveling as an identifiable group of US students will attract attention and possibly cause problems. Try to fit in with the surroundings.
- Whenever possible, speak the local language.
- Report suspicious events immediately to your WVU faculty preceptor. Act similarly if anything might indicate threats or an actual terrorist attack on the premises or on student activities.
- **Do not give out your or anyone else's address or phone number to strangers.**

## **9. Travel Issues**

**Driving a vehicle in another country is not recommended.** The number one cause of injury and death to Americans abroad is vehicle accidents -- whether automobile, motorcycle, or bike. Different driving laws and road conditions cause confusion which can lead to accidents. In addition, you should take care to take only well-known public transportation providers, and it is never recommended to hitchhike. Not only should you avoid driving a vehicle, you should also be cautious about safety while riding in a bus, train, or taxi. Don't travel in empty train cars, and try to find a travel partner. Check arrival and departure times before traveling, and reconfirm all trips. Avoid scheduling travel when you will arrive at your destination late at night.

### **Ways to Save Money**

- Share traveling expenses.
- Pack lunches from grocery stores for long trips or for everyday.
- Eat where the locals eat, which is often at home.
- Stay away from "western" hotels and restaurants; they are typically very expensive.
- Ask local people where the cheap places are, and the best ways to travel.
- Do not make phone calls from hotels; calling cards are the least expensive way to make phone calls.
- **Beware** - Postage is very expensive in most countries, including postcards.
- Courier travel is often less expensive than traditional airline companies although travel dates are very restricted. Be sure to check out the agency prior to contracting with them.

### **Travel Advice**

- Trips: Don't plan trips within or near a war zone or in an area where the inhabitants are unsympathetic to a US cause.
- In large cities and other popular tourist destinations, avoid possible target areas, especially

places frequented by Americans (e.g. American banks, American school or churches, US embassies and consulates, American Express, American style eating places).

- Keep all valuables in a discrete place, preferably stowed away in a money belt or a pouch that hangs around your neck and under clothing.
- Try to avoid arriving late at night to cities with which you are not familiar, and take along a reliable guidebook that lists restaurants and hotels/hostels.
- It's preferable to travel with another person. It is not advisable to sleep on a train if you're traveling alone.
- Do not agree to watch the belongings of a person whom you do not know.
- Do not borrow suitcases and ensure that nothing is inserted into yours.
- In all public places, stay alert.
- Remember that hitchhiking is dangerous. **Hitchhiking is not advisable.**

## 10. How to Research Your New Home

Learning about your host country's people, culture, and geography will help you adjust to your new environment and allow you to get the most out of your overseas experience. Knowing the basic factual information about your host country and their present-day problems and current national affairs will aid in intercultural understanding and help you communicate through the barrier of cultural differences.

- How many prominent people in the host culture can you name (i.e., politicians, athletes, religious leaders, artists)?
- Who are the country's national heroes and heroines?
- Can you recognize the national anthem?
- Are other languages spoken besides the dominant language?
- What is the predominant religion? Is it a state religion? Have you read any of its sacred writings?
- What are the most important religious observances and ceremonies? How regularly do people participate in them?
- How do members of the predominant religion feel about other religions?
- What are the most common forms of marriage ceremonies and celebrations?
- What is the attitude toward alcohol consumption?
- What is the attitude toward divorce, extra-marital relations, and polygamy?
- If, as a customer, you were to touch the merchandise, would the storekeeper think you were considerate and within your consumer rights?
- Is the price asked for merchandise fixed or are customers expected to bargain? How is the bargaining conducted?
- How do people organize their daily activities? What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period? What is the customary time for friends to visit?
- What foods are most popular?
- How are the most popular foods prepared?
- What things are taboo in this society?
- What is the usual dress for women and men? Are slacks or shorts worn? If so, on what occasions? Do teenagers wear jeans?
- What are the special privileges of age or gender?
- If you are invited to dinner, should you arrive early, on time, or late? If late, how late?

- On what occasions would you present (or accept) gifts from people in the country?
- Do some flowers have a particular significance?
- How do people greet one another? Do they shake hands, embrace, kiss? How do they depart one another? What does any variation from the usual greeting/goodbye signify?
- What are the important holidays? How are they observed?
- What are the favorite leisure and recreational activities of adults?
- What sports are popular?
- What kinds of television programs are shown? What social purposes do they serve?
- What is the normal work schedule of adults? How does it accommodate environmental or other conditions?
- How will your financial position and living conditions compare with those of the majority of people living in this country?
- What kinds of local transportation are available? Do all classes of people use them?
- Who has the right of way in traffic: vehicles, animals or pedestrians?
- Is military training compulsory?
- What are the editorial opinions toward the USA of the largest circulating newspapers?
- What is the historical relationship between the country and the USA?
- How many people have emigrated from the host country to the USA? Other countries? Are many doing so at the present?
- Are there many Americans living in the country?
- What options do foreigners have in choosing their places to live?
- What kinds of health services are available? Where are they? Does everyone have equal access to health care? Why or why not?
- What are the common home remedies for minor illnesses?
- Where can medicines be purchased? Do you always need a prescription?
- Is education free? Is it required?
- In schools, are children segregated by race, gender, class, or nationality?
- What schools are perceived as being the best: public or private?
- In schools, how important is learning by rote?
- How are students disciplined in school?
- Where are the important universities of the country? Are private or federal universities perceived as being better? Do students in the host country go abroad? If so, where do they choose to study?
- What are the major industries?
- What is the minimum wage? Is there one?
- What group(s) of people are discriminated against? Why?
- How is the USA viewed for its political history and current practice?
- What common images of Americans do the host culture maintain? Will you fit this image or challenge it through intercultural communication?

The GHP office will arrange for meetings with faculty and residents who have been overseas and can answer questions about the country and institution you will be visiting. Here is a list of websites that you may also find very useful:

- The International Education Site: <http://www.intstudy.com>
- The Washington Post: <http://washingtonpost.com>
- Travel Document Systems: <http://www.traveldocs.com>
- U.S. State Department Consular Information Pages: <http://travel.state.gov>



## 11. “What Do I Pack???”

Your new host country friends will probably enjoy seeing where you live - **bring a postcard from home, or a picture of your house.** A small map of the United States will help you explain where West Virginia or your home state is located. A few of your favorite pictures of your girlfriend, boyfriend, family, dog, and friends could also help you with those moments of homesickness. Keep a travel journal or diary even if it is the first time you have ever done this.

### **Here are some more tips:**

- If you have some favorite non perishable snacks, you might take a small supply for a special treat.
- Take personal hygiene items such as soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, shaving cream, mouthwash, etc.
- You might want to buy your film before you leave when there is a sale. Wrap the film in aluminum foil to protect it when going through the metal detector in the airport, or ask for your camera bag/film to be hand-checked.

## 12. Communication With Home

### **Telephone**

Calling home from other countries can be very expensive. Several companies such as AT&T, MCI, and Sprint offer calling cards which can make calling home easier and less expensive. Consult your telephone directory or the World Wide Web for information about these cards.

### **Letters**

When writing letters to home or receiving letters from home, consider that international postage in other countries can be expensive and that it may take ten days to several weeks for your letter to arrive.

### **Electronic Mail**

This is a really inexpensive way to communicate with your friends at WVU or those with access to a computer. Check with your host institution upon arrival. If your host institution does not offer E-mail accounts for students, check with one of the many free Web-based E-mail providers:

- <http://www.hotmail.com>
- <http://www.excite.com>
- <http://www.juno.com>
- <http://www.rocketmail.com>
- <http://www.yahoo.com>

Another option for students is cyber cafes – coffee shops where you can surf the net while you get your daily dose of caffeine. E-mail is usually free and only takes seconds to transmit messages across oceans. To locate cyber cafes, visit <http://cybercaptive.com> or <http://netcafes.com>.

# CROSS - CULTURAL ISSUES

*You must be the change you wish to see in the world. C GHANDI*

## 1. Intercultural Communication

Communication is always a challenge when two cultures meet. Both language and mannerisms contribute to the complexities of intercultural communication. In many instances, language cannot be directly translated (word for word) because connotative *vis-a-vis* denotative meanings usually are too different. Therefore, it is essential to understand much more than just the grammatical structure of a host country's language. Cultural values must also be taken into account. It is helpful to know how a culture communicates within its own society. The following types of communication are not exclusive to one culture or another, nor should they be used as stereotypes. *Upon your arrival in the host country, try to recognize the style of communication and the cultural meaning behind it. This will help you overcome some culture shock.*

### Global Discoveries

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Here are some ways to improve your intercultural communication skills.

**Seek information about the other culture.** Prejudice stems from ignorance.

**Be other-oriented.** You can no longer rely on the assumptions of your own cultural heritage.

This is not to tear down the value of your own culture, it is to make you aware of the richness of other cultures.

**Ask questions!** Be prepared to share information about yourself. Be sensitive in the way you ask (you don't want to be perceived as prying). Open communication helps to reduce uncertainty.

**Develop Flexibility.** Not everything always goes as planned.

**Tolerate Ambiguity.** Communicating with someone from another culture produces uncertainty, which can be uncomfortable. Learn to tolerate the discomfort because communication will become easier with time.

**Avoid Negative Judgments.** Resist thinking that your culture has all the answers. It has its strengths; so do other cultures.

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## 2. Cultural Adjustment

*Life is a progress, and not a station.*

**--RALPH WALDO EMERSON**

### Culture Shock

"Culture shock" is the term used to describe the more pronounced reactions to the psychological disorientation most people experience when they move for an extended period of time into a culture different from their own. Culture shock is not a result from a specific circumstance or event. Rather, it is derived from the experience of encountering ways of doing, organizing, perceiving, or valuing things that are different from your culture. Things that are not the same as in your culture can be perceived as a threat to your basic, unconscious belief in your customs, assumptions, and values. Culture shock does not strike suddenly. Rather, it builds up slowly over time from a series of events that on their own are difficult to identify.

Culture shock is the result of being cut off from your familiar cultural routines. For example, the unapparent change in the amount of spices a cultural dish could have in another country may over time develop into a “shock” to your dietary patterns. Culture shock also results when the nuances and shades of meaning that you understand instinctively and use to make your life comprehensible are suddenly withdrawn from you. Many times, students feel ambivalent when they have only lived in another culture for a short period of time. For instance, one American abroad in Brazil would be asked to dinner or social events that never materialized. There was a cultural difference between his concept of making social plans versus the Brazilian habit of saying something about social plans which are never set in stone and therefore, often do not materialize.

Sometimes culture shock will result when your own values (that until traveling abroad were seen as absolute) are brought into question. Tara was in Italy for a semester study abroad. There were Italian freedoms implicit to the culture that she did not realize until riding on the trains that did not separate smoking from non-smoking sections. Tara realized that the Italian culture did not share the same values as her American culture. From Tara’s perspective, she became aware that Italians do not have the same view of space and “clean air” that was normal to her. This realization made Tara think about freedom, to whom it belongs, and how one culture may perceive of something as a freedom while another might perceive it as a rule?

### **3. A Note to Women**

Violence against women is a growing concern all over the world. Sometimes when women are out of familiar environment, guards are let down. Always be alert and use the same safety precautions as you would in the US, no matter where you are going. If something disconcerting or violent should happen to you, go to someone related to your program for assistance. Unfortunately, in many countries the issue of female harassment is handled quite lightly, and you may be treated accordingly.

### **4. A Note to Men**

Many of the above concerns apply to men as well as women. Again, the actions which seem perfectly normal and natural in the U.S. can easily be misconstrued or out of place in another country. Be aware of the accepted, cultural norms which surround the country you are in. You are ultimately responsible for your own well-being.

### **5. The Journal**

Keeping a journal of your study abroad experience and of your thoughts regarding your experience is a good way to record this exciting time in your life. You can look back on your journal in several years and not only read about what you were doing but how you were changing. A journal is something you will have as a keepsake.

**Global Health Program  
Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center  
International Travel Contract**

This international travel contract will inform and guide faculty, residents, students, and staff from all disciplines at the Health Sciences Center of the required policies and procedures regarding international travel. Please initial each item after you read it to accept the conditions stated.

The undersigned understands that he or she must deliver an executed copy of this contract to the Global Health Program office prior to departure for international travel.

**Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

- A. **Financial Responsibility:** The undersigned agrees to the following policies and procedures regarding financial responsibility:

**Faculty (School of Medicine):** If you are acting as a preceptor for a senior medical student who has received an International Travel Award through the Global Health Program, your travel expenses, passport, visa, immunizations, housing, international travel insurance and miscellaneous approved expenses will be the responsibility of the faculty member traveling. You will need written approval from your supervisor or Department Chair and Dr. Brick to travel overseas. If there are funds available through the GHP Budget, the GHP **may** be able to offer some financial support towards the expenses of the faculty member. The GHP cannot guarantee that there will be funding available for faculty. **Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty (School of Pharmacy, School of Dentistry, School of Nursing):** If you are acting as a preceptor for a student doing an international rotation, you will be financially responsible for all your expenses unless your school financially supports the Global Health Program for international travel of their faculty. If your school financially supports the Global Health Program, it is possible that **some** of your travel expenses, visa, housing, immunizations, international travel insurance, and miscellaneous **approved expenses will be paid for through the Global Health Program.** You will need written approval from your supervisor or Department Chair and your dean to travel overseas. **Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

**Residents:** All residents going overseas for a business related purpose, will be financially responsible for all of their expenses. You will need written approval from your supervisor or Department Chair and Dean of your school to travel overseas. **Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff:** All staff going overseas for a business related purpose, will be financially responsible for all of their expenses. You will need written approval from your supervisor and the Dean of your school to travel overseas. **Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

**Students (School of Medicine):** If you are a medical student who has received an International Travel Scholarship through the Global Health Program, the scholarship will be applied toward your travel expenses, and the balance will be the responsibility of the students. **Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a medical student doing an international elective **but who has not received** an international travel award, the GHP will be happy to assist you in arranging your international elective. The GHP will assist you in locating possible funding sources, advise you of the travel warnings, immunizations necessary for the country you are visiting, assist you with your visa application, and give you information on international travel insurance and the country you plan to visit. **Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

**Students (School of Pharmacy, School of Dentistry, School of Nursing):** If you are a student doing an international rotation, you will be financially responsible for all your expenses unless your school financially supports the Global Health Program for international travel of their students. If your school financially supports the Global Health Program, it is possible that **some** of your travel expenses, visa, housing, international travel insurance, and miscellaneous **approved expenses will be paid for through the Global Health Program.** **Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Cancellation:** The undersigned understands that the Global Health Program reserves the right to cancel any international travel without notice, in which event any reimbursable out-of-pocket monies paid by faculty, residents, students, or staff towards the business related international travel will be refunded in full. If the undersigned cancels for any reason, he/she will be responsible for reimbursing the Global Health Program for any and all expenses paid in his/her behalf.

**Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

- B. Behavioral Responsibilities:** The undersigned is aware of the expected behavioral code while participating in any international travel. As a guest in a foreign country, there are certain behaviors which are considered unacceptable and could lead to possible disruption of the program. The undersigned hereby assures the Global Health Program that he/she shall conduct himself/herself in an appropriate manner which does not infringe upon the customs of the country in which they are visiting, nor upon the rights and safety of the undersigned and of other participants of the program. Behavioral responsibilities shall be applicable during the course of the program both when in the company of other program participants and when the undersigned is physically separated from other program participants. The undersigned must adhere to all policies outlined in the Behavior Code. In addition to cultural disruptions, inappropriate behavior may compromise the health and safety of the undersigned. **Inappropriate behavior is cause for dismissal from WVU Global Health Program without refund, and return flight and other costs will be the faculty, resident, staff, and/or student's sole responsibility.** **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

**Illegal Drugs:** The use or possession of illegal drugs during an international rotation is cause for immediate dismissal from WVU programs without refund. Furthermore, laws in other countries may have severe penalties for those caught with drugs. Neither U.S. Embassies nor WVU can do much more than contact your family if you are arrested and detained abroad. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

**Arrest:** Inappropriate behavior in some countries may lead to arrest. The undersigned acknowledges that he has been informed about the legal systems in the host country in which he/she is doing a clinical rotation. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

- C. **Medical Responsibility:** The undersigned acknowledges that there are certain risks inherent in international travel and that the Global Health Program of West Virginia University cannot assume responsibility for the provision of medical services to its faculty, residents, students, or staff or the payments thereof. The undersigned is expected to have consulted with a medical doctor, as deemed necessary, with regard to any individual medical issues or needs. Further, the undersigned is aware that the Global Health Program cannot be responsible for attending to any of the medical needs of the undersigned. The undersigned acknowledges that medical services and treatment in other countries may not meet his/her expectations. The way that medical help is provided and how patients are treated are culturally dependent and can vary considerably. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

The undersigned agrees to provide the Global Health Program with completed and signed **Traveler Information Sheet, Inoculations and Vaccinations forms and a copy of passport and visa (if applicable).** **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

- D. **International Health and Travel Insurance:** The undersigned is aware that, should he/she be hospitalized while in a foreign country the Global Health Program cannot and does not assume legal responsibility for payment of such costs. The undersigned does hereby assure the Global Health Program that he/she has assumed all risk and responsibility and has adequate insurance to meet any and all needs for payment of hospital costs while overseas. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

The undersigned understands that everyone traveling overseas is required to maintain sufficient medical, travel assistance, evacuation, and repatriation insurance while participating in this program. The Global Health Program requires all participants traveling overseas to purchase minimum coverage as provided by the Global Health Program and recommends additional coverage as outlined in the **Proof of Insurance Form**. The Global Health Program of West Virginia University shall not assume responsibility for student medical expenses. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

- E. **Students with Disabilities:** The undersigned acknowledges that the absence of law mandating equal access for individuals with disabilities in some countries may affect their ability to activate accommodations in certain locations. Disclosure of the disability to the Global Health Program will ensure that every effort is made to prepare the undersigned for limitations to access in certain locations and for requesting accommodations for a disclosed disability. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

- F. **Orientation:** Many pre-departure orientation meetings will be conducted by the Global Health Program before the departure date to prepare for the elective at the desired site. The undersigned agrees to attend the required meetings, read the pre-departure orientation handbook, and ask questions if there are misunderstandings or if issues are unclear. The Global Health Program will give specific information about the country and institution where you will be doing your elective at these meetings. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

**G. Living Arrangements:** The undersigned acknowledges that housing accommodations vary from one location to another. The Global Health Program office will arrange suitable housing in advance and will notify those going overseas regarding the accommodations. It may be necessary for students of the same sex to share a room. Specific details about accommodations will be discussed also at the pre-departure orientation meetings. If there is a cost for the living accommodations, the undersigned is to pay and obtain a receipt for possible reimbursement. Types of living accommodations could possibly include sharing a room with someone of the same sex with separate beds, rooms with single bed, living with a host family, or sometimes your accommodations could be in a faculty guest house. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

**H. Sightseeing:** Your international elective is to be both an educational and cultural experience. Sightseeing is approved and recommended but only on weekends, holidays, or your scheduled days away from your clinical responsibilities. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Statement of Risk:** The undersigned acknowledges that the decision to do a clinical elective or travel overseas on business must be made by each individual and his/her family. It is regrettable, but true, that nowhere in the world, including many of our own cities, can one expect a completely safe environment. It is impossible for anyone to predict future events or give guarantees about the course of events in the world. Through the pre-departure information packets and orientations, the GHP of the Health Sciences Center offers as much information and guidance as possible regarding health and safety issues within the contexts of different cultures. These issues include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Alcohol - consumption, public intoxication, laws and arrest.
2. Drugs - use, possession, sale of, laws and arrest.
3. Vehicle and other transportation - driving, travel warnings, laws and arrest.
4. Legal systems in different countries - laws, rights, arrests.
5. Assault - avoiding attracting attention, when and where to travel, laws and arrest.
6. Theft - protecting valuables.
7. Health - overall wellness and avoiding illness and injury, carrying adequate insurance, visiting a physician before travel, traveling with appropriate medications, prescriptions, and medical records.

**Please see the GHP Pre-Departure Guide for more information on each of the items outlined above or contact the GHP office.** **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_

**J. Acceptance of NAFSA (formerly National Association for Foreign Student Affairs) Guidelines:** The undersigned agrees to read and accept the **Responsibilities of Participants** section of the **Guidelines for Responsible Study Abroad: Health and Safety**, created and promoted by NAFSA that are listed below. Participants should:

Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in host countries.

Consider their health and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting an opportunity to go overseas.

Make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy overseas experience.

Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.

Obtain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.

Inform parents/guardians/families, and any others who may need to know about their participation in the program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis.

Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host country laws.

Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the WVU preceptor or other appropriate individuals.

Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.

Accept responsibility for your own decisions and actions.

Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.

Follow the program policies for keeping WVU faculty and staff informed of your whereabouts and well being. **Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

**K. Completion of Documentation:** The undersigned agrees to read, complete, and sign the following forms before leaving for his/her overseas elective.

1. Student Information Page.
2. Confidential Health Information Form.
3. Vaccinations and Inoculations Form.
4. Proof of Insurance Form.

**Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

**L. Overseas Contact Information:** The undersigned agrees to contact the GHP office upon arrival at their host institution with notification of save arrival, current phone number, e-mail address, and physical address. The undersigned agrees to contact the GHP office with same information if the above information changes for any reason, even if they are away on a sightseeing trip. **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_



As a health professional student at the West Virginia University and its School of \_\_\_\_\_, I have voluntarily chosen a clinical rotation in a foreign country. Although this clinical rotation is recognized by the West Virginia University School of \_\_\_\_\_ for its educational value, the rotation is not a requirement to obtain the degree of \_\_\_\_\_ at West Virginia University. I hereby absolve and release West Virginia University, its officers, and its governing board from any and all liabilities of a nature whatsoever arising from this clinical rotation in a foreign country including, but not limited to injury and/or safety from acts of violence or terrorism or other causes during my travel to and from the foreign country and while I am in the foreign country.

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Student Signature

(Date)

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Associate Dean/Student Affairs Signature

(Date)

As a resident at the West Virginia University School of \_\_\_\_\_, I have voluntarily chosen a clinical rotation in a foreign country. Although this clinical rotation is recognized by the West Virginia University School of \_\_\_\_\_ for its educational value, the rotation is not a requirement for completion of the Residency Program at West Virginia University.

I hereby absolve and release West Virginia University, its officers, and its governing board from any and all liabilities of a nature whatsoever arising from this clinical rotation in a foreign country including, but not limited to injury and/or safety from acts of violence or terrorism or other causes during my travel to and from the foreign country and while I am in the foreign country.

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Resident Signature and Date

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Director, Global Health Program and Date

I have voluntarily chosen to act as a preceptor for (dental, medical, nursing, pharmacy-**circle one**) students and residents at West Virginia University School of \_\_\_\_\_ who are doing a clinical rotation in a foreign country. I understand that as well as acting as a preceptor, I will also be a good role model to the students and residents and assist with their clinical rotations if a need arises while in a foreign country.

I hereby absolve and release West Virginia University, its officers, and its governing board from any and all liabilities of a nature whatsoever arising from this clinical rotation in a foreign country including, but not limited to, injury and/or safety from acts of violence or terrorism or other causes during my travel to and from the foreign country and while I am in the foreign country.

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Faculty or other Health Care Professional Signature and Date

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Director, Global Health Program and Date

I have voluntarily chosen to join a team from WVU to do a clinical rotation in a foreign country.

I hereby absolve and release West Virginia University, its officers, and its governing board from any and all liabilities of a nature whatsoever arising from this clinical rotation in a foreign country including, but not limited to, injury and/or safety from acts of violence or terrorism or other causes during my travel to and from the foreign country and while I am in the foreign country.

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Faculty, Health Care Professional, or Volunteer Signature and Date

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Director, Global Health Program and Date

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty, Students, Residents, and Staff Taking International Electives

FR: Melanie A. Fisher, M.D., M.Sc.  
Professor of Medicine  
Director, Global Health Program

RE: International Electives

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**Please read and sign the following:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am taking an International Elective offered through West Virginia University. I understand that this elective is overseas. I understand that there are dangers and risks in this elective including, but not limited to, exposure to tropical illnesses such as malaria, typhoid, meningitis, tetanus, trypanosomiasis, various other parasitic illnesses, measles, rabies, hepatitis, tuberculosis, and HIV. I certify that my immunizations are up to date. I understand that I will be counseled regarding the required immunizations and need for malaria prophylaxis where indicated and it is my responsibility to obtain them. I understand that if I have a potential exposure to HIV, I will notify my supervisors in the host country as well as West Virginia University faculty mentor, and begin post-exposure prophylaxis medications if this is indicated by CDC guidelines. In addition, I agree to leave the host country to return to Morgantown, West Virginia within 72 hours. If I encounter a delay in getting flights to Morgantown, I will notify the Global Health Program. I certify that I will be carrying health insurance which will cover me during my stay abroad and during travel to and from the United States. This insurance coverage does include medical evacuation and repatriation insurance.

I understand that this elective is in a foreign country. I realize that much of the world is not politically stable and that this could change with no notice at any point including during the elective. I realize that I may be subjected to bodily harm and I realize that there are other dangers such as motor vehicle accidents, etc. that may result in bodily harm or death. I recognize that the Global Health Program at West Virginia University or the Global Health Program faculty/mentor at the overseas site has the right to cancel the elective and will cancel the elective at any point deemed necessary should the political climate of the country change to such a degree that it is deemed unsafe or unwise to carry on with the elective. If this happens during my time abroad, I may be asked to terminate the elective early. I understand that it is impossible to predict with certainty that no harm will come to me during this elective. I agree that I must take appropriate precautions for my own safety.

I accept these risks and wish to proceed with the elective.

---

Traveler's Signature and date

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty, Students, Residents, and Staff Taking International Electives

FR: Melanie A. Fisher, MD, MSc  
Professor of Medicine  
Director, Global Health Program

RE: Behavior Code

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**I understand** that it is a privilege to participate in this International Health elective.

**I understand** that I am a representative of Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center of West Virginia University and the Global Health Program.

**I understand** that I must respect and honor the moral rules governing the clinic and/or hospital as well as the cultural rules imposed by that society regardless of my own belief system or practices in the United States.

**I understand** that I will not use illicit drugs and that I am expected to be in compliance with all laws of the country that I am visiting.

**I understand** that I am to conduct myself in a moral fashion.

**I understand** that I will be expected to adhere to the local dress code, and dress in a professional manner when working.

**I understand** that if I fail to comply with the moral and cultural rules of the clinic and/or hospital and of the society, I will be asked to leave immediately. I will agree to leave if I violate these rules.

---

Traveler's Signature and Date

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

**School of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy (circle one)**

I hereby agree to comply with the terms set forth by the GHP copies of which are attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference. I certify that I have read these forms, understand the provisions thereof and agree to be bound hereby.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Student  
or other Health Care Professional

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the Host Institution

\_\_\_\_\_  
City and Country of Host Institution

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dates of Overseas Travel

**Original executed document must be submitted to the Global Health Program  
prior to departure overseas. Faxed copies will not be accepted.**

The purpose of an International Health rotation for all health professions students and residents should be a learning experience as well as a cultural experience. The duration of your International Health rotation is one month which includes travel time to and from the overseas institution. It is required that you sightsee only on weekends or during your free time according to your clinical schedule at the host site. If you encounter a problem with your elective, a health problem, etc., you are to ask your WVU faculty preceptor to help you with this situation. The WVU faculty preceptors will be responsible for completing your evaluation while on this overseas rotation.

While you are overseas, the Global Health Program suggests that you keep a journal of your clinical activities. Your journal does not have to be typed. Upon completion of your overseas rotation, the Global Health Program will require a 1-2 page report of your clinical and cultural experience. If you wish to turn in just your handwritten journal as your report, that will be acceptable as long as it is at least 1-2 pages.

In your report/journal, the Global Health Program would like you to address the following questions:

How did this international rotation change or influence your view of dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and/or your practice of dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy?

What did you learn from your experience in regards to medicine, other culture(s), and yourself?



## TRAVELER INFORMATION PAGE

Answer all questions. Please **print clearly** in black or blue ink or type. This information will be used in case of an emergency. **Please be neat!** Please return this form to the Global Health Program, P.O. Box 9164 HSC, Rm 3000 HSCN.

1. Host Institution: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Host Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Stay: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you have a passport? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please attach a photocopy of the picture page. If no, please apply for your passport as soon as possible. Date passport application was submitted: \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Student name as it appears on your passport: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Country where passport was issued: \_\_\_\_\_ Passport Number: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Place of Birth (City, State): \_\_\_\_\_
8. What languages do you speak? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What school do you attend? (Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Current Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Parent's Name & Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Name and contact information for two people with different addresses to contact in case of an emergency (see table below):

Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
Phone No.:	Phone No.:
Email:	Email:
Relationship to you:	Relationship to you:

**In case of an emergency, I hereby grant permission for WVU's Global Health Program office at the Health Sciences Center to contact individuals listed above and to release any pertinent information to them.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Traveler

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS SHEET

This is a place for you to note the contact information for important individuals that you may need to refer to while you are abroad. While you are overseas, you will need to arrange for someone to represent you on a multitude of different issues, helping you take care of important matters in the U.S., if they arise.

### Global Health Program

Name:	<u>Melanie A. Fisher, MD</u>	Name:	_____
Address:	_____	Address:	_____
	_____		_____
Phone:	<u>(304) 293-3306</u>	Phone:	_____
Fax:	<u>(304) 293-2209</u>	Fax:	_____
E-mail:	<u><a href="mailto:mfisher@hsc.wvu.edu">mfisher@hsc.wvu.edu</a></u>	E-mail:	_____

### Health Care Provider

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Health Insurance Agent

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### U.S. Embassy in Host Country

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Person with "Power of Attorney"

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix A.

## **Customs Information - Please also check with your travel agency**

### **Before you leave the United States**

Become familiar with the US CUSTOMS REGULATIONS. If you plan to take foreign made personal articles (watches, cameras, etc.) with you, consider getting a certificate of registration from the customs office nearest to you or at any port of exit from the United States. This certificate will expedite free entry of those items when you return by offering proof that they were not purchased overseas.

**CAUTION:** Do not misrepresent what may be contained in packages. US Customs opens packages regularly and randomly (not just “suspicious looking ones”), and making a false declaration can be a serious matter.

### **Entering a Foreign Country**

Custom declaration forms are distributed on ships and planes and should be prepared in advance of your arrival for presentation to the immigration custom inspectors. Whether or not you have anything to declare, you must at least fill out the identification section of the form.

Upon entering the foreign country, you must show your passport, turn in your customs declaration form and pass through a baggage check. Customs regulations and procedures, as well as the purpose, nature, and thoroughness of the customs check will vary radically from country to country. If you are traveling with any unusual items or large quantities of any kind of goods, check with the appropriate embassy before departure to find out if such articles are prohibited from entry.

### **Re-entry into the United States**

The booklet “Custom Hints for Returning U.S. Residents — Know Before You Go”, is available from the department of Treasury, US Customs Service, P.O. Box 7407, Washington D.C. 20044.

Note that customs regulations can change at any time. – Please check with your travel agency for customs regulations for the country you are visiting.

**All items included on your declaration form must accompany you.**

Remember that “duty-free” only means that you did not pay local taxes in the country of purchase. Also remember to watch the prices in the duty-free shops.

# Appendix B.

## Planning for a Healthy Journey

Footloose and fancy free. That's the dream of every traveler. But even small problems, particularly when they are health-related, can make a dream into a nightmare. When you're setting off on your own, it's important to take basic precautions to insure your health overseas.

Are you one of the many people confused about what vaccinations to get before your travels? The GHP will tell you what immunizations you will need and direct you to the Travel Clinic at University Health Service.

### Health Certificate

First, **your immunization record will be no good if it is not recorded on the International Health Certificate available from the CDC and approved by the World Health Organization (WHO).** It must be complete in every detail; if incomplete or inaccurate, you risk being denied entry or revaccination at the border. In some countries this could mean that one needle is used for all travelers without sterilization in between jabs, so you stand a good chance of contracting hepatitis, AIDS, etc. For those reasons, it is important to find a doctor who has some knowledge of the International Health Regulations adopted by WHO that monitors the spread of disease in the world. In addition, your doctor needs to possess a "Uniform Stamp" to validate your International Health Certificate. The best resources are travel clinics, usually associated with university medical centers or public health departments.

### Immunization

Today, only the immunization for yellow fever is required for foreign travel to certain areas of the world. Cholera has recently been eliminated by the WHO, and countries subscribing to WHO regulations have promised to abide by their guidelines. But some border officials in Africa or Asia might still inappropriately demand this immunization for entry.

### HIV/AIDS

The most recent requirement for entering some countries is HIV testing, and particularly singled out are students. In addition, a number of countries are denying entry to persons with AIDS and those whose test results indicate infection with HIV is growing. Check with the embassy or the country you plan to visit for regulations. The tricky part of the AIDS procedure is that US test results are not accepted by most countries listed by the US State Department as of today.

Blood and certain other body fluids should always be considered potentially infectious for HIV.

A one-month supply of HIV/AIDS prophylaxis medications will be purchased by the GHP and will be given to the preceptor for each site with instructions as to what to do if exposed through a needle stick or other sharp injury, mucous membrane exposure, or other exposure that poses a risk for HIV transmission. Further information on what to do in case of a potential exposure is located in the CDC guidelines that will be given to you prior to your trip if you are considered to be at risk.

## **Malaria**

Information on malaria risk in specific countries can be obtained from the GHP and/or Travel Clinic current malaria prevention and advice. Doctors can obtain information concerning treatments and drugs for parasitic diseases through the GHP and/or Travel Clinic. There are several different strains of malaria on which your doctor should advise, depending on which country you will be traveling. You should know that the antimalarial drugs can cause mild to serious adverse reactions, and that you may acquire malaria regardless of methods used. Often doctors and health officials do not adequately advise or inform travelers about the risks, side effects, or other contraindications of the drugs or vaccines they prescribe for travelers. For instance, no vaccine is completely effective or safe and some can cause adverse reactions from minor to major illness depending on the individual.

## **Dengue**

Dengue fever has become the newest traveler's disease and has been spreading rapidly in the last 20 years, according to the CDC. The disease is usually benign and self-limiting. There is no vaccine or specific treatment available. It is transmitted by the Andes mosquito, which prefers to feed on humans during the day. Malaria is transmitted by the bite of an infected female Anopheles mosquito, which is most active at dusk and dawn. In this case, more important than medicines to the traveler are protective measures such as mosquito netting, clothes that cover the whole body, and insect repellent for the exposed skin. In addition, travelers should spray Permethrin on their clothing and mosquito netting.

## **Personal Protection**

Estimating the risk of illness for international travelers depends on how and where you travel. Are you staying in the Hilton Hotel or are you the adventurous backpacker staying in the villages with the locals? Are you going to be a long term resident living in air-conditioned housing or a Peace Corps volunteer? You should understand the hazards of international travel and find a doctor who is willing to spend the time providing you with information on how to treat medical problems that might occur during your journey. Remember, you want to experience the charms of a country, not its medical facilities.

— Christina Henning

## **Travel Advisories**

Ask your doctor which vaccinations are necessary prior to departure to your destination. Are there particular health problems? Phone the US State Department Overseas Citizen Emergency Center for information on current health conditions worldwide. Travel Health Information Services provides up to date information on immunizations, current health risks, travel advisories, and embassy information for any country.

If you have a health condition which requires routine attention, prepare to deal with the condition overseas. The Health Guide for International Travel (Passport Books) suggest the following steps: Prior to departure, visit your doctor to determine if any limitations apply to your travel overseas. Arrange for any prescriptions of staff-assisted medications you will require. Bring a doctor's statement with you describing your medical problem, a generic prescription for drugs you may require for its treatment, and a very clear explanation about any drugs or medical paraphernalia that you are carrying with you. Bring copies of any relevant records: X-rays, EKG's etc.

# Appendix C.

## For More Information:

### A. Health Insurance Providers

<p>Associated Insurance Plans International, Inc. (AIP) 1301 S. Wolf Road Suite 203 Prospect Heights, IL 60070 office@aip.com</p>	<p>MEDEX Assistance Corporation PO Box 5375 Limonium, MD 21094-5375 (800)537-2029 -or- (410)453-6301 info@medexassist.com</p>
<p>Council for International Educational Exchange (CIE) 205 E. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street New York, NY 10017-5706 (212)822-2734</p>	<p>OMS Limited Student Health Insurance 26 Quincy Ave Braintree, MA 02184 (800)767-0169 omalimited@aol.com</p>
<p>Cultural Insurance Services International (CASI) 102 Greenwich Avenue Greenwich, CI 06830 Roy MAI (800)303-8120 ext. 5441</p>	<p>PONTIAC 1320 19<sup>th</sup> Street, NW Suite 420 Washington, DC 20036 (800)247-5575 -or- (202)347-5575 pentecorp@aol.com</p>
<p>CMI Insurance Specialists Ted Persons Global Insurance Benefits 1447 York Rd. Suite 400 Luther ville, MD 21093 (410)583-2585</p>	<p>T.W. Lord &amp; Associates International Benefits Division 25 Dodd Street PO Box 1185 Marietta, GA 30061 (800)633-2360 theplan@twlord.com</p>
<p>Hinchcliff International 11 Ascot Place Ithaca, NY 14850 (607)257-3051</p>	<p>Services for International Travel and Education Travel Care Services (US service office) PO Box 610011 North Miami, FL 33261-0011 (800)282-1849 -or- (954)966-3268</p>
<p>International SOS Assistance Eight Nishominy Interplex PO Box 11568 Philadelphia, PA 19116 (800)767-1403 -or- (215)244-2227</p>	<p>Wallach &amp; Co. 107 West Federal Street PO Box 480 Middleburg, VA 20118-0480 (800)237-6615 (540)687-3166 info@wallach.com <a href="http://www.wallach.com">http://www.wallach.com</a></p>

MedChoice International Seabury & Smith Special Risks Department 1255 23 <sup>rd</sup> Street, NW Suite 300 Washington, DC 20037-1125 1-800-331-3047 -or- (202)457-6824	
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## **B. Suggested Reading List**

### **Cross Cultural Issues:**

- The Art of Crossing Cultures. Stori, Lang. International Press Inc., 1990.
- The Survival Kit for Overseas Living. Kohls, Robert. Intercultural Press, 1979.
- Dos And Don'ts Taboos Around the World. Axtell, Roger. Benjamin Books, NY, 1990
- All You Need to Know About Living Abroad. Pierce, Elanor. Doubleday, NY, latest ed.

### **Journal Related:**

- Applying Cultural Anthropology. (Eating Christmas in the Kalhari)
- Interpretation of Culture. Geertz, Clifford. Basic Books, NY, 1973
- Return to Laughter. (Teaching Shakespeare to the Tiv) Bohannon, Laurel.
- The Travel Writer's Handbook. Zobel, Louise. Writer's Digest Books, OH, 1984

### **Of Particular Interest to Women:**

- International Places of Interest to Women. Ferrari, Marianne, ed. Ferrari Publications, 1991
- In Another Dimension: A Guide for Women who Live Overseas. Piet-Pelon, Nancy and Barbara Hornby. Yarmouth, ME, International Press Inc., 1985
- Our Sisters' London: Feminist Walking Tours. Chicago, Chicago Review Press, 1990

### **Travel Books:**

- Bayse, Jennifer; The Air Courier's Handbook — Travel the World on a Shoestring; Big City Books, 7047 Hidden Lane, Loomis, CA 95650.
- Study, Work, and Travel Abroad: The Whole Handbook — CIE, 205 42<sup>nd</sup> St., New York, NY 10017.
- The Lets Go... series has books for practically every area in the world, the passages are written by student travelers. Harvard Student Agencies. INC.

### **Gay, Lesbian and Bi-Sexual Resources:**

- Coming Out: An Anthology of International Gay and Lesbian Writings. NY: Pantheon Books, 1992.
- Out in the World: Gay and Lesbians Life from Buenos Aries to Bangkok. Ithica, NY: Rirebrand Books, 1991.
- The Third Pink Book: A Global View of Lesbian and Gay Liberation and Oppression. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1993.
- Van Gelder, Lindsay and Pamela R. Brandt. Are You Two...Together? A Lesbian Travel Guide to Europe. NY: Random House, 1991.
- There is also a list server on the Internet for gay, lesbian, and bisexual news with some postings from the international community. To subscribe: SUB GLB NEWS (your full name) to [LISTSERVE@BROWNVN.BROWN.EDU](mailto:LISTSERVE@BROWNVN.BROWN.EDU).

# Pre-Trip Planning Checklist

## *Don't Forget To Do or Bring These Items:*



- \_\_\_\_\_ International Travel Contract
- \_\_\_\_\_ Passport/Visa
- \_\_\_\_\_ Immunizations

\_\_\_\_\_ **Leave a copy of all vital information at home and keep a copy with you. First two pages of your passport, traveler's checks numbers, credit card numbers, medical prescriptions, health insurance policy number, and any other essential documents.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Learn about the places you plan to visit, i.e., customs, political system, etc. Contact the National Tourist agency of your host country. Tell them what you are planning to do and most will send you FREE information, maps, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ Learn some of the language.

\_\_\_\_\_ Talk to other people who have visited that country, meet host nationals.

\_\_\_\_\_ Familiarize yourself with the measurements, time, and monetary system of your host country.

\_\_\_\_\_ Buy more film than you think you will need. Be sure to wrap it in foil so it is not damaged in the airport metal detectors, or have it hand checked.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## **Pre-departure Checklist**

Robert Kohls in his book *Survival Kit for Overseas Living* (International Press) recommends the following pre-departure checklist.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Make an appointment to see your doctor at least three months ahead of departure for a physical and required immunizations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find out from your Public Health Service if gamma globulin shots, a preventative measure against hepatitis, are recommended for the country or region where you plan to travel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Request copies of medical records that would be important to the treatment of problems you might encounter overseas: X-rays, a record of your blood type, prescriptions written in a generic form, dental records, and a letter describing any special health problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Remember that US prescriptions cannot be honored overseas. Take additional prescribed drugs with you and be sure that you have a doctor's letter with you describing, in generic terms, what these drugs are and how they are used. Beware, however, of buying potent drugs over the counter. Always ask careful questions about what you are purchasing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bring eyeglasses prescriptions and an extra pair of glasses or contact lenses. If you are using an electric cleaner for your contact lenses, make sure you have the appropriate transformer or find other methods of cleaning.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bring a medical kit. Standard items which may be useful abroad include adhesive tape, cotton swabs, gauze, Band-Aids, sterile cleansers and anti-bacteria ointment. Depending upon the country, it might be useful to have water purification tablets, salt tablets, skin lotion and moisturizer, insect repellent, antihistamines and painkillers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Learn how to find a doctor overseas. If you are with a program, your director should be able to tell you who is reliable.

If you are traveling by yourself, you might contact a Western-style hotel to ask which doctor they refer their guest to. You might go to a University Hospital, or contact a US consulate for a list of doctors. IAMAT, the International Association of Medical Assistance to Travelers (736 Center St., Lewiston, NY 14092) provides a list of English-speaking doctors all over the world. There is no fee, but donations to the non-profit worldwide organization are welcomed.

# CONFIDENTIAL HEALTH INFORMATION FORM

Please complete this form and give a copy to your primary care physician or to Dr. Gregory Juckett in University Health Service (Student Health). **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN THIS FORM TO THE GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRAM OFFICE.**

The purpose of this form is to help the Global Health Program be of maximum assistance to you before and during your travel overseas. Mild physical or psychological disorders can become serious under the stresses of life in an unfamiliar environment. With this form, we would like to create an awareness of any health issues that you should take into consideration before going abroad. The information provided by you and your physician(s) will be used to best advise you regarding the site which you will be going and the extent to which the host institution can accommodate your needs (i.e., the extent to which the nature or degree of a condition may prevent your successful participation in a program, whether or not appropriate medical care for the medical condition is available in the location of the site and/or the degree to which the living and environmental conditions to which you could be exposed would present a risk to your health or the health of others.

Your Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you currently being treated for any physical or psychological/emotional problems? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
**If yes**, have your physician or counselor give a statement and attached it to this application.

2. Are you currently taking any medications, or do you receive any treatments on a regular basis? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_ **If yes**, please list along with dosages: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you have any allergies: Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ **If yes**, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Have you had any major injuries, diseases, or ailments in the last five years? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
**If yes**, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you a vegetarian or are you on a restricted diet? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ **If yes**, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you have needs that must be accommodated on site because of a physical or learning disability or other condition? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ **If yes**, please describe as we may need to make advance arrangements (if possible) with the host institution. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Have you ever received treatment in a hospital or mental institution? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ **If yes**, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you ever received treatment for drug or alcohol addiction? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ **If yes**, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Have you ever been treated by a psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, or psychologist for any mental, emotional, or nervous disorder? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ **If yes**, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**If there is not enough room to explain any of the above questions, please attach additional sheets as necessary.**

I certify that all responses made on this Health Information Form are true and accurate, and that I will notify the Global Health Program hereafter of any relevant changes in my health that occur prior to or during my overseas trip.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date