Global Health Education Programs
Senior Clinical Elective in Emergency Medicine in Cape Town, South Africa
Spring 2015

The UCLA Center for World Health has established relationships with several leading health service providers and researchers at government health care facilities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Cape Town, South Africa.

South Africa is a country with a turbulent history, with resultant large inequalities in wealth, education and health. However, despite the challenges it faces, South Africa has developed significant expertise in the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, particularly in addressing TB and HIV. Cape Town is the provincial capital of the Western Cape, with a population of approximately 1.6 million inhabitants. English, Xhosa and Afrikaans are the three most commonly spoken languages in Cape Town. According to national policy, public health care is provided along a tiered referral system. Primary care clinics provide access points to health services, with more complicated conditions being referred to secondary level hospitals.

We are pleased to offer a clinical rotation in Emergency Medicine at Somerset Hospital in Cape Town, for two senior medical students in the spring of 2015. In the Emergency Department, students will care for a wide range of patients, including a large number of trauma patients, and those presenting with common opportunistic infections associated with HIV (i.e. tuberculosis and cryptococcal meningitis). Students will have opportunities to participate in common emergency room procedures. Supervision of UCLA medical students will be by senior medical staff on site, and students will work alongside the equivalent of residents and medical students from the University of Cape Town (UCT). Students will also participate in evening mobile clinics run by UCT medical students, providing primary care services in poorer areas of the city, through its well-established SHAWCO Program.

The rotation has been developed with formal goals and objectives. We are seeking students with an interest in caring for underserved populations, and those with enthusiasm for learning more about global health, infectious diseases and health care delivery in resource poor settings. Students will be expected to demonstrate the highest level of maturity, professionalism and cultural sensitivity.

Students will receive $2,500 of support for the South Africa clinical rotation. These funds are awarded to contribute to the costs of roundtrip airfare and in-country accommodation and food. Students will need to cover the remaining expenses from other funds, as the cost of this rotation will exceed the amount provided by the Center for World Health.

Interviews for the elective will take place on November 1, 2014, with a few additional time slots the week prior to that. Students selected for this rotation are required to participate in a full day pre-departure training program in Los Angeles on Saturday, February 7, 2015. Upon return home from Thailand, students will be expected to provide feedback through written evaluation forms, and participate in a lunchtime feedback session on Thursday, June 4, 2015.

Rotation dates for this elective have been confirmed. **Students applying to this elective must be able to commit to this elective from March 30, 2015 through April 17, 2015.** Note that a March 30 start date will require departure from the U.S. by March 28, 2015 at the latest.

Questions regarding this rotation should be directed to Dr. Traci Wells at twells@mednet.ucla.edu. Thank you for your interest in the clinical experience in South Africa!