



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are Surgicorps International's Mission and Beliefs?

Surgicorps International is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide free surgical and medical care to disadvantaged individuals in developing countries.

Surgicorps believes:

- in providing free surgical and medical care to disadvantaged individuals in developing countries, thus allowing them to become functional members of their society.
- in providing individuals the personally-rewarding experience of giving back through serving others.
- in fostering an exchange of knowledge and experience among medical professionals resulting in improved surgical techniques and patient care.
- in remaining non-profit.
- that locally-based cultural interaction is an important component of Surgicorps trips.

2. Does Surgicorps only perform cleft palate/cleft lip procedures?

Although cleft lip and cleft palate surgeries represent a large portion of the procedures done by Surgicorps, and although children are the majority of patients, the team also treats adults with cleft lip/palate, and provides a wide-range of other types of surgical and medical care including: hand surgery, treatment of burn scar contractures, treatment of traumatic injuries/deformities (i.e. farm accidents, animal bites, motor vehicle accidents, etc.)

3. Why doesn't Surgicorps concentrate its efforts among those in need in the United States?

In most cases, the surgical procedures provided by Surgicorps are widely available and paid for through private or government-funded insurance in the United States.

4. How is Surgicorps different from Smile Train or Operation Smile?

Smile Train raises funds to support organizations like Surgicorps, allowing them to do medical missions. The difference between Surgicorps and Operation Smile is primarily size. By running only a limited number of trips versus multiple trips all over the world, limiting the number of trip participants, and making multi-year commitments to specific countries, Surgicorps provides a unique experience for medical and non-medical volunteers. Volunteers often describe their relationship to Surgicorps as "family".

5. What constitutes a Surgicorps Medical Mission Team?

Surgicorps International's medical missions are staffed by medical and non-medical volunteers. The medical team make-up reflects each country's needs and requests. Members may include surgeons with differing specialties, medical specialists, anesthesiologists, physician's assistants, RNs, surgical techs, CRNAs, OTs, PTs, and dentists.

Non-medical participants have diverse backgrounds and are a minimum of 16 years of age. They perform a myriad of tasks including providing comfort in pre and post-op areas, practicing play therapy, transporting patients, and packing supplies. They have the opportunity to observe procedures in the operating room. Volunteers also help to chronicle the trip through photography, blog postings and a website report on the outcome of the journey.

6. How many people participate on a Surgicorps team?

Need does not necessarily determine the size of Surgicorps' teams. The number of medical personnel is directly related to a country's ability to host the surgeries **and** their surgical needs. Teams may also be self-limiting because Surgicorps trips are self-funded. In the future, Surgicorps hopes to have the financial resources it needs to subsidize – in full or in part – members of the medical team.

7. Where will Surgicorps travel in 2011?

Surgicorps will make four return trips in 2011: Ethiopia, Bhutan, Guatemala, and Vietnam. They will also travel to Zambia and Haiti for the first time.

8. How are Surgicorps' trips funded?

Surgicorps' trips range in cost from \$40,000 to \$90,000. The level of expense depends on a variety of issues including the location of the mission and related airfare, the "in-country" facility (e.g. a fully-equipped mission hospital such as the one in Guatemala or the most rudimentary facilities that require Surgicorps to bring every piece of equipment and supply it may need), and the potential need to financially support patients and their families for their transportation, housing, and food.

Surgicorps International's trips are made possible by different types of donations. First, the medical and non-medical participants on the team are all required to pay all or at least part of their expenses. In most cases, they pay 100% of their travel and accommodations. There are times, however, when a medical professional is partially-sponsored by Surgicorps to provide a special skill. This does not, however, represent the full cost of the trip for each person. In most cases, team members take unpaid leave to accompany a trip or use benefit time at their place of employment.

Donated services to Surgicorps total approximately \$300,000 each year. As much as possible, medical supplies are also be obtained via in-kind donations from companies or individuals.

9. Why are unrestricted donations important?

Surgicorps expends 100% of trip volunteer donations on the mission. There's never any surplus, although overages in medical supplies will be retained in the host country for later use in local hospitals.

Surgicorps must close a funding gap of between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per trip. The ability to provide the highest quality of services and the safest experience for its mission participants depends on the generosity of individuals and businesses giving unrestricted donations each year.

10. How can I stay up-to-date on Surgicorps' latest trip?

Join our e-mail list and receive regular communications from Surgicorps. Be a frequent visitor to the website – www.surgicorps.org -- and see posts from trip participants, updates to the travel schedule and more. Don't forget to become a Surgicorps "fan" on Facebook and recommend us to your friends.

11. I can't take a trip with Surgicorps at this time – how can I help make their missions possible?

- **Make a contribution.** Unrestricted donations are applied to the area of greatest need. Donors may also make designated contributions to a special trip and/or purpose.
- **Donated Items.** You can make a difference by contributing items you can purchase on your next trip to the grocery store – ibuprofen, alcohol wipes and more.
- **Host a House Party** or invite Surgicorps to make a presentation at your church, school or community meeting.
- **Refer potential volunteers** – medical and non-medical – to Surgicorps.
- **Attend a Packing Party at the Surgicorps office.**
- **Attend one of Surgicorps' annual fundraising events** and bring a friend!