



Best and Emerging Practices in Short-term healthcare missions

MISSIONEXUS 2022

Why Best AND Emerging Practices?

- Best Practices are well established, evidence-based solutions to common, technical challenges.
- But what the Church faces in the global health arena are challenges that are complex/adaptive which require new thinking and thus emerging practices.

The Complexity

- the influence of the Western church is waning while the church of the majority world is growing
- the Western church (be it the local church or Christian NGO's/nonprofits) still controls much of the material resources but isn't always so good at stewarding them.
- Great zeal to do good in the West but limited in our application of zeal with knowledge.
- Still a massive problem with unhealthy dependency (well entrenched and still being created by our efforts)
- Still 6000 + unreached people groups around the world.
- Multiple "players" in the field also hoping to do good.



Added complexity



- growing influence of secular/humanist (atheistic/materialism) global health organizations
- our Western efforts at helping care for the whole person still fall short
- followers of Christ often are not living healthy lives
- our work is coming under closer scrutiny by the rest of the world
- there is a paucity of research focused on the work of those doing health related missions
- there is still no seminary we are aware of that has integrated a “Theology of Health” into its DNA
- there is still no health sciences school we are aware of that adequately teaches and reinforces what health is from a biblical perspective
- very few examples of local church’s that see themselves as centers for health and wholeness in their communities

What makes Christian Short-term health care missions Christian?

1. The overall emphasis is demonstrating and proclaiming the gospel.
2. Our work is to be accomplished through the local church★ with a goal of building and strengthening (or even establishing) the church.
3. We point to Jesus Christ as the Great Physician. All healing comes from God.
4. Prayer is a major hallmark of our ministry.
5. We conduct our work in love and humility so that people give God the glory.
6. To imitate Christ's methods and commission of healing



Principle and Practice #1: We embrace the 7 Standards as outlined by the Standards of Excellence in short term missions.

1. God-Centeredness
2. Empowering Partnerships
3. Mutual Design
4. Comprehensive Administration
5. Qualified Leadership
6. Appropriate Training
7. Thorough Follow-Up (including metrics)



Principle and Practice # 2 : Healthcare missions team equipping – team members should undergo adequate equipping prior to engaging in global health missions' outreach.

Paradigm shifts

- We are not the hero's
- Biblical/Christian understanding of HEALTH
- Mutual transformation/Worldview → Beliefs → Values → Behavior
- Integration of faith and vocation – calling
- Recognizing God as the one who heals – what we put at the center of our outreach is what the people will worship when we leave
- Balance between BEING and DOING
- Understanding unhealthy dependency



Principle and Practice # 3: Thorough Planning – thorough and collaborative planning for short-term healthcare mission trips

1. Determine what people want done – this should be determined by the in-country partner. Is it a relief/recovery/rehab/development situation?
2. Employ well thought out strategies – ABCD, Adaptive Leadership approach, CHE
3. Engage at multiple levels:
 - People
 - Partner
 - Churches
 - Local Health Professionals
 - Government
 - Other Christian groups and parachurch organizations



Principle and Practice # 4: Nurturing Relationships - We will nurture relationships without fostering dependency.

- People don't care how much we know until they know how much we care!
- We will train the in-country health professions with whom we work in those areas where they have requested training.
- We will go with an attitude of learning as well.
- We will honor our hosts by using safe and effective local equipment and procedures whenever we can.
- Point to Jesus first, not our materialistic life-styles, Western model of medicine, United States, etc
- No junk for Jesus



Principle and Practice # 5: Obey the rules

We will obey the host country rules and laws, to the glory of God.
(unless this would require us to compromise our Christian values)

- Obtaining permission to practice
- No bribery
- No smuggling health materials into the country
- Obtain malpractice insurance



Principle and Practice # 6: No Double Standards

we will not compromise basic healthcare ethics. If something is unethical where you come from it's also unethical where you go to serve

1. Give medications in a health-care setting (may be situational)
2. In-country local primary health care provider who knows the patient and the culture should prescribe the medications
3. No experimental medications
4. No expired medications
5. Safe distribution of medications
 - *Child-safe*
 - *Labeled*
 - *WHO essential medications*
6. Purchase medications in country whenever possible



No Double Standards (continued)

7. We will obtain informed consent for any anything that we do for people including prescribed medications.
8. We will keep accurate and accessible medical records and make arrangements for their long-term local maintenance.
9. We will correctly utilize interpreters so that the people understand health information and what we are doing on their behalf and what they can do to stay healthy.



Principle and Practice # 7: Promote Sustainable Health Missions

We will promote sustainable short-term missions (as well as long term)

- We seek long-term relationships, not medical missions tourism.
- We will be health education teachers whenever and wherever we can.
- We will encourage and support community engagement and ownership.
- We will encourage an integrated community development approach

Principle and Practice # 8: Right Emphasis for the Situation

We will differentiate between relief, recovery/rehabilitation and development efforts (from WHH)

1. Disaster relief (stop the bleeding)

Short-term

- Caring for emergent medical needs

2. Recovery/rehab

Medium term

- restore people and their communities to the positive elements of their pre-crisis conditions.
- working with the tsunami victims as they participate in their own recovery

1. Development

Long-term

- Building healthcare capacity
- Education
- Encouraging Primary Care



Principle and Practice # 9: Share our Values

- We will take advantage of every opportunity to share our beliefs and values with the secular international medical relief and development community.
- Nothing is more powerful than our own personal story of faith in Christ.
- This will have little if any value if we are doing shoddy work just because it's being done in a LMIC (low to middle income country)



Principle and Practice # 10: The Great Convergence:

the Greatest Commandment with the Great Commission

The first compels us to express love of neighbor through quality, compassionate whole person care that addresses the brokenness of the human ...

1. Body
2. Soul
3. Spirit

... in the individuals social/cultural context

The Second compels us to use our resources to make Jesus known where He is not yet known.

Is there a greater ministry focus for establishing the Church than caring for the whole person in the way of Jesus?



Principle and Practice # 11: Focus on people

Adjust time/task expectations

Consider

- Translation time
- Educational time
- Surgical times

➤ Love the people who we are with



Principle and Practice # 12: Multiplication

- We need more laborers in the harvest field!
- Encourage the creation of Christian health professional groups.
- Multiplicative training – encouraging indigenous Christian health professionals to be engaged in missions themselves.
 - Give a man a fish
 - Teach a man to fish
 - Enable/Encourage a man to teach others to fish



The work and calling of Health for All Nations

Catalyzing Solutions to Complex Global Health Challenges through:

- Networking
- Innovation
- Publishing
- Equipping