Global health opportunities

DO A WORLD OF GOOD IN A WORLD OF NEED
Regardless of where your career takes you, you will see many patients in your practice from around the world. By learning about and working with health issues that affect different parts of the globe, you will help save lives, hone your clinical skills and go on to provide better care for your patients.

Many areas of the world lack the basic health care many of us take for granted. Many of the health problems of people in underserved areas can be successfully treated with simple, basic care. By doing a global health rotation or internship, you’ll be part of that solution.

The University partners with clinical sites around the world to offer these experiences. The Global Health Department strives to enable students in all three of DMU’s colleges to serve and learn in...
Getting ready for global health experiences

The Global Health Department works to ensure DMU students are ready for the challenges and personal changes that global health trips can involve. Students participate in learning activities pre-departure that emphasize traveling safely and preparing for a different culture. Post-departure, students reflect on the impact the trip had on them and lessons learned.

Students work to devise site-appropriate solutions to local needs. Our physical therapy students have worked with senior citizens on rehabilitation in St. Lucia, for example, while osteopathic and podiatric medical students have treated patients in the Dominican Republic, Tanzania and Appalachia. Public health and health care administration students provide education and expertise to individuals, communities and organizations in a variety of sites and settings.

DMU offers global health learning experiences on campus, too, from a wide variety of speakers, panels and events to its electives in beginning and intermediate medical Spanish language. Global health adjunct faculty members offer additional perspectives.

On campus and around the world, the Global Health Department focuses on the global goal of advancing the health of people and populations around the world.

“Medicine isn’t all about doing a history and physical. The ability to understand your patients’ backgrounds, the willingness to reach out to offer help and listen to their complaints, and being more culturally competent all will go a long way in making me a better physician.”

As a second-year podiatric medical student, Dixon Xu was part of a DMU global health service trip to Biloxi, Mississippi.
DMU offers a spring break service trip to an underserved area of the United States. In 2016, the site will be Jackson, Kentucky.

DMU offers rotations at Sanford Health in Accra, part of a 10-clinic network that serves urban and rural areas as well as small communities.

DMU offers rotations at the National University of Rwanda (NUR) in the capital of Kigali and surrounding rural communities.

DMU partners with Timmy Global Health to provide health care services to some of the most underserved communities near Monte Cristi in the Dominican Republic. This partnership expands health care services and public health programs. In addition to short-term clinics and clinical rotations in Monte Cristi, DMU students work with ongoing public health programs on educational campaigns that address local health concerns.

DMU offers rotations at La Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas (UPC) in the capital of Lima with the potential for additional experiences at a U.S. Naval Research Base. DMU also hosts UPC medical students in Des Moines to rotate in the DMU Clinic and partner hospitals.

Hillside Health Care International in Punta Gorda, with its well-trained staff from developed countries, offers a rotation that’s especially beneficial for physician assistant, physical therapy and public health students.

Students work in a health care setting in Kingston. This rotation is particularly beneficial to physical therapy students.

DMU offers rotations at St. Jude Hospital in Vieux Fort, St. Lucia, the second-largest city on the southern coast of this West Indian island country. This rotation is particularly beneficial for physician assistant, physical therapy and public health students.
International rotations and internships vary from year to year, with established sites as shown on the map. Since 2007, 675 students in DMU’s osteopathic and podiatric medicine, physician assistant, physical therapy, health care administration and public health programs have participated in these interprofessional rotations and internships in more than 40 countries around the world, serving thousands of underserved patients, interacting with other health professionals and conducting research.

**United Kingdom**

This rotation at the University of London exposes students to the United Kingdom’s national health system, making it particularly of interest to public health students.

**Uganda**

DMU offers rotations at Makerere University in Kampala, the largest city and capital of the East African country of Uganda. Participants rotate at Makerere’s National Teaching Hospital, where they gain experiences in obstetrics, surgery and emergency medicine.

**Tanzania**

DMU offers rotations for osteopathic medicine students at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC) in Moshi, at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro. This 457-bed facility is a referral hospital for more than 11 million people in Northern Tanzania.

DMU also offers experiences at Gonja Lutheran Hospital and Same Hospital, both rural sites that offer a great depth of hands-on clinical and cultural experiences.

**Thailand**

DMU offers rotations at Chiang Mai University’s national teaching hospital. Students gain clinical skills as well as insights on social determinants of health given the area’s large refugee population.

**India**

Students can experience rotations at Mercy Hospital in Kolkata, a general hospital with 30 specialty centers that serve approximately 100,000 patients per year. In addition, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS) in Kerala is an excellent site for podiatric medical students with its focus on diabetic lower-limb problems.

**Australia**

This rotation at the University of Sydney gives students insights on and experience in socialized medicine.
Global health does not involve just care in countries beyond the United States. That’s why DMU students and faculty serve diverse patients in need in Iowa.

Through community service and campus organization activities, students regularly offer sports physicals to Iowa school children, health care at local free clinics and friendship to homeless people in the city. The Global Health Student Club offers a variety of speakers, discussions and presentations to expand students’ perspectives. Frequent interactive student-led discussions tackle topics affecting the health of people around the world. Available as a one-credit elective to second-year clinical students, these discussions bring together members of the DMU and Des Moines communities to explore a wide range of issues.

DMU students, faculty and health care volunteers also provide care and education through the University’s Mobile Health Clinic, a 38-foot customized Winnebago motor home equipped with two complete examination rooms. These experiences “at home” expose students to a variety of people and the issues they face, expanding their cultural sensitivity and skills.

Helping here at home

DMU brings people together

DMU students can gain global insights from medical students the University regularly hosts from Makerere University in Uganda. During their time in Des Moines, the students take classes at DMU, shadow physicians in the DMU Clinic and then experience a rotation at Mercy Medical Center.

The University also works with alumni and local clinicians who want to supervise students on global health service trips. These individuals contribute significantly to students’ learning while also helping underserved individuals and communities.
Partnerships

Des Moines University works with other institutions and organizations that share the goal of improving patient and population health while expanding global health experiences for students.

The Heartland Global Health Consortium

Des Moines University is committed to expanding global health opportunities for students to expose them to other cultures while they hone their clinical skills. This commitment led to the creation of the Heartland Global Health Consortium (HGHC), a group of Iowa educational institutions that works to expand multidisciplinary educational, research and service opportunities to equip students to become leaders in global public health. The consortium’s activities include an annual conference, held in conjunction with the World Food Prize Symposium, to explore issues such as health care disparities, women’s and children’s health, climate change and more.

The World Food Prize

Created in 1986, the World Food Prize is the foremost international award recognizing individuals who have advanced human development by improving the quality, quantity or availability of food in the world. The World Food Prize Foundation, headquartered in Des Moines, offers several events and programs of interest to the DMU community. Several students and faculty, for example, have presented their research at the foundation’s annual Iowa Hunger Summit.

The Age-Friendly Greater Des Moines Initiative

In 2006, World Health Organization leaders realized aging presents a global challenge. To encourage communities to prepare for that, the organization brought together 33 cities in 22 countries to determine key elements of urban environments that support active, healthy aging. These cities formed the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities. Des Moines became just the third Age-Friendly City in the United States in 2011. DMU is among the local organizations leading the effort in the areas of infrastructure, social capital and health services.

A pathway of distinction

A highly selective, guided track empowers DMU students to explore research topics in global health at prestigious organizations. The Global Health Research Pathway enables students to work with national and international experts and researchers on issues that affect individuals and broad populations.

The World Health Organization

In 2008, the DMU Global Health Program developed a partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) that includes summer internship opportunities for DMU students and research collaboration. Select students travel to WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, for eight to twelve weeks to work with high-level WHO staff on conducting systematic reviews and other research and creating evidence-based educational materials for worldwide distribution.

The Pan American Health Organization

Based in Washington, D.C., as a regional office of the World Health Organization, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is an international public health agency with more than 100 years of experience in working to improve health and living standards in the countries of the Americas. It also enjoys international recognition as part of the United Nations system. DMU students are selected annually to work at PAHO on summer research projects.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

DMU is one of the few health care universities that offers select students unique opportunities to do internships and capstone projects at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), America’s health protection agency. Participating students spend eight weeks at CDC headquarters in Atlanta to work in various fields, including introduction to applied epidemiology, introduction to preventive medicine and public health.
Excellence in action:

Des Moines University’s Global Health Program

DMU organized its first medical service trip to Belize in 2006, and its Global Health Program has continued to grow ever since. The program has a diverse adjunct faculty and collaborations with partners around the state, nation and world. Its opportunities help prepare DMU students to become culturally competent, compassionate health care providers and leaders in our increasingly diverse world.

“I started to think of issues with a global perspective. I’m more aware of all the factors that play into a patient’s health. The conversations I had were so unique, and working with people with such passion was amazing. It was like having a hamster running in your mind for two months. Every day I felt the blinders coming off. To call your workplace the WHO for two months is surreal.”

A dual-degree student in podiatric medicine and public health at DMU, Kelsey Millonig interned at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2015. Just in her WHO department, her colleagues included a social/behavioral health expert from Germany, an Australian physician who’d created a clinic for Aborigines, a podiatrist from the Netherlands who’d done significant work with people with disabilities, and a physician from India with extensive experience in Alzheimer’s disease.

GET A GLOBAL VIEW OF DMU
To learn more about global health opportunities:

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