

# NPH INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING DURING COVID-19 GUIDELINES



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# I. INTRODUCTION



The COVID-19 Pandemic has affected communities around the world, and the NPH family is no exception. Nonetheless, the NPH International Volunteer Program has never ceased to operate because we know that volunteers are an indispensable part of our mission. We continue to invite those around the world who are interested in dedicating a year abroad to NPH's mission to join us—we need you now more than ever.

In nearly every area of our work, we are all learning to plan for the future with much greater degrees of uncertainty. The same holds true for NPH's volunteer program. We have adapted the program to a new normal under COVID-19, so as to ensure the safety of the children, youth, and families we care for and support, as well as to ensure the safety and well-being of the volunteers.

The region where we work has been hit hard by the virus and its devastating social and economic consequences. Nonetheless, thanks to the diligent work of our health teams as well as the collaboration of all, we continue to ensure that NPH homes remain healthy and safe environments.

We ask that volunteers join us in ensuring that the NPH community continues to prosper despite the pandemic. This means following bio-security rules and protocols that were not necessary prior to the pandemic. Simple rules such as requiring that all adults wear face coverings while working have allowed us to keep the NPH family safe and healthy during the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested every family and community around the world. At NPH, we remain steadfast in our belief that if we come together in solidarity as the global family that we are, we will overcome this tough test. Thank you for your willingness to serve the NPH family. If we all continue to follow the rules and guidelines established by our leaders, we will continue to ensure the health and well-being of all in the NPH homes and programs.

**The International Volunteer Program** continues to be a hallmark of NPH's values. Though we have had to make adjustments to the program, it remains an integral part of the NPH mission, and we continue to welcome qualified professionals who are able to give a year of their lives in service to others.







# II . LATIN AMERICA

## DURING COVID-19

Latin America has been deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The countries where NPH operates have large informal economies, high rates of poverty, deficient public health systems, and overcrowded cities. This combination has led not only to widespread outbreaks in these countries, but also devastating social and economic consequences.

As we are now a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, the communities where NPH operates look very different than they did a year ago. NPH homes remain safe environments, thanks to the continued support of those around the world who make our mission possible. Nonetheless, the new realities of our external environment have affected our operations. In many countries it is difficult to travel and move around cities due to government-enforced curfews. Many businesses remain closed or operate with limited hours.

The health systems in Latin America, largely inadequate even in non-pandemic times, have been pushed to the brink. During the weeks and months of greatest contagion, many countries had overwhelmed hospitals incapable of responding to the enormous demand for care and services, which lead to higher death and contagion rates. Thankfully many governments have made important advances in opening more healthcare facilities to ensure greater opportunity for care in the next year of the pandemic.

NPH has struck a balance between protecting our family from any bio-security threat, while also ensuring that the hundreds of children and youth we care for are receiving the care and services they need. As governments in the region continue to reopen their economies and borders and guide their countries to a "new normal," it is important that we all remain vigilant in our efforts to curb the spread of the virus as well as our commitment to protect our personal safety.

### LATIN AMERICA

remains a global epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic. As governments continue to make strides to re-open their economies and strengthen their health systems, NPH remains committed to protecting all of our collaborators and beneficiaries. We continue to provide guidance and education to ensure that we curb the spread of the virus, while also ensuring that essential activities and services can safely proceed.





# III. RULES AND GUIDELINES

to ensure the safety of all

## QUARANTINE:

- Unvaccinated volunteers will be required to quarantine upon arrival in the NPH home to ensure they were not exposed to COVID-19 during travel.
- Volunteers will be informed of the start and end date of the quarantine.
- Volunteers will be assigned a space in the NPH home to complete the quarantine.
- Volunteers may be required to quarantine at other moments during their volunteer service in the event of a suspected exposure to COVID-19.
- All quarantine measures will respect the human rights of the person in quarantine (i.e. access to food, a clean and comfortable place to stay, etc.). If a volunteer suspects a human rights violation, they should immediately report it to the supervising health authority.

## MASKS:

- Volunteers, as well as all adults on NPH grounds, are required to wear face masks that cover both nose and mouth at all times when working or conducting any activity outside of their private living quarters.
- Volunteers will be provided with face masks at no cost if they do not have their own.







## COVID-19 TESTS:

- Many countries in the region require travelers to provide proof upon arrival of a negative COVID-19 test taken within days of entry, even if you are vaccinated against COVID-19. Volunteers must assume any costs related to pre-arrival COVID-19 tests.
- Diverse forms of COVID-19 tests are available in the private health system in countries where NPH operates.
- Volunteers may be subjected to COVID-19 screening tests by NPH health teams during their volunteer service.
- If a volunteer is in need of a COVID-19 test and the NPH home cannot provide the test, the volunteer must assume all costs of the test not covered by his or her health insurance.

## MOBILITY INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE NPH HOME:

- Volunteers will have extremely limited opportunities to leave the NPH home, whether for vacation or for weekends off. Most touristic destinations in the region are closed for visitors.
- Volunteers may be subjected to a quarantine if they do leave the NPH property (applies to unvaccinated individuals).
- Volunteers will have limited opportunities to purchase food outside of the NPH home, meaning that volunteers will have to make do with the meals NPH provides.
- Volunteers may be required to social distance from certain groups within the NPH home, meaning that you may only be able to interact with a certain population to help prevent widespread outbreaks.



# IV. STAYING WELL DURING COVID-19



## PREVENTION:

- Volunteers are required to join us in practicing all prevention measures to keep COVID-19 at bay, including:
- Constant hand washing.
- Respiratory hygiene practices (i.e. coughing and sneezing into elbow).
- Social distancing.
- Use of face masks.
- Self-isolation when ill.

## RISK FACTORS:

- Volunteers are required to submit a completed health statement filled out by their physician for review before departure.
- Volunteers who have been diagnosed with a pre-existing condition that puts them at risk for severe illness due to COVID-19 will not be accepted to the NPH volunteer program at this time.
- Volunteers are encouraged to read guidelines set by the CDC and WHO for more information on COVID-19 infection and risk factors.

## MENTAL HEALTH

The "new normal" we are living at NPH can cause feelings of stress, isolation, anxiety, loneliness, frustration, and even boredom for volunteers. It is of utmost importance that prior to departure volunteers consider these feelings that they may face.

NPH is committed to supporting the volunteers' emotional well-being as they navigate this new normal. Nonetheless, volunteers who feel that their mental health may not be able to withstand the rules and protocols we are asking them to follow should consider applying for service again in the future when the pandemic is over.

It is important for volunteers to identify activities and other coping strategies that will make the adaptation process easier.

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns about volunteering with NPH as it relates to your mental health.

## INFECTION:

- Volunteers have access to primary healthcare services provided by the NPH clinics at no cost to the volunteer.
- Volunteers who become infected with COVID-19 will be evaluated by the NPH health team in-situ. The volunteer and the health team will decide whether the volunteer can be treated at NPH or should seek care outside of NPH.
- NPH purchases health insurance with international coverage for all volunteers. Any costs related to COVID-19 treatment not covered by the volunteer's insurance must be paid for by the volunteer.
- Positive COVID-19 test results are reported to the government of the country. Therefore, volunteers will be subjected to the processes and protocols of the government of the country of service, including but not limited to contact tracing and quarantine.



## VACCINES:

- Countries where NPH operates are beginning to plan and implement COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. Each country's government is deciding which vaccines to purchase and which population groups will be prioritized for vaccination. Ask your local volunteer coordinator for more information on the country where you will serve.
- NPH International does not require that volunteers be vaccinated prior to beginning service, though some NPH offices do require the volunteers they send to be vaccinated. If the volunteer has the opportunity to receive the vaccination prior to joining NPH, we strongly encourage the volunteer to do so. If you are vaccinated, please bring your vaccine card with you when you travel to NPH.
- Volunteers may have the opportunity to receive a COVID-19 vaccine in the country of service. The availability of vaccines varies by country. Volunteers must assume any costs of vaccination not covered by their insurance or by the government.
- Volunteers who are vaccinated must still engage in all prevention methods listed on the previous page under the section "Prevention."

**For more information about COVID-19, visit [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)**



# VOLUNTEERING DURING COVID-19 GUIDELINES

## **I HAVE READ AND FULLY UNDERSTAND THE NPH INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING DURING COVID-19 GUIDELINES RELATING TO THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:**

- Latin America during COVID-19
- Quarantine
- Mask Use
- COVID-19 Tests
- Mobility Inside and Outside of the NPH home
- Anti-COVID-19 Prevention Measures
- Risk Factors for Severe COVID-19 Infection
- Infection by COVID-19
- COVID-19 Vaccines
- Mental Health during NPH Volunteer Service

## **FURTHERMORE, I UNDERSTAND THE FOLLOWING:**

- I accept full responsibility for my actions, my safety, and my well-being during my volunteer service.
- I am able to terminate my volunteer year with NPH early out of concern for my health and well-being. I will assume full financial responsibility for my return home.
- I understand that border closings around the world are possible and could prevent my ability to exit the country of volunteer service or return to my country of origin.
- I understand that NPH homes implement health and safety protocols which I must strictly follow with no exception.
- I am aware that the public health system in Latin America and the Caribbean are unsuited to adequately respond to a pandemic and to care for me if I were to get sick and need hospital care.
- I understand that NPH protocols will dramatically limit my mobility, work, and recreational activities.
- I understand that public health officials may issue proclamations with which I will be required to comply.

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_