

MEDICAL OUTREACH BEST PRACTICES FRAMEWORK

Partnership

Strong, mutually beneficial partnership is the critical element in conducting effective medical outreach and creating lasting impact on local health care capacity. AmeriCares extensive research reveals a relationship between these best practice elements and robust partnerships resulting in improved and more sustainable health care services and systems.

Preparation

Teams possess the necessary expertise and professional credentials to achieve specified goals. They participate in pre-departure training, acquire cultural competence and are appropriately supplied and equipped for anticipated needs. They conduct site visits, pre-trip screening or pre-trip information exchange to identify health care needs.

Ongoing Assessments

Working with local partners, teams conduct ongoing assessments to evaluate local health issues, medicine and equipment needs, logistical considerations, training priorities and health care objectives. This exchange of information begins before and extends beyond the timeframe of the trip and informs both trip and partnership goals.

Education Exchange

Teams offer a range of appropriate educational and training activities in response to partner needs that strengthen the capabilities of health care staff. They respect and learn from local health care providers who often conduct their work in challenging and resource-limited environments, and seek to create lasting relationships to support and develop each other's skills.

Evaluation and Reporting

Monitoring and evaluation of health outcomes are used to measure impact, and inform future outreach and partnership priorities. Implementation of careful record keeping, feedback mechanisms and reporting are the basis for improving effectiveness. Results and lessons are shared to foster continued growth and independence of the partner and its staff.

Sustainability

Teams commit to long-term objectives with their partner and consider the many factors influencing effectiveness. They seek to empower partners to achieve improved clinical outcomes, professional development and health care capacity. Trip frequency and ongoing support between trips are designed to assist staff and when appropriate, patient care.