

# DOVE Mission International

## Short-Term Team COVID-Era Policy

Last updated 1 June, 2022

During 2020, DMI cancelled many of its short-term mission teams due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic raised many issues concerning sending teams to other nations, including the reliability of air travel, health risks in foreign countries, travel medical insurance coverage, and quarantine restrictions both in the foreign country and upon return to the USA.

Over the course of time, we have learned that the numbers infected varies greatly, as do travel requirements. We will attempt to keep abreast of guidance from the US Center for Disease Control. Individuals should also check the latest CDC recommendations, *including doing so while overseas*, as these may change subsequent to your departing the USA. Leaders or potential team members should also check with DMI, as matters may have changed since the last update of this document. As of June 2022, DMI is planning and sending missions teams again, reviewing each country on a case-by-case basis.

For a team to go to a foreign country, the following conditions would need to be met:

- **Agreement with hosts**

Any potential team may only proceed if the hosts (e.g., local church) want a foreign team to assist them during this time and are confident that a foreign team will be able to abide by the COVID guidelines of that host country. This is based upon our value of honoring a country we are visiting and submission to local leadership.

- **Medical screening for acceptance on team**

It is standard policy for DMI to screen potential team members for preconditions or prevailing health issues. There are some conditions which may make a potential member vulnerable to serious health complications if infected with COVID-19. Persons with such preconditions will not be able to participate in an overseas team.

- **Protocols upon reentry to the USA**

When booking a trip, DMI and the team leaders will ascertain the current requirements for reentry into the USA (e.g., negative COVID test before departure to the USA and/or COVID test once within the USA). DMI expects team members to abide by the regulations in existence at the time of return to the USA. We will also check that testing is available in the country the team is visiting to abide by any USA reentry requirements.

- **Flights**

Given that airlines have been willing to accept money for flight bookings even when there is little chance of the flight happening, teams can only be planned when there is a reasonable likelihood that that route is operative (e.g., we can confirm that flights have taken place on that route in the last month). Team members should be aware that there

is currently a greater likelihood of flight cancellations, which may mean a longer stay overseas. Any associated costs with such a stay are the responsibility of the team member.

- **Travel insurance**

DMI will purchase travel/medical insurance for team members. According to communication with our usual agent, Good Neighbor Insurance, on May 26, 2021, such insurances now do cover treatment for COVID infection (this had not been the case previously).

- **COVID infection rates in foreign country**

COVID infection rates should be low, certainly with an R number less than 1, if that country has such data. Further checks should take place, if possible, as official figures may be unreliable (e.g., does that country have a robust and reliable testing regime?).

- **Vaccination**

It is strongly recommended that team members be vaccinated against COVID-19. For those who receive the vaccination, please send DMI documentation to show vaccination has occurred, including the dates of vaccination (as immunity is only achieved some weeks after a second dose). Along with copies of passports, having this document on file can be helpful.

Should a team member object to vaccination, he or she may still be able to participate by signing a waiver that DMI and the team leadership will not be responsible for arrangements and costs if said team member contracts the coronavirus.

It could be the case that countries will require proof of vaccination for entry. This in itself may be a bar to participation for any non-vaccinated people. For those vaccinated, we recommend taking proof of vaccination with you to show authorities upon request.

At the time of writing, CDC guidance is that those who have been infected with COVID-19 should still be vaccinated.

- **Signed statement**

All team members are to sign a statement acknowledging the additional risks in international travel which may affect any of the issues above. This must also be signed by the parents of any minors participating on the team.