

HVO celebrates 25 years of service to international health care

This year Health Volunteers Overseas, the private, nonprofit, non-sectarian and voluntary organization based in the United States, is celebrating its 25th year of improving the lives of half the world's population who do not have access to healthcare services. The AAOMS is proud to be an original and continuing sponsor of HVO, and oral and maxillofacial surgeons continue to be well represented in the organization's pool of volunteers, but more are needed.

HVO volunteers represent all areas of medical and dental practice. They spend up to a month or more training, educating and mentoring in developing countries around the world. HVO's training programs address important areas of health care, including oral health, and are designed to increase the number of healthcare workers in those regions of the world where the health care need is high, but the number of providers is low.

HVO volunteers lecture, conduct ward rounds and demonstrate techniques and procedures in classrooms, clinics and operating rooms. In addition, they may be involved in teacher training, curriculum development and mentoring of students. Most programs require that volunteers serve for one

month, but there are some sites where volunteers may serve for as little as two weeks. There are also opportunities for longer placements, if a volunteer has the time available. Each program is managed by a volunteer program director in North America who is a health professional with HVO experience. Program directors screen and assist volunteers in selecting a suitable site. They also provide information about the work sites, local customs, housing arrangements, health conditions and other subjects relating to a healthcare tour. Volunteers are responsible

for their travel arrangements and expenses to and from their site.

New program established

HVO is pleased to announce the establishment of a

new oral health education program in Managua, Nicaragua at the Universidad Catolica (UNICA). The medical school at UNICA was founded in 1992, but the dental program was just established three years ago and will graduate its first class of 28 in 2012.

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America with a population of nearly 6 million people. Sixty



percent of the population lives on the Pacific side of the country. UNICA's main focus is to train dentists for this population. An economically challenged country, most people do not have access to dental care. One estimate is that only 30% of the population has access to these services.

To address this need, HVO volunteers will provide support and assistance to the faculty at UNICA with the development of specialty training programs in various aspects of oral health care. General dentists, specialists and oral and maxillofacial surgeons are needed. Training will consist of both didactic and clinical components. Initial areas of focus are: endodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, periodontics, and prosthodontics. Volunteers are needed for assignments of two weeks or longer.

HVO's oral health programs are sponsored by the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons and the American Dental Association.

If you are interested in volunteering your services, review the complete list of available volunteer opportunities at www.hvousing.org, or call the HVO office to speak with a recruiter at 202/296-0928. ■

MEMBERSHIP MINUTE

AAOMS would like to thank all of the fellows, members and candidates who supported the specialty and sponsored their staff members for the **new Allied Staff membership category**. Since its inception in January, AAOMS has welcomed more than 500 new members.

It's not too late to join! For a minimal application fee, Allied Staff members receive great discounts on educational courses offered through the end of the year. And the following year's dues are still less than what you save by sending your staff to a practice management seminar, coding or billing workshop or any of our many well-received educational sessions.

AAOMS 2012 membership dues will be billed in October for all membership categories and payment is due by December 31. We are always in search of new benefits to support the membership, especially our new allied staff members. If you have any suggestions for programs or services you would like to see, please contact your AAOMS Practice Management or Membership Services Departments at 800/822-6637. ■

eLearning presenters wanted

AAOMS is actively seeking to expand its number of high quality, integrated educational e-learning offerings. If you are interested in presenting an e-learning program on a clinical topic in which you specialize, we invite you to complete the Online Educational Program Application Form at www.aaoms.org/speakers. Programs may be either live online presentations, such as a Webinar, or a pre-recorded interactive program. For more information, contact the continuing education department at 800/822-6637. View AAOMS's current online offerings on the AAOMS Web site.

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