



Health Volunteers Overseas
Improving Global Health Through Education

Oncology Vietnam Program Description

GOAL: Assist in training physicians, surgeons, nurses, laboratory personnel and other health providers with the Hue College of Medicine and Pharmacy in the following areas:

1. Up-to-date advances in the clinical care of oncology patients on a wide variety of topics such as management of lung cancer, head and neck cancer, breast cancer and reconstruction, esophageal cancer, GI cancers, lymphoma, and cervical cancer.
2. Surgical training for breast cancer, esophageal cancer, gynecologic and pancreatic cancer.
3. Guidance in developing immunohistochemistry and flow cytometry technologies.
4. Training for physicians to provide palliative care.
5. Assistance in developing an infrastructure to deliver chemotherapy as an outpatient which would involve assistance in developing an infusion center and provide assistance in improving their current chemotherapy mixing station to be able to mix chemotherapy drugs safely.
6. Oncology lecture series to medical students and/or residents.
7. Training to nurses in the management of oncology patients.

**PROGRAM
DIRECTOR:** Quyen Chu, MD

Work: 318-675-6123
E-mail: Qchu@lsuhsc.edu

Please note: Potential volunteers should not contact Program Directors until they have submitted a profile form and contacted a recruiter at the Washington office.

**LOCAL
CONTACT:** Dr. Phung Phuong

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LENGTH OF ASSIGNMENT: 1 – 4 weeks

VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS: Volunteers must be appropriately trained and credentialed medical professionals who specialize in oncology. This includes physicians (medical, radiation, gynecologic, and surgical oncology, among other specialists), laboratory professionals, and nurses. Volunteers need to have been in active practice for at least 5 years, be board certified in their oncology specialty and provide HVO with a current CV, a copy of their current license and, for surgical volunteers, a list of which surgical procedures they currently are permitted to perform based on their current hospital credentials. Final year oncology fellows or those who have recently completed their fellowships will be accepted if paired with an experienced volunteer.

PROGRAM: Hue College of Medicine and Pharmacy, located in central Vietnam, is an academic center with a hospital run by the government. It provides health care for the 18 provinces in the central and highland areas of Vietnam serving a total population of more than 20 million. About 70 – 80% of the citizens have some form of insurance, either through private insurance or government supported insurance. It trains a variety of specialties including undergraduates, medical doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses and medical technologists. For the past 50 years, more than 12,000 health professionals have been trained at this center. It has 600 beds and approximately 28 departments, one of which is the department of oncology. There are 30 residents per year and 2 oncology fellows each year.

Oncology patients are cared for by a multidisciplinary team which includes medical oncologists and surgical oncologists. Approximately 70 beds are reserved for cancer patients. Surgical and medical oncology beds are separated from each other. There are no private rooms. The bulk of the patients at the hospital are indigent.

The facility sees about 120 – 130 new cancer cases per month. The majority of deaths occur due to the metastatic disease. The most prevalent cancers seen are lung, gastrointestinal (gastric, hepatoma, colorectal) breast, cervical, ovarian and lymphoma. The center has a rudimentary list of cancer patients treated with their respective diagnosis, but no formal cancer registry.

The center does all of its chemotherapy as an inpatient service although it would like to develop an infrastructure to deliver chemotherapy to outpatients. It has a rudimentary palliative cancer care program. Because it does not have screening programs, a good number of patients present with advanced disease. Only about 10% of patients with advanced cancer and/or imminent death have some sort of in-home services. There are no hospice facilities. There is a small amount of blood bank support. Most of the medications on the WHO list of essential medicines are available.

The operating room is relatively modern and clean. The center has laboratory facilities on site with a 1 day turn-around time for lab results. For pathology results, the turn-around time is 3 – 5 days. The facility has about 200 microscopes and one multi-head scope.

Volunteers will provide training in a variety of ways including conducting ward rounds, surgical demonstrations, bedside training and didactic lectures.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: See HVO “Vietnam General Information” document.

EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES: The center does not have a linear accelerator. The gamma-knife is their major work-horse. It has modern computers and software programs that would allow them to effectively deliver radiation to their patients. It has basic radiologic support such as X-rays and Ultrasounds. It also has CT and MRI scans although these need to be updated.

HOUSING: Available at local guest houses and hotels. Additional information will be provided.

ATTENTION: In many cases, an accompanying spouse, companion or family member (age 18 and older) is interested in participating in a volunteer capacity. In general, HVO is able to facilitate such assignments, especially for those with health care training. However, it would be up to the individual to be pro-active in developing a volunteer assignment. Many times, a role for these

volunteers is not defined until after arrival at the site.

In order for an assignment to be under the auspices of HVO, a spouse, companion or family member will be required to become a member of HVO and sign a release form prior to their assignment.

Site Suitable for Spouse/Companion?

YES NO

Site Suitable for Children?

YES NO

LANGUAGE: Vietnamese is the official language. French and English are common second languages. French is common among older people, while English is more common among the young and the well educated. Faculty at the hospital speak English.

PASSPORT & VISAS: A business visa is required for Vietnam. Volunteers have the option to apply directly to the Vietnam embassy on their own or else volunteers can choose to utilize HVO's visa service for an additional fee. Visa applications should be submitted 4 – 6 months prior to a volunteer's assignment and absolutely no later than 2 months. Approved volunteers will be provided additional information outlining this process.

REGISTRATION WITH US EMBASSY: Volunteers are encouraged to register with the local US Embassy. See the "Vietnam General Information" document for further details.

CLOTHING/CLIMATE: Average temperatures in Hue are mid-80's to mid-90's all year long. Temperatures climb steadily and reach high temperatures from June through August (90's F). September through December is the rainy season.

Volunteers should wear their HVO name tag and short white coats. Bring 2 sets of scrubs and enough masks and caps to last your stay. Clothes should be lightweight and easily washable. Volunteers are expected to dress in a professional manner while fulfilling their assignment duties at the program site. Professional attire does not include shorts, short skirts, sleeveless tops, flip flops or other casual attire not appropriate in a professional setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Volunteers accepted for this program will be provided with additional information regarding housing, visas, travel, and other topics.

ORIENTATION MATERIALS: All volunteers have access to the *HVO KnowNET* (<http://www.hvo.projectsaces.com/>) where the majority of the essential orientation materials are now maintained. The *HVO KnowNET* contains a variety of useful background materials -- how to obtain a visa; hints and suggestions from previous volunteers to a site; copies of volunteer talks/lectures; curriculum information; trip reports from previous volunteers, etc. To receive access to KnowNET, contact your recruiter.

HVO MEMBERSHIP: All volunteers with confirmed assignments must be members of HVO. The costs associated with developing a meaningful volunteer opportunity, as well as recruiting, briefing and placing a volunteer exceed \$900. Dues help defray these costs and provide essential funding for HVO ensuring that we will be able to continue placing volunteers – today, tomorrow and next year. Dues are \$150 for physicians and dentists; \$70 for nurses and allied health

professionals; and \$40 for those in training. To join, visit our secure website (<http://www.hvousa.org/waystogive.shtml>) or call the HVO office.

For more information about HVO programs, please visit our web site at www.hvousa.org

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