



## MEDICAL MISSIONS

The Pan American Medical Society, founded over 70 years ago as a scientific, humanitarian, and educational institution in Washington, DC, has recently begun an active program of overseas medical missions serving the countries of South America, and is engaging affiliate members to expand our work into Central America (M.F. Roider Foundation) and Africa (Paul Chester Foundation).

Since reorganizing as a Charitable Organization under IRS 501(C)3 rules in 2001, the Society's members have performed over 175 reconstructive and reparative surgeries, primarily on impoverished children without access to this level of care in their birth-countries.

The members of these surgical missions have until this time either donated or raised their own funds or paid out-of-pocket, in addition to their investment of personal time in the performance of these missions.

Our goal is not to radically alter health-care delivery in the countries where we operate. Rather, we recognize that in many cases a 1-2 hour surgical procedure can radically change the life of individuals afflicted with some of Nature's most disfiguring and debilitating conditions (cleft palate, club foot, burn scars, trachoma). We usually operate with local physicians who can and do use the experience gained to continue the volunteer effort in their country. These physicians often arrange for extended visits to the US after our missions to observe and learn new techniques and technology to deliver better care in their countries.

The cost of the missions is approximately \$1500-3000 per team member. A team of 12-15 can operate on about 50-60 children in a week, and a team of 25 can operate on twice that number. Transportation, lodging, meals, and security make up the bulk of the cost. Almost all equipment and supplies to run the mission are donated or borrowed by the team members. An average mission takes 10-12 days, of which 5 are spent operating. Travel time, unpacking and repacking, patient screening, OR setup and breakdown, and patient recovery take up the remaining time.

Our recent affiliation with Kuki Gallman in Kenya will hopefully lead to a means of reducing blinding sequelae of eye infections and improve the safety of childbirth. We will be traveling with an advance team including an ophthalmologist, obstetrician, anesthesiologist, nurse and logistics coordinator as the first phase of what we hope to be a perpetual health support presence in Laikipia, about 5 hrs north of Nairobi.

If you have any interest in supporting these efforts, please contact me, Dr. William Chester, President of PAMS, or one our team or board members. Our web address is [www.panammedsociety.org](http://www.panammedsociety.org).

Sincerely,

William Chester, MD  
Director of Missions  
Pan American Medical Society