The Clinica Cristiana was founded over 25 years ago with the vision of providing excellent medical services to the community of San Juan with specific and preferential treatment for the poor. It is a fully operational, Dominican-run clinic that we are able to share facilities with during North American surgical weeks.

Because of volunteers, like you, we are able to offer low-cost specialty procedures and surgeries that these patients would never have access to otherwise.
The Christian Clinic of Integrated Health
La Clinica Cristiana de Salud Integral

Patient Costs/Finances
Before surgery, each patient must meet with our clinic Administrator regarding their financial situation and/or ability to contribute to their healthcare. Medical volunteers are providing the surgeries free of cost, however, costs to the clinic (electricity, laundry, personnel, maintenance, etc) are still present. That being said, it is important to note that No patient will ever be denied care for financial reasons.

Surgical Supplies
Please plan to bring ALL the surgical supplies that you will need for your surgeries and patients during your surgical week. We recommend beginning communication early with organizations such as Americares (www.americares.org), Blessings International (www.blessing.org), Kingsway Charities, (www.kingswaycharities.org), Map International (www.map.org), and 12 Basketsfull (www.12basketsfull.org). It is wise to begin ordering and gathering supplies months ahead of your trip and have “packing parties” with the members of your team to distribute supplies in various suitcases.
How It Works

Sunday
The afternoon will be prep time for your team. After arrival, your team will have an orientation and then be given time to unpack and organize your surgical supplies, ORs, etc. Please take this time to review instruments present in the clinic as well as what you may have brought with you. You can put your trays together, wrap them, and place them in the autoclave. During consults on Monday, please alert one of the Medical Coordinators or clinic staff to run the autoclave. There may be some supplies available for your use in the clinic but please plan on bringing the vast majority of what you will use. This includes all gowns, drapes, towels, laps, sponges, raytex, special sutures, dressings, Foleys, casting materials, mesh, drains, disposable instruments, etc. Because the clinic is in use all year round, supplies that are left from other groups are also used by the Dominican surgeons and doctors. This includes medications, both for pain management and anesthesia. We are more than happy to communicate needs to teams but with the understanding that our supplies ebb and wane based on both North American AND Dominican use.

Monday
Your team will complete the majority of your surgery consults on Monday. All patients over the age of 20 require cardiac clearance. The cardiologists are present on Monday and Wednesday. Some of the surgical candidates will already be cleared by cardiology for the North American teams. It is important to schedule these patients for surgery early in the week and then have the others see the cardiologists in order to have surgery on Wednesday or Thursday.

Major surgeries (thyroid, open gallbladder, large ortho surgeries) should be performed as early as possible during your surgical week in order to allow time for your surgeon to see the patient as often as he/she can before the patient is discharged.
Monday continued:
All patients are required to have lab work before surgery. Dominican laws require patients to have a CBC, type and screen, Hep B/C, VDRL and HIV testing before surgery. Certain patients may require another labs which can be confirmed during consults on Monday.

We do not have a current functioning x-ray machine, which means that any patient who may require X-rays will be sent to another facility in San Juan to have them taken and then return with them. It is likely but not a guarantee that this can happen in the same day.

Our Dominican doctors will have been preparing and pre-screening patients for your team’s arrival. Many patients therefore will have had their lab work and cardiac clearance completed prior to Monday’s consult.

Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday
Your team will begin work at 8 am on the surgeries that you have set in your schedule. The team goal is to be finished with surgery by 5 pm in order to participate in dinner and scheduled activities with the team.

The normal clinic hours are 8 am-4 pm, which means that the majority of Dominican staff will leave at 4 pm, leaving one or two nurses to attend the patients if there are over-night patients. The in-house pharmacy where the North American teams purchase their IV fluids, Fentanyl and Versed also closes at 4 pm. It is important to consider this fact during the day time hours and ask in advance if your team will need more fluids or medications. You will sign for the medications and then be given a bill at the end of the week to pay in either dollars or pesos.

Before you leave on Thursday, it is important to leave the OR’s clean and organized and return instruments and supplies to their proper places.
Facilities

- 2 operating rooms available
- 1 Pre-op and 1 Post-op (each containing 6-8 beds)
- Several consultation rooms available
- There is a large autoclave available for large instrument trays with an approximate 60 minute turn-around. This autoclave is managed by the Dominicans. There are also several small autoclaves at your disposal for “flash” autoclave rounds. If you would like to have your instruments run through the large autoclave, they should be washed and wrapped and placed in the large autoclave. Then alert Livida to run the autoclave if they are present. If they are not present, please alert one of the SRI medical coordinators to communicate with those who can run the autoclave. Again, it is your responsibility to prepare and have your instruments ready for each case.
- SOME of the surgical instruments that you need will be available. However, if you want to be sure of availability, we would recommend that you bring your own.
- You will have interpreters available for consults, Pre-op and Post-op
You will be given standardized forms to use for your patients for documentation.

Dominican nurses will stay with your patients at night to provide care. The nurses should be given a full report for each patient, as well as sufficient/prescribed medications.

You must document on your surgeries the same way you would at your practice at home (This includes pre-operative vital signs, informed consents, any medications given, an anesthesia report, orders, recovery room specifics, and an operative note that includes a follow-up care plan). Local Dominican staff will be following-up with your patients and will need to know specific extended care plans.

Pain Medications and IV Fluids

Normal Saline or Lactated Ringers will be purchased by your team in the Dominican pharmacy for approximately $25 US/case of 10 (unless you choose to bring your own).

In the Dominican Republic it is very difficult to find narcotics needed for surgeries. Fentanyl ($5/100mcg vial) and Versed ($6/2mg vial) can usually be purchased at the clinic’s pharmacy if given at least 3-4 weeks notice**. Teams should plan to bring their own supply of pain medications (such as Nubain, Toradol, Tramadol, Meloxicam Vicodin, Percocet, etc).

It is also difficult at times to obtain anesthesia meds. Please try to bring Sevo, Propofol, Succs and any other anesthetics that you plan on using.

Check our website REGULARLY for an updated list of needed surgical supplies and medications (http://www.solidrockinternational.org/missions-home/resources-for-mission-attendees/).
Staffing for your surgical team is very important. Although there are Dominican nurses occasionally available to help in certain ways, you are responsible for all staffing needs for your team. This includes Pre-op nursing care, PACU nursing care (preferably ACLS certified), OR circulator, OR scrub nurse or tech, anesthesia personnel and surgeons. Since instrumentation is quite different in our OR’s, we also recommend someone to help wash and prepare the instruments between cases. Although Livida (our Dominican charge nurse) is sometimes available to help with instruments this is not 100% guaranteed and should be staffed by North Americans accordingly. Pre-Op nurses are responsible for organizing the Pre-op area, making the beds, helping to admit the patients, start IVs, check vital signs and review records for required paperwork. PACU nurses are responsible for organizing the PACU area, making the beds, verifying oxygen tank capacity and “full levels”, and caring for the patients for at least the first hour after surgery, recording vital signs every 15 minutes for stable patients. PACU nurses are also responsible to assist the surgeons in discharging patients in the morning before surgery begins as well as ensuring that adequate medication is left with the overnight Dominican nurses caring for the patients and also the patients upon discharge. Scrub techs/nurses are responsible for all instrumentation, including putting together, washing, wrapping and organizing the instruments for their surgeon. Circulating nurses are responsible for supplies in the OR before, during, and after surgery and also organizing the supplies left by the group on Thursday afternoons. Anesthesia personnel are responsible for patient care in the OR, all anesthesia medications and documentation during surgery. All of the anesthesia machines are “bag machines” with no working ventilators at this time. Surgeons are responsible for reviewing all paperwork in the chart, including verifying signed consents, appropriate labs (Hemoglobin must be above 10, all positive viral labs must be referred to Dr. Canario, etc), leaving written orders, and writing a follow up plan (English is fine) for the Dominican staff to follow.
MEDICAL LICENSURE

Due to recent changes and requests from the Public Health offices in the Dominican Republic, we are asking for copies of ALL medical personnel licenses 40 days BEFORE your arrival to San Juan. This includes physicians, RNs, PAs, NPs, EMTs, CNMs, paramedics, and LPNs. They should be sent to Nicole Hoover (nhoover@solidrockinternational.org) in ONE EMAIL with all copies attached at least one month before your trip. We will be printing them and taking them to the Public Health offices in San Juan. Group leaders should plan on having a copy of ALL medical licenses in the surgery rooms.

OPERATING ROOM EXPECTATIONS

We expect our surgical teams to set the same examples of professionalism as found in North America. This includes proper surgical attire in the OR rooms, appropriate personnel in the OR, and proper sterile techniques (including no eating and drinking) in the OR. We want to adhere to the same standards as the United States.
The Set-up for Success

Flexibility is the catch word that we try to emphasize from the moment of your arrival. Time is a “loose” concept in San Juan and often times patient arrivals and departures aren’t quite as organized as our teams are accustomed to experiencing. Our autoclaves aren not as fast as in North American and turning over a surgical room usually takes a bit more time than most OR staff are expecting. However, it is extremely fulfilling to participate in a surgical team and be able to spend time with the warm, welcoming, and grateful people of San Juan de la Maguana. Relationships take priority over almost everything else here and it is so meaningful to the patients when we can show love to them. Please prepare your hearts and minds to be open to perhaps a “slower” way of life knowing that these moments spent talking or reassuring patients are very important to them.

We have been praying for each team arrival knowing that God has a specific purpose for all those who are coming to serve. THANK YOU for sharing your talents and gifts on a surgical team!