Global Health Education Programs
Senior Clinical Elective in Cape Town, South Africa
Spring 2018

South Africa is a country with a turbulent history, with resultant large inequalities in wealth, education and health. However, despite the challenges it faces, it has developed significant expertise in the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, particularly in addressing TB and HIV. Cape Town is the provincial capital of the Western Cape, with a population of approximately 1.6 million inhabitants. English, Xhosa and Afrikaans are the three most commonly spoken languages in Cape Town. According to national policy, public health care is provided along a tiered referral system. Primary care clinics provide access points to health services, with more complicated conditions being referred to secondary level hospitals.

We are pleased to offer clinical rotations in Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics, Internal Medicine and OB/GYN at Somerset Hospital in Cape Town in the Spring of 2018. With all of these rotations, students do their own blood draws and start their own IVs, and become skilled in these areas. Students will care for a wide range of patients, including those presenting with common opportunistic infections associated with HIV (i.e. tuberculosis and cryptococcal meningitis). Supervision of UCLA medical students will be by senior medical staff on site, and students will work alongside the equivalent of residents and medical students from the University of Cape Town (UCT). Students will also participate in evening mobile clinics run by UCT medical students, providing primary care services in poorer areas of the city, through its well-established SHAWCO Program: http://www.shawco.org/.

The rotation has been developed with formal goals and objectives. We are seeking students with an interest in caring for underserved populations, and those with enthusiasm for learning more about global health, infectious diseases and health care delivery in resource poor settings. Students will be expected to demonstrate the highest level of maturity, professionalism and cultural sensitivity.

Students will receive $2,500 of support for the South Africa clinical rotation. These funds are awarded upon return from the elective to contribute to the costs of roundtrip airfare and in-country accommodation and food. Students will need to cover the remaining expenses from other funds, as the cost of this rotation will exceed the amount provided by the Center for World Health.

Interviews for the elective will take place on Saturday, October 7, 2017, with a few additional time slots during the following week. Students selected for this rotation are required to participate in a full day pre-departure training program in Los Angeles on Saturday, January 20, 2018. Upon return home from South Africa, students will be expected to provide feedback through written evaluation forms, and participate in a mandatory lunchtime feedback session on Thursday, May 31, 2018.

Rotation dates for this elective have been confirmed. Students applying to this elective must be able to commit to this elective from April 2, 2018 through April 20, 2017. Note that an April 2 start date will require departure from the U.S. by March 31, 2018, at the latest.

Questions regarding this rotation should be directed to Dr. Traci Wells at twells@mednet.ucla.edu. Thank you for your interest in the clinical experience in Cape Town, South Africa!