

## Updated COVID-19 and VOSH Humanitarian Clinics Advice

VOSH/International recently consulted its US and International Chapters about the feasibility and timing to restart our humanitarian clinics. While the vaccination process continues with different levels of success depending on availability and acceptance, it is evident that vaccine inequity and the availability and reliability of data in several countries are issues we need to consider.

Even if already vaccinated, our chapters are still concerned about the wellbeing of our volunteers and patients. Some chapters, are organizing clinics locally where they are better able to comply with the existing safety requirements and respective state/country regulations.

The COVID-19 pandemic is being experienced quite differently depending on state, region, country, vaccine availability, vaccine acceptance, and the spread of SARS-COV-2 variants. Most VOSH chapters are not holding clinics or traveling internationally in 2021.

Thus, VOSH/International is slightly moderating its overall guidance against clinics and travel issued in late March 2020 and renewed in January 2021. This will be reviewed and communicated on a quarterly basis.

If a VOSH Chapter chooses to hold a clinic or travel internationally, we highly recommend that the chapter performs due diligence to comply fully with the requirements established by the visited country, ensures all VOSH volunteers are aware of and follow strict safety guidelines and all existing protocols and regulations of the country, and keeps the principle of “do no harm” embedded in all its decision making. As always, the wellbeing and safety for VOSH volunteers and our patients is of utmost importance and central to any decision-making process. We have published our updated clinic guidelines with best practices to be observed in this new context. VOSH chapters in specific countries are using protocols that need to be considered as well. You can download VOSH/International clinic guidelines [here](#).

**\*VOSH/International is formed by autonomous US and international chapters that are fully and only responsible for their activities, fundraising and decision-making. VOSH/International can only provide recommendations based on our best knowledge and information at the time.**

Also please keep checking the following sites with official and most recent updates:

World Health Organisation: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

US CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/when-to-delay-travel.html>

US Government Travel Advise: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/COVID-19-Country-Specific-Information.html>

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to improving vision and eye health throughout the world.

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