

## **Volunteer in Ghana and Make a Difference! Women's Health Initiative (WHI) Cervical Cancer Prevention Outreach March 14 - 27, 2025**

### **Project HANDS overview and philosophy**

The scales of the world are unbalanced. Some of us have much more than we need, whilst others struggle to survive on an unthinkable amount of nothing. Project HANDS seeks to rebalance the scales. We are a registered Canadian volunteer organization that provides healthcare, education and support to those who, by chance of birth, have less fortunate lives than our own. We have no religious or political affiliation. Our mandate is empowerment. We do not relieve developing societies of their duty to provide healthcare. Rather, we assist them through training and upskilling. When we help make sustainable change, the scales begin to rebalance, and it is time to move on and offer our hand to someone else.

### **Why is this work important?**

Cervical cancer is nearly 100% preventable, yet it claims more than 300,000 lives a year. It is the leading cause of female cancer deaths in Ghana. Every year, more than 3,000 women are diagnosed and more than 2,000 die, constituting a mortality rate of 67%. Early detection and treatment save lives.

### **What are the goals for this trip?**

To screen 800 - 1000 women between the ages of 25 and 55.

### **What methodology is used?**

Our "see & treat" methodology (visual inspection with acetic acid and immediate thermal ablation) is the most cost effective (fewest dollars spent per life year saved) strategy for low resource regions. We are also incorporating an AI based diagnostic system into our protocol, to improve screening efficiency and accuracy.

### **What are the program achievements to date?**

We have trained 115 healthcare providers, screened 11,107 women and administered 959 ablation treatments in Bolivia, Myanmar and refugee camps in Thailand.

### **What is the tentative trip schedule?**

Days 1 & 2 | Friday, March 14 & Saturday, March 15 | travel to Accra, Ghana  
Day 3 | Sunday, March 16 | drive to Akwatia  
Days 4 - 12 | March 17 - 25 | 8 days of screening clinics and Sunday at leisure  
Day 13 | Wednesday, March 26 | drive to Accra  
Day 14 | Thursday, March 27 | travel home

### **Where will the team work?**

We will work at St. Dominic Catholic Hospital in Akwatia.

### **What is our target demographic?**

Our target demographic is low-income women between the ages of 25 & 55.

### **What is the team makeup?**

The team will consist of three clinicians, who will work in close collaboration with Medical Women Association of Ghana and local medical providers.

### **What types of volunteers are needed?**

We are seeking two gynecologists, colposcopists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners or midwives with relevant experience.

### **When is the application deadline?**

Recruiting will remain open until we find the perfect team members.

### **Where does the team stay?**

We stay at very basic accommodations on the hospital grounds. Two rooms have air conditioning. The others have fans.

### **What are the participation requirements?**

- submit resume and proof of current professional registration
- complete online registration form, volunteer agreement and waiver of liability
- receive yellow fever vaccination
- obtain entry visa
- book and pay for your flights and hotels
- pay all individual expenses en route and in Ghana (listed below)
- purchase international medical and evacuation insurance
- comply with strictly enforced deadlines for all requirements
- be in good physical health, as the days are long and demanding
- be flexible, possess a sense of humor, and contribute to positive team dynamics

### **How much does it cost to volunteer?**

Estimated costs include the following:

- international airfare: varies based on departure city and other factors
- entry visa and postage: US\$100
- hotels: US\$700
- meals US\$400
- transportation between Accra and Akwatia: US\$100
- international medical and evacuation insurance: US\$100

At the conclusion of the trip, you are eligible to apply for expense reimbursement up to US\$1,500. Receipts are required.

### **Are my expenses tax-deductible?**

Project HANDES can issue a Canadian tax receipt. Non-Canadian volunteers should consult a tax advisor.

### **May a friend or family member accompany me?**

Sorry, we cannot accommodate friends or family members. There is no role on the team, the examination areas are strictly off-limits, and there are no tourist attractions or diversions in the vicinity.

### **I would like additional information about Project HANDES.**

Please visit [www.projecthands.org](http://www.projecthands.org).

### **I would like to be considered for the team, and/or have additional questions.**

Please contact Debbie Jefkin-Elnekave at [debbie.projecthands@gmail.com](mailto:debbie.projecthands@gmail.com) or (808) 214-6053.

**Note:** First time applicants must submit a resume in order to be considered. If you have applied or volunteered in the past, your resume is still on file. Volunteers who are selected for the team will be provided with a link to formally register online.

**What if it was you who needed a hand?  
Would it be there?**