

2021 M3 Conference
Q&A with Nicholas Comminellis, MD, MPH, DIMPH
“Launching Your International Healthcare Career”

CLICK LINK TO WATCH SESSION: <https://youtu.be/HCozQzim0Xk>

What are the steps to take to start serving in a medical facility or orphanage in a war-torn nation such as Afghanistan?

Begin by looking for organizations that already have a medical facility or orphanage in such a location, so they can guide you with the intricacies. Just by definition, that kind of service is going to be unpredictable. You need to have an organization that is experienced with that kind of unpredictability. Often, they will be blessed by your willingness to contribute to their work. If no pre-existing ministry exists, then begin by interviewing those in power, such as government officials or medical care establishments, and seek their cooperation in beginning such a work.

Where can an entry level or a new entrant fit after finishing a bachelor’s degree in public health?

Individuals with a bachelor’s degree in public health can often begin with a position in community development. For advanced responsibilities, a master’s degree in public health would likely be required.

How have people applied their public health degree in long term missionary work? Are there any examples or stories of certain successful public health missionaries? Are individuals with a public health background able to have the same impact as the medical staff?

A public health degree or international health degree is the leading recognized qualification for a career in global health. Many healthcare professionals in other fields also obtain a degree in public health because their traditional healthcare training did not address communitywide health needs. That said, there are missionaries who work exclusively in public health, and there is wide recognition of the need for greater numbers of such people. Those with public health degrees can make a significant contribution, similar to that of more traditional healthcare missionaries.

I just recently graduated with a BBA in Healthcare Administration and have always had a heart for missions. I just don’t know where to start. Are there internships or other courses that you suggest I go through first before being able to go out?

We need administrators. Someone has to manage the logistics, the transportation, visas, travel, financing and hiring. Mission ministries do not exist without those kinds of logistics. So, someone who is formally trained in administration can be a wonderful compliment. A great need exists for skilled healthcare administrators. If you still feel like you need more training, as a start, I recommend an INMED professional certificate in international public health. This will give you a solid orientation to the challenges and logistics of the field. INMED, or another quality organization, can also arrange for mentored service experiences where you can gain some skills in this field before launching out on your own. You can learn more about INMED and the courses offered at: <https://www.inmed.us/>

I'm a Biomedical Engineer with a Masters in Global Medical Innovation. I rarely see opportunities for bioengineers. How can I get involved with medical device design?

Thank you for asking! You are in a very specific field. There is certainly a well-recognized need for such innovations. I would begin by recommending that you contact Global Health Innovations:
<https://www.globalhealthinnovations.org>

Is there anything a therapist can do?

If you are referring to physical therapy or occupational therapy, yes! The problems with disabilities in the developing world are profound and therapists can create hope among these individuals and families. If you are referring to psychological therapy, yes there is also a need for such professionals. But to be effective, they would also need to become very familiar with the culture and languages of the community.

Can you talk more about your statement, "we need people who will give a significant amount of time serving marginalized people?"

Every community or people that you might have an interest in and want to serve has their own history, their own coded language, their particular challenges, and those are things that are difficult to learn. Even after two or three years, many of us who have stayed long-term would say, I was only just beginning to comprehend the culture. As some of the other presenters have said so far, it's only after years of influence (5, 10 or more years) that someone they have been sharing Christ with or modeling faith with begins to really show an interest. So, my hats off to people who have endured. My very first preceptor in Honduras had been there for 30 years. We need more of them.

Can you elaborate more on the benefit of doing short-term trips to the same location for many years?

For example, after my initial years in Angola in the 90's, I've been going back in July for the last eighteen years. I essentially do their vacation coverage. They know I come in July, so they plan their vacations for July. That's one way to contribute to the sustainability of a ministry, even though we are doing it part-time.

How can people find out more information about the Institute for International Medicine (INMED)?

Our website is a great place to start at www.inmed.us.

INMED hosts a conference every year. When is the INMED conference and how can I register?

June 11th and 12th, 2021, will be the 17th year of the Humanitarian Health Conference. You can register for the conference at <https://inmedevents.org/event/2021hhc/>. We are very intentional about creating an event with a healthcare education focus that will be a crossover experience. So, you can invite someone who may be outside the kingdom, and we think in this environment, they'll not only learn about compassionate healthcare, but they will also be exposed to people walking with Christ. The other key is the connection with sending organizations. The conference provides face time with people with whom you could serve, train, create a vision for what's next in your life.

How are the Institute for International Medicine (INMED) trainings conducted?

The core courses can be completed entirely online. Most of them are eight weeks long and include meetings with the faculty once a week, assignments once a week, and live interactions with the faculty. It will be a role modeling experience, as best as we can do in a virtual environment. We also teach in-person hands-on skills, so if you want to learn ultrasound, we teach an in-person ultrasound course about six times a year, as well as newborn resuscitation, complicated obstetrics, and wound care skills. Skills that are really important, but can't be perfected online, are taught in person. What we are best known for are the international preceptorships, where we match you with a supervisor in a developing country. The preceptor will show you how to apply the head knowledge you have gained on behalf of a people group.

Where are the Institute for International Medicine (INMED) in-person trainings held?

In the United States, INMED offers in-person training in Glendale, California; Kansas City, Missouri; Fort Worth, Texas; Boston, Massachusetts; Long Island, New York; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. INMED also has faculty in 25 nations throughout Central America, Africa, and Asia.

I'm interested in serving with Institute for International Medicine (INMED) and participating in some of the trainings, how do I get connected?

I am happy to hear about your interest in serving with INMED. Please visit our website at www.inmed.us. Please also message Dr. Nicholas Comninellis at nicholas@inmed.us or call 816-444-6400.

Where can we find cost for the Institute for International Medicine (INMED) trainings?

The cost for all INMED courses and training are posted on our website at www.inmed.us. You can also message Dr. Nicholas Comninellis at nicholas@inmed.us or call 816-444-6400.

I was wondering if Canadian students are eligible for the Institute for International Medicine (INMED) programs?

Yes, Canadians are invited to participate in all of INMED's programs; we have about 20 graduates who are Canadian.

Can I take the public health course offered at Institute for International Medicine (INMED) despite being a 15-year graduate?

Yes, you certainly qualify to take the public health courses offered by INMED.