



**MEDSCHOOLCOACH**  
helping you achieve your medical school dreams

medschoolcoach.com

# TRAVEL GUIDE



# PANAMA

2023-2024 School Year Edition

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## Greetings Travelers!



**Dr. Sahil Mehta**  
Founder, MedSchoolCoach



**Steven Atamian**  
Co-Founder, Global Brigades

Welcome to the Global Medical Brigades and MedSchoolCoach adventure in Panama! To those who have already secured their spot, thank you for choosing this transformative journey. For those still considering, understand that this isn't just another trip—it's an avenue for merging research, hands-on practice, and genuine societal impact.

Global Brigades has a legacy of empowering communities across Central America & Panama, offering holistic healthcare solutions and creating sustainable community projects. As a brigade member, you won't merely be an observer; you'll be an agent of change.

In Panama, you will shadow physicians and healthcare providers, witness medical care being administered, and actively participate in research projects that enhance your skills and have tangible benefits for the communities we serve.

Beyond the medical and research realms, Panama offers enriching cultural experiences. Enjoy its scenic landscapes, experience local cuisine, and immerse in its vibrant culture. This trip promises not only intellectual enrichment but also a mosaic of unforgettable experiences.

Returning from this journey, you'll carry more than just memories. You'll possess a fortified research acumen, stories of tangible impact, and a heightened competency profile—attributes that will deeply resonate in your life and medical school applications.

Whether you're gearing up or still gauging, Panama, its communities, and the pioneering spirit of the Global Brigades await. Dive into this journey with us!



# Contacts

## Who do I contact with questions?

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### **For New Bookings & Existing Bookings**

Contact: MedSchoolCoach Enrollment  
Email: [enroll@medschoolcoach.com](mailto:enroll@medschoolcoach.com)  
Phone: (888) 381-9509

### **For International Airfare and Travel Questions**

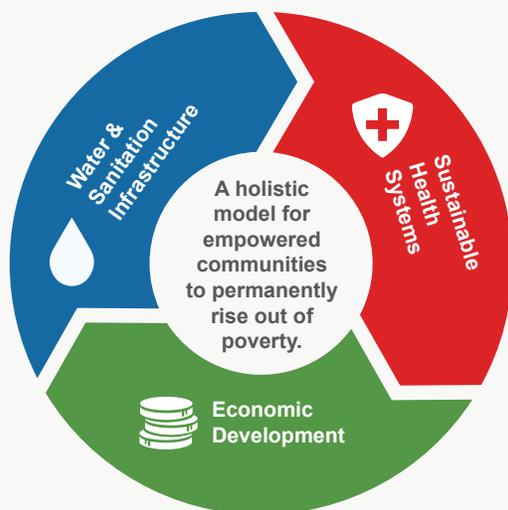
Contact: Carlos Romero  
Email: [carlos.romero@globalbrigades.org](mailto:carlos.romero@globalbrigades.org)  
Phone: (206) 489 4796

# Empowerment Through Global Medical Brigades

## Holistic Approach to Community Empowerment

As a volunteer with Global Brigades, you're not just offering your time; you're becoming a part of a renowned international development organization. Working closely with dedicated local staff and deeply rooted community partners, our collective vision is set on addressing and substantially reducing health and economic disparities. This shared mission is grounded in understanding, cooperation, and a desire to uplift communities from their challenges.

At the heart of our intervention strategies is the Holistic Model, a comprehensive framework that stands out in its multifaceted approach. This model centers around sustainable health systems designed to offer uninterrupted year-round care. It focuses on the creation and maintenance of robust water and sanitation infrastructures, promoting sustainable economic development, and facilitating education and capacity-building. Beyond these interventions, we pride ourselves on the dedication of our full-time local professionals. Their relentless follow-ups, backed by methodical monitoring and evaluation, guarantee that our initiatives have lasting impacts, forging brighter futures for the communities we serve.



Students joining the Panama trip play a vital role in this empowerment journey. Through direct interaction, exchange of ideas, and practical assistance, students amplify the reach of Global Brigades' initiatives, enabling faster transformation of communities.

# The Road to Sustainable Development

Empowered Communities don't just exist; they thrive. With the Holistic Model as their foundation, they pave their path toward self-reliance, accessing sustainable solutions. Global Brigades, by providing financing avenues, supports this journey with a dedicated team of on-ground experts.

Aligned with the United Nation's 2030 Agenda, Global Brigades intertwines its mission with the U.N.'s Sustainable Goals. These goals, aiming to end poverty and ensure prosperity, guide our Holistic Model. Through the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals, we focus our efforts for a lasting impact in our partner nations.

Students on the Panama expedition not only witness this alignment but actively contribute to bringing these goals to life in our partner communities. Their hands-on involvement and efforts directly impact the realization of these sustainable objectives.



# General Information

For those who've already marked their calendars for this transformative journey, we can't wait to welcome you! If you're still contemplating, know that you'll dive into an unparalleled 9-day venture into Panama's heartland.

With MedSchoolCoach physicians and Global Medical Brigades staff by your side, shadow distinguished doctors, delve into clinical observations, and make your mark in meaningful research. This is your golden ticket to navigate the intricate healthcare terrain and secure invaluable advice for your medical school application.

Students are responsible for their round-trip airfare to Tocumen International Airport, Panama City, with guidance provided by a designated Travel Team Member. Please arrive at your departure airport four hours before your flight. Upon registration, a questionnaire will be issued to note any dietary or medical needs. Due to program logistics, individual meal requests can't be accommodated, but a variety of healthy, delicious meals will be provided.

Throughout your journey, you'll be guided by local Panamanian program coordinators and directors, maintaining an approximate 4:1 staff-to-student ratio.

## Travel Dates:



**Summer**

**June 22-30, 2024**

The Virtual Experience typically occurs 1 month before we set off.





### Your Destination:

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Tocumen International Airport - Located in Panama City, Panama. Our primary base will be in the rural regions, about a two to three-hour drive from the city.



### Clinic & Research Sites:

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- **Community Health Centers -**  
Our activities will primarily take place in rural health clinics across Panama, tailored to each community's specific needs.
- **Local Hospitals -**  
Hospital visits may be included in the itinerary, based on available clinical observation opportunities.

As we edge closer to your selected dates, expect a comprehensive itinerary spotlighting precise locations for our clinical and research escapades, tailored to the communities we're privileged to assist.

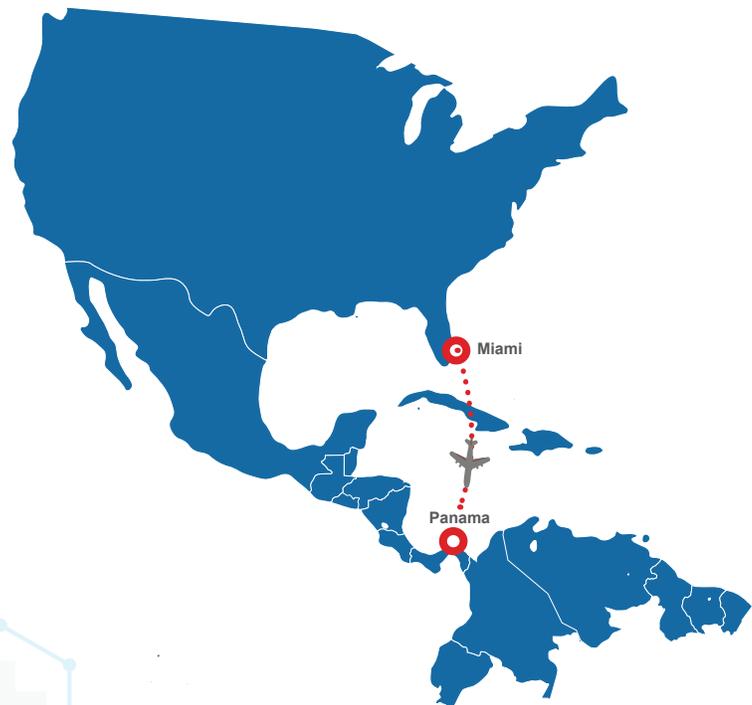
# Trip Planning

Ensure you book your roundtrip airfare from your home city to Tocumen International Airport, Panama City, Panama. Discover more about the airport's location here: [go.medschoolcoach.com/tocumen](http://go.medschoolcoach.com/tocumen)

Direct roundtrip flights from the United States to Panama City hover around \$850 on average. However, these prices can swing quite a bit, so booking sooner rather than later is wise. For reference, flights from Miami take approximately 3 hours, non-stop.



All participants, whether you've already enrolled or are still contemplating, should check that their passport is valid for at least 6 months beyond their intended stay in Panama. While U.S., Canadian, and UK citizens can skip the visa process, others might need to decide on their own. Though basic travel insurance is bundled into your program fees, it's a good idea to consider tuition insurance as well.



# Preparation Schedule

## To Do Immediately

- ✓ If you haven't already booked your MedSchoolCoach trip with Global Medical Brigades, pay your deposit and submit your information to secure your spot. [medschoolcoach.com/panama/reserve-your-spot](https://medschoolcoach.com/panama/reserve-your-spot)
- ✓ Ensure your passport is valid – Check the expiration date. Renew if it will expire during your travels. Keep in mind, passport processing can take 10-13 weeks (routine) or 7-9 weeks (expedited for an additional \$60).

## 120 Days Prior to Departure

- ✓ Pay your remaining balance due.
- ✓ Submit your Health Form – So we can ensure your health, and that of your fellow travelers. [medschoolcoach.com/panama/health-form](https://medschoolcoach.com/panama/health-form)
- ✓ Submit your Disclosure Form – Review and sign the Liability Release, GPA Verification, Media Waiver, and Code of Conduct. [medschoolcoach.com/panama/disclosures](https://medschoolcoach.com/panama/disclosures)
- ✓ Book your roundtrip flight to Tocumen International Airport in Panama City. If required, a Global Medical Brigade Travel Team Member can assist.
- ✓ Purchase independent travel insurance to cover potential trip cancellation.

## 90 Days Prior to Departure

- ✓ If you are not a citizen of the U.S., Canada, or the UK, secure visas if your research indicates that you will need one to enter Panama.
- ✓ Obtain necessary vaccinations, including yellow fever (if moving to a country requiring proof after your visit to Panama). If traveling directly from a yellow fever-free nation, you can skip this step.
- ✓ Follow the CDC and Panama vaccination recommendations, which include Hepatitis A/B, Measles, Rabies, Malaria, Typhoid, and COVID-19 with booster.

## 60 Days Prior to Departure

- ✓ Review the packing list to ensure you have all necessary items.

## 30 Days Prior to Departure

- ✓ Provide the MedSchoolCoach phone number of (888) 381-9509 to a family member for emergency contact.
- ✓ Leave copies of your passport, visa (if required), and airline tickets with a trusted adult.
- ✓ Confirm all your travel arrangements.

# Packing List

This list provides a general guideline of what to bring or not bring on a brigade. Contact your airline to confirm baggage allowances before travel.

## Packing Tips:

- ✔ **Dress for durability:** Expect your clothes to get wet and dirty during community visits. Avoid bringing favorite or expensive clothes. Use Ziplock bags for keeping personal items dry.
- ✔ **Minimize electronics and valuable items:** Leave unnecessary electronic devices and expensive jewelry at home.
- ✔ **Pack light:** A large backpack or duffel bag should suffice. Leave some space for souvenirs. Try to avoid checking bags to prevent loss. If bags are lost, Global Brigades is not liable.
- ✔ **Bring necessary medication:** Keep medications in their original prescription bottles in your carry-on luggage. Bring only the amount needed for the trip length. Follow security guidelines for liquid medicines.
- ✔ **Stay prepared:** Always carry a copy of your passport and essential documents.

## Dress Code:

As a volunteer, you represent Global Brigades in the communities. Dress professionally yet comfortably, respecting the local culture. Pack conservatively (avoid leggings or revealing clothes). Adhere to the coordinator and GB staff's guidance, as dress codes may vary per country/community. At the lodging facility, casual clothes like shorts, flip flops, tank tops, etc., are acceptable.



## Documents:

- ✓ Passport, visas, green cards (Passport photocopies mandatory for Panama entry)
- ✓ Under-21 Consent Letter, if applicable
- ✓ Photocopy of passport (Valid for 6 months post-departure)
- ✓ Immunization records copy
- ✓ Yellow Fever Vaccination Card, if applicable

## Clothing & Footwear:

- ✓ Durable, conservative work clothes
- ✓ Closed-toe shoes or boots
- ✓ Long pants, t-shirts (No shorts, leggings, tank tops, or scrub tops in the community)
- ✓ Casual clothes for lodging facility (Shorts and tank tops allowed)
- ✓ Swimsuit, shower shoes
- ✓ Hat, sunglasses
- ✓ Layering items: light jacket, rain jacket, sweatshirt

**Note: Non-healthcare volunteers should avoid scrub tops; scrub pants with a t-shirt are acceptable.**

## Personal Items:

Pack hygiene supplies in checked luggage and personal items in carry-ons:

- ✓ Laptop (For data informatics)
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Prescription medications (Students should carry their own)
- ✓ Insect repellent, sunscreen
- ✓ Sealed toiletries to prevent spills
- ✓ Hand sanitizer, wet wipes
- ✓ Daypack for brigades
- ✓ Ziploc bags for dry storage
- ✓ Snacks
- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Notebook, pen
- ✓ Alarm clock or cell phone (airplane mode)
- ✓ Flashlight
- ✓ Small-bill spending money (USD accepted)
- ✓ Downtime activities: cards, soccer ball, book

# The Medical Brigade

## The Brigade

Embark on the Global Medical Brigades journey to Panama, accompanied by a U.S. physician who will facilitate your diverse clinical experiences. In less than two weeks, you'll accumulate more than 45 observation hours spanning multiple medical specialties.

Each evening, engage in comprehensive discussions about the patients you've encountered, their pathology, and potential treatment plans, under the guidance of our lead physician educator. This real-world immersion goes beyond the traditional academic learning, providing a depth of exposure typically experienced in medical school.



## Participate in Patient Care

Your involvement isn't limited to observation. Depending on the specialty and the attending physician, you may have an opportunity to participate directly in patient care. This could include surgeries, procedures, physical examinations, and history taking.

## Explore Health Systems

Gain insight into Panama's complex healthcare system. You'll learn how it caters to diverse urban and rural populations, providing a contrast to the healthcare system in the U.S. This understanding will broaden your perspective on international health care delivery and inform your future medical career.

## Learn Clinical Medicine

The Global Medical Brigades trip is a unique opportunity to learn clinical medicine in a hands-on environment. Standing side by side with physicians, you'll gain a broad understanding of disease diagnosis, management, and treatment within a real-world context.



## Engage in Health Research

Alongside clinical exposure, this trip offers a research component. You'll collaborate with experienced researchers, collecting and analyzing data relevant to local health issues. This research experience will deepen your understanding of the role of research in global health initiatives and its crucial impact on healthcare outcomes.

# Clinical & Research Experiences You Can Expect

*During your journey with Global Medical Brigades, you will gain diverse clinical and research experiences. Here's a glimpse into what you may encounter:*

## Clinicians & Specialists You May Shadow

Students will have the opportunity to shadow a variety of physicians and healthcare professionals in Panama, including:

- Primary Care Physicians
- Emergency Medicine Physicians
- Tropical Medicine Specialists
- Pediatricians
- Community Health Workers
- Public Health Officials



## Clinical Activities You May Participate In

Since the program revolves around real-life healthcare delivery, your experiences will reflect the patients and conditions that present during your visit. Some activities you might participate in include:

- Triage and initial patient assessment
- Assisting in the delivery of primary healthcare in rural communities
- Participating in patient education on hygiene and preventive healthcare
- Observing the diagnosis and treatment of tropical diseases

## Research Activities You Can Expect

Global Medical Brigades offers a unique opportunity to engage in health research, allowing students to learn and contribute to impactful studies. Here's what you might get to do:

- Participate in data collection on local health issues
- Assist in the analysis of collected data
- Learn about research methodologies in a global health context
- Understand how research findings are applied to improve health outcomes in local communities

Remember, each trip is unique based on patient care and research focus during the time of your visit. This list provides an idea of the potential opportunities, but the actual experience will be shaped by real-world circumstances during your brigade.



# Clinical Experiences

## Join the United Force for Health

Through our established partnerships in rural Panama, you'll join an integral part of a mobile healthcare clinic team. This dynamic group, including local doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and enthusiastic student volunteers like you, is the heartbeat of our healthcare delivery. Collaborating closely with these professionals, you'll gain a unique perspective on a holistic approach to healthcare, often elusive in traditional clinical settings.

## Experience the Frontlines of Healthcare Delivery

In your role, you'll do more than just observe; you'll actively participate in diagnosing and treating various health conditions. This hands-on approach offers a golden opportunity to provide vital support to communities with scarce access to these essential healthcare services. Imagine the depth of clinical skills and experience you'll gain while making a tangible difference in people's lives!



## Ignite a Ripple Effect of Health Education

Your involvement won't be limited to immediate treatment; you'll also educate the local community about prevalent health issues. Empowering individuals to manage their health effectively is a cornerstone of our brigade. Your work will contribute to a lasting impact, promoting sustainable health outcomes far beyond your stay.

## Embark on a Transformative Journey

Through this enriching experience, you're not just acquiring invaluable clinical skills. You're sparking a ripple effect of positive health change that echoes well into the future. This adventure is more than a step towards your medical career; it's a leap towards a lifetime of transformative health impact. Join us on this journey, and help shape a healthier, brighter future for communities in Panama.



# Research Experiences

## Embark on a Comprehensive Virtual Module

Your journey starts with a thorough 20-hour virtual module that delves into the captivating world of research design/methodology and the complex nature of global health research. Engage directly with enthusiastic community health leaders in Honduras, acquiring invaluable insights and priming yourself for the imminent in-person experiences. This cross-country perspective offers a broadened worldview, revealing the myriad global health challenges and solutions.



## Dive into On-site Research in Panama

The excitement amplifies as you shift to the tangible research phase in the dynamic landscape of Panama. Here, you will collaborate with community health workers (Global Brigades-trained local volunteers) and members of the Global Brigades' impact and evaluation team. Experience first-hand data collection over several days, witnessing the real-life outcomes of global health initiatives run by Global Brigades doctors.

## Contribute to a Health Action Plan

During your virtual research component, you'll analyze the data collected, leveraging both your academic knowledge and experience, and you'll create a real impact by crafting a health action plan for the community. This plan, which incorporates the community's needs and resources, will serve as a guide for sustainable health interventions carried forward by community leaders with Global Brigades' health staff's support. This blueprint you'll publish signifies your tangible contribution to the community's future health.



# Global Brigades' Transformative Impact

Through mobile clinics and training of community health workers, Medical Brigade programs enhance the holistic model, ensuring greater healthcare access in partner communities. Collaborating with local authorities and community figures, each community benefits from 2-3 mobile clinics annually. These are championed by local medical professionals, assisted by global volunteers.

Services range from medical consultations and vision screenings to OBGYN services and educational workshops. In between clinic visits, our trained Community Health Workers, supported by sustainable health initiatives, continue to provide essential care.



**700**  
Community Health Workers Trained



**51,115**  
People with Access to Clean Water



**1,600,0655**  
Patient Consultations



**\$148,797,145**  
Funds Raised

# Case Study: A Journey of Medical Outreach & Sustainable Development

Situated near the Pana-American Highway in Darien, Canglón is a vibrant rural community about four hours from Panama City. It's home to over 720 residents primarily involved in agriculture. In 2015, Global Brigades initiated a community bank in Canglón, which has since matured with 26 active members and distributed 160 loans.

Medical outreach started in 2016, accumulating to over 1300 patient consultations. Notably, in 2019, the Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Healthcare (WASH) team assessed Canglón's drinking water and public health, leading to the inception of biodigester toilets. With an unwavering commitment, Global Brigades continues its partnership with Canglón to enhance its water and sanitation systems.

This partnership is a shining example of the positive change students can champion on their own brigade journeys.



**46%**   
public health  
infrastructure  
coverage

**1,331**   
medical  
& dental  
consultations  
provided

**2**   
community  
health workers  
trained

**26**   
trained  
community  
bank  
members

**\$11,523**   
invested in the  
community  
bank

**160**   
loans  
disbursed to  
community  
members

# Daily Agenda

## Day 1 Arrival Day

- 4:00PM** : Arrival and settling in at the lodging facility
- 5:00PM** : Introduction to Brigades
- 7:00PM** : Dinner
- 8:00PM** : Discussion and overview of the holistic model and preparation for research days (KoboTool training)

## Day 2 - Day 4 Research Days

- 7:00AM** : Breakfast
- 8:00AM** : Departure to the community
- 9:00AM - 5:00PM** : Research activities (with a lunch break at 12:00PM)
- 6:00PM** : Dinner
- Evening activities** : Reflections, continued work on research

## Day 5 Cultural Day

- 7:00AM** : Breakfast
- 9:00AM** : Panama Canal visit
- 12:00PM** : Lunch
- 1:00PM** : Monkey Island tour
- 6:00PM** : Dinner
- 7:00PM** : Preparation for clinic days and medication packing

## Day 6 - Day 8 Clinic Days

- 7:00AM** : Breakfast
- 8:00AM** : Departure to the community
- 9:00AM - 5:00PM** : Medical clinic (with a lunch break at 12:00PM)
- 6:00PM** : Dinner
- Evening activities** : Reflection on Panama health system, data informatics and HPC Exchange reflection

## Day 9 Departure Day

Departure to the airport



# Virtual Itinerary

The Virtual Experience of our Medical and Research Brigade offers a unique and comprehensive opportunity for students to delve into the realms of clinical practice and medical research without leaving their homes. This immersive online journey presents you with a real-world snapshot of rural and urban healthcare delivery in Honduras, Ghana, and Greece and offers you practical, hands-on learning experiences that elevate your knowledge and skills.

This innovative, virtual platform leverages technology to enhance your educational experience, making it more dynamic and interactive. Throughout the virtual brigade, you'll engage directly with community health leaders, Global Brigades' staff, and local doctors, fostering international relationships and gaining an invaluable perspective on global health.

## Highlights:

- Engage in interactive training modules on research design/methodology and understand the nuances of global health research.
- Connect with healthcare professionals in Honduras, Ghana, and Greece, gaining valuable insight into their day-to-day experiences and challenges.
- Participate in virtual community visits, conducting patient interviews, and helping diagnose and manage a variety of health conditions.
- Be a part of data collection days, where you'll collect real-life data and observe the process of evaluating the impact of healthcare initiatives.
- Take part in analyzing collected data, applying your academic knowledge, and using your findings to develop a health action plan for the community.
- Experience the realities of international medical and research work from the comfort of your home, supplementing your academic learning with practical application.
- Contribute directly to creating sustainable health interventions for communities in Honduras, making a tangible difference even from afar.
- Enjoy enriching discussions and reflections on the Honduran, Ghanaian and Greek health system and Global Brigades' holistic model.
- Network with other passionate students and healthcare professionals from different parts of the world.



# Your Home Away From Home



**Iguana Eco Resort:** Step into the embrace of nature at the Iguana Eco Resort, located in the heart of Panama's lush greenery. The resort prides itself on its eco-friendly policies, blending luxury accommodation with sustainable practices to create an atmosphere that's both tranquil and eco-conscious. Expect rustic cabins, stunning biodiversity, and activities such as hiking, bird-watching, and yoga classes, all set within an idyllic tropical backdrop. A stay at the Iguana Eco Resort means treating yourself to the restful harmony of nature, while minimizing your ecological footprint.

The destination: <https://laiguanaresort.com>

How to get there: [go.medschoolcoach.com/iguana](https://go.medschoolcoach.com/iguana)



**Hacienda Doña Victoria:** Hacienda Doña Victoria is a perfect marriage of rustic charm and old-world elegance in the Panamanian countryside. This hacienda-style accommodation spotlights traditional Spanish colonial architecture, imbued with local influences and antique furnishings, creating an atmosphere of timeless elegance. Revel in the hospitality of yesteryears as you explore beautifully maintained gardens, savor locally sourced, traditional meals, or simply unwind in spacious, tastefully appointed rooms. Hacienda Doña Victoria is a quiet retreat where you can relish the slow, unhurried pace of life.

The destination: <https://haciendadonavictoria.negocio.site>

How to get there: [go.medschoolcoach.com/dona-victoria](https://go.medschoolcoach.com/dona-victoria)



**Hotel Avicar:** In the bustling heart of Panama City lies Hotel Avicar, where comfort and modernity coexist. The hotel's classic architecture is gracefully complemented by state-of-the-art amenities to ensure a comfortable and convenient stay. Each room is outfitted with plush beds, contemporary decor, and the latest technologies, providing a serene space for rest amidst the vibrant cityscape. The hotel's location also offers guests easy access to Panama City's bustling markets, museums, and nightlife. Whether for business or leisure, Hotel Avicar provides a seamless blend of traditional hospitality and modern comfort.

The destination: <https://www.facebook.com/hotelrestaurantpavicar>

How to get there: [go.medschoolcoach.com/avicar](https://go.medschoolcoach.com/avicar)

All rooms are designated for group occupancy. If you prefer single room accommodation, an additional charge of \$50 per night will apply.

Single occupancy rooms have limited availability and can be reserved at the time of registration on a first-come, first-served basis. If you have questions regarding single room accommodations, you can contact us at [enroll@medschoolcoach.com](mailto:enroll@medschoolcoach.com) or call us at (888) 381-9509.

# Savor the Flavors of Panama

Throughout your journey with us, we ensure that meals are more than just a necessity; they're a delightful experience. Our meals offer a unique blend of Panamanian and international cuisine, catering to diverse palates.

For breakfast, you can look forward to a hearty spread of coffee, tea, bread, tortillas, hojaldres, fruit preserves, peanut butter, eggs, and fresh fruit. This nutritious start to your day will fuel your brigade activities and research sessions.

When lunchtime rolls around, we serve traditional Panamanian dishes at the brigade site, providing a taste of local flavors with meals like rice, meat or chicken, and salads.

Dinner is a diverse array of dishes, combining both local Panamanian foods and international cuisine.

For our vegetarian friends and those with dietary restrictions, we've got you covered as long as our staff is informed ahead of time. While meals are provided, you may wish to bring your favorite snacks from home, or you may have the opportunity to stop at a local store for additional snacks if time allows.

**Enjoy this culinary journey as part of your brigade experience!**



# Answers to Common Questions

## About the Program:

**Q.** How long is the Panama Medical and Research Brigade?

**A.** The brigade lasts for nine days, including arrival and departure days.

**Q.** How many students are typically in a brigade?

**A.** On average, our brigades consist of about 20 students. We find this number allows for a great team dynamic and ensures everyone gets a personalized, hands-on experience.

**Q.** Will there be chaperones on the trip?

**A.** Yes, there will be chaperones on the trip. Each student group will be overseen by experienced local coordinators and staff, maintaining a 4:1 staff-to-student ratio to ensure everyone receives personalized attention throughout the experience. Our team includes educators, nonprofit leaders, and graduate or medical students.

**Q.** What is the primary language spoken in Panama?

**A.** The official language of Panama is Spanish. However, our team will have interpreters on-site to facilitate communication.

## Preparing for the Trip:

**Q.** How do I book my flights?

**A.** Students should book their domestic flights to Tocumen International Airport in Panama City. For international flights, students must use our program travel agency, McNair/Direct Travel.

**Q.** What should I pack for the trip?

**A.** We will provide a comprehensive packing list to help you prepare. It includes personal items, appropriate clothing for the clinic and community visits, and other essentials.

## During the Brigade:

**Q.** What kind of clinical experience will I gain during the brigade?

**A.** Students will gain hands-on experience in patient consultations, medication dispensing, public health workshops, and much more. They'll also have the opportunity to shadow various healthcare professionals.

**Q.** What kind of research experience will I gain?

**A.** Students will be involved in collecting and analyzing data, helping assess the impact of Global Brigades' year-round health initiatives. They will also develop a health action plan for the community based on their findings.

**Q.** Will there be opportunities for cultural immersion?

**A.** Yes, we have a dedicated Cultural Day, where students will visit the Panama Canal, take a Monkey Island tour, and interact with local communities.

## After the Brigade:

**Q.** Will I get a letter of recommendation?

**A.** Letters of recommendation can be written by any of our U.S.-based physician staff members or by the Panamanian-based physicians. However, letters of recommendation are not guaranteed and their solicitation will be at the student's discretion.

**Q.** How does participation in the Panama Medical and Research Brigade contribute to my medical education and career?

**A.** The brigade provides a unique opportunity to gain hands-on clinical and research experience in a global health context. This experience not only broadens your understanding of healthcare disparities and global health systems but also equips you with practical skills that are valuable in a medical career. By participating in this brigade, you demonstrate a commitment to service, leadership, and cross-cultural collaboration - qualities highly valued in medical professionals. It can significantly strengthen your medical school applications and help you stand out in competitive career environments.

**Q.** How can MedSchoolCoach assist me in leveraging this experience for my medical career?

**A.** MedSchoolCoach specializes in guiding aspiring medical professionals at every step of their journey. Our team of physician advisors can help you articulate the skills and experiences gained from the brigade effectively in your medical school applications and interviews. Additionally, our personalized coaching services can guide you on how to integrate these experiences into your long-term career goals. Whether you need help with your personal statement, interview preparation, or overall application strategy, MedSchoolCoach is here to support you.

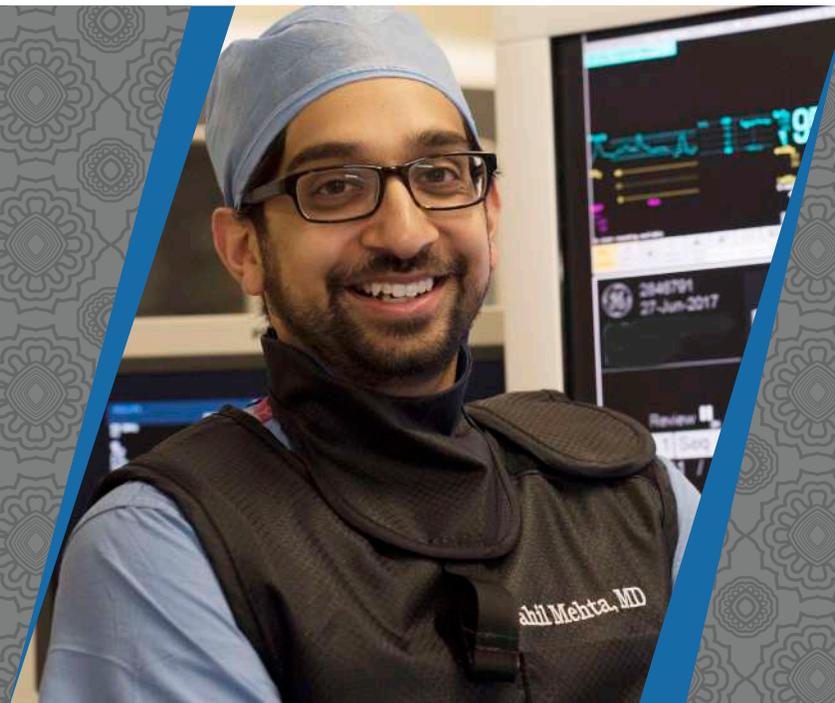
**Q.** How can I stay involved with Global Brigades after the brigade?

**A.** There are various ways to stay involved, from joining a university chapter to participating in future brigades, or even becoming a Global Brigades ambassador.

# The MedSchoolCoach Difference

MedSchoolCoach doesn't just aim to make you a physician – we want to help you craft a compelling journey that stands out in medical school applications. By incorporating your trip to Panama into this journey, we enrich your application profile. This unique experience can be highlighted in your extracurricular hours, woven into your essays, and shared as inspiring stories during medical school interviews. With MedSchoolCoach guidance, you'll know precisely how to leverage these experiences for maximum impact.

For more than a decade, we've specialized in guiding pre-med students through the intricacies of medical school admissions, offering consulting services, MCAT, and USMLE/COMLEX tutoring. We're here to support you from the first step of your pre-med journey, right up until you step into the role of a doctor.



## Sahil Mehta MD MedSchoolCoach Founder

### EDUCATION

**Undergraduate:** B.S. Columbia University  
**Medical School:** M.D. University of Chicago  
Pritzker School of Medicine  
**Residency:** BIDMC/Harvard University  
**Fellowship:** MGH/Harvard University



When I founded MedSchoolCoach I had a sole purpose in mind: to help pre-meds become doctors. Through personal experience, I knew how important it was to skillfully navigate the pre-med process and succeed in the world's most competitive admissions process. Since then, we've helped over 12,000 students become physicians.

The ability to mentor students through the pre-med process, have them succeed on their MCAT or USMLE exams and match into the residency of their choice is incredibly gratifying and what we all strive for everyday at MedSchoolCoach. It's why we have been so successful.



# Our Experts Guide Future Physicians

The MedSchoolCoach team goes above and beyond at every step of the process. Since our inception, our focus has been to assemble the absolute best team of physician advisors, MCAT and USMLE/COMLEX tutors anywhere. Everyone at MedSchoolCoach is dedicated to the goal of making you a physician.



**Ken Tao**  
Director of MCAT Tutoring

**25+**  
MCAT TUTORS

EACH WITH  
**520+**  
MCAT SCORES

Ken graduated from UC Berkeley with a BS in Bioengineering and a BA in Molecular and Cell Biology. Today, Ken is nationally recognized as a premier MCAT tutor and doctoral candidate at Harvard Medical School. He leads the most elite tutoring team in the industry.



**Renee Marinelli MD**  
Director of Advising

**70+**  
ADVISORS

EACH WITH MEDICAL  
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS  
COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE

Dr. Marinelli has practiced family medicine, served on the University of California Admissions Committee, and has personally helped hundreds of students get into medical school with her admissions coaching. She spearheads a team of physician advisors who guide our students.



**Joel Ramirez MD**  
Director of Medical  
School Tutoring

**85+**  
USMLE TUTORS

EACH WITH  
**250+**  
USMLE SCORES

Dr. Ramirez attended University of California, San Francisco where he is currently a vascular surgery resident. He received a 266 on Step 1 and 265 on Step 2 CK. He oversees a team of elite USMLE and COMLEX tutors.

# Boost Your MCAT Score by 12 Points or More

Your MCAT score will determine your chances of acceptance to medical school, and MedSchoolCoach will help make it the best it can be.

## How MedSchoolCoach Can Help You Improve Your MCAT Score



### Boost Your Score

Our students see incredible jumps in their MCAT score because our expert tutors craft and execute study plans personalized just for you.



### Receive a Personalized Study Plan from Elite Tutors

Get coached by 99th percentile scorers who have been through the most rigorous training in the country, all scoring between 130 and 132 on each section of the exam.



### Access Exclusive Content

Our expert team has created the most realistic practice questions and tests, a complete video course, flash cards and more, all from the ground up for the new MCAT.



### Study Smarter, Not Harder

We focus on the highest yield topics and strategies to improve MCAT scores.

BE PART OF THE

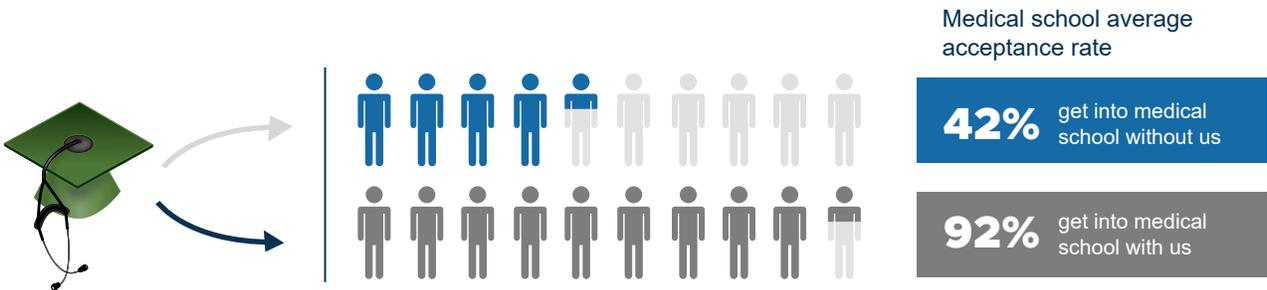
**100%**

of students who raise their MCAT scores!

# Invest in Your Medical School Future

MedSchoolCoach has helped thousands of students as they head on their journeys toward becoming a physician. Invest in yourself and we'll help make sure you are doing everything right to get into medical school, residency, and beyond!

## Let MedSchoolCoach Help You Get Accepted!



## How MedSchoolCoach Can Help You Get Accepted

### Strategy & Planning

Game plan your path to becoming a doctor with our physician advisors. Plus, plan a gap year, coursework, or extracurriculars so you can optimize your chances of an acceptance.

### Application Preparation

Craft the perfect application strategy for an acceptance. Work through every step of the process, from choosing a school list, to submitting paperwork, to writing waitlist letters so that you can get accepted.

### Essay Writing & Editing

Create a perfect personal statement that captures who you are for your medical school application, post-bacc program or summer opportunity.

### Interview Preparation

Enjoy realistic practice with physician advisors who have interviewed actual medical school candidates and receive feedback that will make you stand out.



**MEDSCHOOLCOACH**  
helping you achieve your medical school dreams

MedSchoolCoach works with pre-med and medical students **to help them achieve their medical school dreams.**

Learn valuable lessons abroad on your journey toward becoming a physician.

## CONTACT US

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-  [medschoolcoach.com](http://medschoolcoach.com)

## STUDENTS LOVE US

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