

# FOREIGN MEDICAL MISSIONS: SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

**Note:** As part of its regular LINKAPIL Program, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas is prepared to assist in facilitating/expediting the requirements for all foreign medical missions who wish to practice in the Philippines. The CFO may be contacted at Citigold Center, 1345 President Quirino Avenue, corner South Superhighway, Manila, Philippines 1007, telephone number (632) 561-8327, fax number (632) 561-8332 or through e-mail address: [info@cfo.gov.ph](mailto:info@cfo.gov.ph)

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The following regulations are applicable to Filipino and foreign non-government organizations and overseas medical groups intending to provide health care services in underserved areas in the Philippines, where professional services, ancillary procedures, surgical interventions, and medicines are given at no cost to the patient (DOH Administrative Order No. 179, s. 2001):

- Sponsors of foreign medical and surgical missions must obtain clearance from the Office of the Secretary of Health, through the Bureau of International Health Cooperation (BIHC), prior to the implementation of the medical and surgical mission.
- For monitoring purpose, BIHC will notify the local Centers for Health Development of the conduct of the medical mission in their areas of responsibility.
- A foreign medical and surgical mission can only be conducted in a given community with the expressed and written consent of the local government unit and the local medical society.
- All medical and surgical procedures to be employed must conform to accepted local and international standards.

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- All medicines to be dispensed should have clearance from the Bureau of Food and Drugs as to safety and efficacy, and shall have an expiry date of no less than one (1) year upon arrival in the Philippines. Medicines must be covered by the Certificate of Product Registration.
  - A referral system to follow up patients seen during the medical and surgical mission must be established by the sponsor and collaborating organization(s).
  - All cases seen during the medical/surgical mission must be documented and a summary report submitted to the Center for Health Development within two (2) weeks after the medical/surgical mission with the following basic information:
    - Number and age of cases seen;
    - Diagnosis of patients;
    - List of medicines distributed and of surgical interventions done; and
    - Endorsements to the necessary health facilities.
  - Foreign physicians and health-related professionals are not allowed to practice their professions in the Philippines without a Special Permit issued by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC).

**Note:** Only foreign physicians whose country grants reciprocity for Philippine physicians to practice, may be granted Special Permits by the PRC.

Presidential Decree No. 541 allows professionals who were former citizens of the Philippines and who have previously passed licensure examinations

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in the Philippines to practice their profession while in the country on a visit, sojourn or permanent residence. The said former Filipino professionals must be practitioners of good standing prior to their departure from the Philippines and in their adopted country.

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The following documents will be required in requesting for clearances or endorsements in connection with foreign medical missions:

1. Application letter to the Director, BIHC-Department of Health, which contains the following information:
  - Type of mission (i.e., medical, surgical or both);
  - Location/venue of the mission;
  - Duration and inclusive dates of the mission; and
  - Name of sponsor or local counterpart(s), if any.

**Important:** The application letter with the supporting documents should be received by BIHC-DOH at least three (3) months before the proposed schedule of the mission.

2. List of the names of the medical and surgical team and credentials of each medical/paramedical member. The following duly authenticated credentials of the members of the medical team members must also be submitted:
  - Two copies of passport size photograph taken not more than three (3) months before the filing of application;

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- Photocopy of valid/current certificate of license to practice profession in their own country; and
  - Documents attesting to the specialized studies, fields of specialization or experiences (if any).
3. List of medicines (generic or brand names) and medical supplies that will be brought in or donated by the medical team, with the corresponding quantity, specification, and approximate value; and
  4. Endorsement of the local government unit or an accredited professional medical organization.

**Note:** The original copies of the documents need to be presented for verification, unless the photocopies are authenticated by competent or legally authorized persons or officers.

The DOH will review the request and will consult with the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), the Board of Medicine, the Philippine Medical Association (PMA), and the Philippine Hospital Association (PHA), whenever necessary. In certain cases, the DOH may recommend alternative activities, locations, or arrangements to coincide with government priorities. The head of the medical mission or the local sponsor/project coordinator will be informed, within two (2) weeks after receipt of the request of either the approval or disapproval of the request, and the reason for the decision. DOH may also recommend activities, tentative schedules, alternative sites/venues or arrangements, if any.

The sponsor or local counterpart is required to submit an exit/termination report after the completion of the mission to the DOH through the Regional Director concerned.

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## SPECIAL PERMIT

A foreign physician and health-related professional can only practice his/her profession in the Philippines with a Special Permit from the Professional Regulation Commission. The following documents are required by PRC for the grant of Special Permit to foreign physicians:

1. Letter from the sponsoring local association, organization or entity requesting the PRC and the concerned Professional Regulatory Board for the issuance of Special Permits to members of the Medical Mission for a short period (not to exceed thirty days), indicating the specific municipality/city/province where the medical mission will be conducted.
2. Endorsement from the following accredited professional organization, if the sponsoring organization is not an accredited professional organization:
  - Philippine Medical Association; for physicians
  - Philippine Dental Association; for dentists
  - Philippine Association of Optometrists; for optometrists
  - Philippine Nurses Association; for nurses
3. Endorsement of the Department of Health
4. Curriculum vitae of the members of the medical mission team duly authenticated by the Philippine Embassy/ Consulate with jurisdiction

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5. Current/valid licenses to practice their profession in their own country
  6. Residency Certificate (for anesthesiologists) and Board Certification (for surgeons and ophthalmologists)

Applications for release of Special Permits for the conduct of foreign medical missions must be submitted to the Professional Regulation Commission not later than ninety (90) days before the proposed medical mission.

The PRC notifies the sponsor of the medical mission of the approved resolution granting the issuance of Special Permit. PRC will charge a registration fee of One Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Pesos (P1,250.00) for each permit issued.

#### REFERENCES:

Guidelines For Granting Permits To Foreign Doctors Conducting Medical Missions Sponsored By Local Private Organization, Resolution No. 06, s. 1991 of the Board of Medicine.

Policies and Guidelines in the Conduct of Local and Foreign Medical and Surgical Missions, Administrative Order No. 179, s. 2001, Department of Health.

Presidential Decree No. 541, Allowing Former Filipino Professionals to Practice their Respective Professions in the Philippines.