Call for Volunteers – Frequently Asked Questions (updated 3/29/20)

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When should I plan to deploy?
You should only travel to the destination once you have been contacted by official governmental representatives, who will inform you when and where to go.

Should I just go and sign up there?
No, once you have completed the volunteer form, we will share your information with government representatives who will then contact individuals that are selected.

What should I pack?
Government representatives will provide you with specific information, but you should ensure you have proof of licensure with you.

It’s been several days since I signed up and no one has contacted me yet.
Rest assured, we have your volunteer information and have provided it to local representatives. Selection is based on location, language, clinical expertise and other factors. Not everyone will be called. You may be contacted later for deployment - if you are still interested and available.

What will be expected of me?
You will be expected to provide care for critically ill or injured patients. These may or may not be patients with COVID-19.

What if I can only stay for a limited time?
You are free to leave at any point in the assignment. If you have time constraints that you are aware of, inform the governmental contact upfront or as soon as you become aware of them.

What if I volunteer and find out that I can’t go?
You are under no obligation to go if you are unable. You are free to decline the opportunity should your circumstances change.

How will it be determined who will get called?
Government representatives will match skills/specialties with current needs and contact the appropriate individuals.

What are the special skill sets needed?
The request to SCCM was specific for ICU experienced physicians and nurses. Language skills are also helpful.

Who pays for my hotel, airfare, mileage and other costs associated with volunteering?
Most volunteer opportunities do not include reimbursement for travel expenses. In some instances, relief volunteers receive support for expenses from the local government, the American Red Cross and other agencies. Discuss this with the governmental official when you are contacted and be sure you understand your financial obligations before you agree to travel. SCCM and relief management officials also post lists of discounted links and services that may assist volunteers who are supporting relief efforts.
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Will I receive housing, food, and other support onsite?
In some instances, relief volunteers receive support for onsite expenses from the local government, the American Red Cross and other agencies. Discuss this with the governmental representative when you are contacted and be sure you understand your financial obligations before you agree to travel.

Do I need to be concerned about liability?
Volunteer clinicians may be eligible for liability protection under both state and federal law. The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997: Volunteers of a Nonprofit or Governmental Entity (VPA) was enacted to provide minimum protections for healthcare volunteers. More information can be found here.

I am a resident, fellow and trainee, am I eligible to volunteer?
Medical fellows and residents that have an NPI number are eligible to volunteer. Medical students and other trainees are not.

I am a physical therapist, pharmacists, nutrient specialist or other healthcare professional; can I still volunteer?
Currently, the request is only for physicians and nurses with ICU experience.

Will volunteers be screened for COVID-19?
You will only be asked questions about exposure and illness prior to travel. You may be tested upon arrival at your assigned destination based upon the rules of the facility to which you are assigned.

How long am I expected to volunteer?
You will discuss the length of your volunteer service with the government representative before departing. Volunteer assignments are flexible regarding length of service.

Will I be required to quarantine pre/post volunteering?
There currently is no quarantine period for volunteer healthcare workers prior to the assignment but discuss this with the government representative when you are contacted. Your own institutional policies will determine if you must quarantine upon your return. Discuss this with your employer.

When should I expect to hear back from SCCM?
Your information will be transferred to the agency requesting volunteers and those who are selected will be contacted directly by a government representative. The government representative will only contact those they chose based on skills and specialties needed. It is possible that you may not be contacted. SCCM is not notified of who the government agency selects for volunteer service.

How can I withdraw my application for volunteering?
You are under no obligation to participate. You are free to decline the opportunity should your circumstances change. You should notify the government representative when they contact you. If you would like your volunteer information removed from the SCCM volunteer database, contact SCCM’s Customer Service. Please note, information already provided to government agencies cannot be retrieved.

Will SCCM organize an open call for other areas in need?
SCCM organizes relief volunteers only at the request of a governmental authority that can clear medical and nursing licenses. Should these be received, SCCM will make an announcement and everyone meeting the criteria of the request will be notified.