

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER INTEREST SURVEY

The International Health Committee (IHC) of the WSEHA promotes the mission of WSEHA in the context of international health.

The WSEHA mission statement reads:

“WSEHA is a non-profit professional and educational organization established to provide a forum for dialogue and a vehicle for advanced training opportunities. WSEHA enhances individual and collective expertise, promotes professional growth, and revitalizes Environmental Health endeavors. The Association is enriched by the diversity of ideas and orientations of its members, who represent both the public and private sectors.”

In keeping with the WSEHA mission, the IHC thought it would be a good idea to develop or research training opportunities for WSEHA members interested in doing volunteer work overseas. Transfer of technically appropriate “best practices” would not only promote professional development but would allow volunteers to be more effective in overseas work. Training materials and opportunities can either be posted on the WSEHA website, presented in workshops, or available as self-study modules for WSEHA members.

Training and placement of WSEHA members in overseas assignments is seen by the IHC as a method to help save lives, allow better grounding in basic and emerging public health issues, and to prepare members for work locally in case of natural disaster or other emergency. The IHC through WSEHA can also raise awareness and advocate with members’ employers to allow leaves of absence to do such work.

Many WSEHA members have done overseas work in the past and have expressed interest in doing short-term overseas work if they could arrange the time off their current work. There are several organizations that keep rosters of volunteers available to do this type of work. However, no volunteer network is in place within WSEHA to handle such requests. These organizations are constantly looking for appropriately trained volunteers to do public health work overseas due to the growing number and scope of humanitarian crises around the globe.

If you are interested in becoming involved with this effort, either by coming to IHC meetings and helping with ongoing projects, or if you are interested in doing overseas work, please contact the International Health Committee Chair.