



UTMB Health Center for Polar Medical Operations
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Dear Doctor:

This person is applying for a position with the United States Antarctic Program (USAP). Because of the remoteness of the area, medical facilities have limited diagnostic and therapeutic modalities. The clinics in Antarctica can comfortably manage primary care problems. Emergency situations requiring hospitalization or sophisticated diagnostic procedures require evacuation to New Zealand or the South American continent. Under optimal conditions, medical evacuation can be performed in no less than twelve hours (from McMurdo and South Pole Stations). At Palmer Station evacuation is only available by sea and may take several days. At McMurdo and the South Pole Stations, weather conditions can delay flights in and out of Antarctica for several days in the summer. Winter evacuations are virtually impossible. Consequently, common clinical situations in urban communities such as evaluating atypical chest pain, acute abdominal pain or treating renal calculi can present a major dilemma. Antarctica is the highest, driest and coldest continent on earth. Temperatures at McMurdo Station are frequently well below freezing in the summer. South Pole temperatures on average are -30F degrees in the summer with wind chill commonly -60F degrees. Employees live in close quarters during the unrelenting six-month summer daylight or winter darkness. The South Pole is at a physiological altitude greater than 10,000 feet and has virtually no humidity. Altitude sickness is very common and must be differentiated from other serious causes of dyspnea, dizziness and chest pain. Accordingly, it is vitally important to thoroughly screen individuals to identify risk factors for cardiopulmonary and psychological conditions. Your comments on the overall health of the applicant are valuable in contributing to the success of the Program and safety of the participant. The USAP has medical examination requirements for summer and winter deployment as discussed below:

Winfly/Summer Deployment (August to February)

Medical Examination/Testing:

All tests and labs to be performed on this candidate can be found on the **Medical/Dental Checklist for Deployment Clearance to Antarctica (MA-FRM-0009)**. Additional tests and exams may be required based on this information. Please review the candidate's checklist, five-page Medical History Form, and perform a physical examination. **A comment on all positive findings in the history and examination is required to help expedite the medical clearance process. All sections of the medical exam must be performed.** Required medical exams and testing must be done within 6 months of deployment (patient can provide approximate deployment date).

Blood typing is required for all applicants. Only medically qualified personnel are requested to contribute to the USAP's walking blood bank. You may ask the participant if they would like to contribute to the walking blood bank. If the candidate indicates his/her willingness, please note

the answer next to the blood type on the Physical Examination Form. Discussion of or participation in the walking blood bank is not a requirement of you or the candidate and will not affect deployment clearance. **If the applicant does not wish to be a participant of the walking blood bank, or is not medically qualified, please identify in the COMMENTS section of the exam – otherwise consent is implied.**

Summer Deployment (September to February)

All tests required for Winfly/Summer deployment – see Medical and Dental checklist

Winter Deployment (March to August)

All tests required for summer deployment, plus the following mandatory tests:

- TSH
- HIV Testing
- Chest X-ray – send report only
- Psychological testing for McMurdo and South Pole stations

Administrative Information

1. Lab Results: Labs to be completed no earlier than 6 months prior to deployment.

Please follow the instructions in the Medical Deployment E-mail and Medical Deployment Packet for completing laboratory requirements. Additionally, the requirements are listed on the individual medical/dental checklist.

Should you be completing your laboratory requirements outside the United States, please refer to form MA-FRM-0001 (Required Laboratory Tests) in the Medical Deployment Packet. Lab results are to be forwarded to ASC Medical at the address provided in the letterhead.

2. Return of Examination/Tests:

Please send the completed original medical history and physical examination form, including requested test results, to ASC Medical.

3. Other Requirements:

Prescription medications (type and quantity) are limited at all Antarctic medical facilities. Candidates are required to bring a sufficient supply of their own medication for the duration of their deployment. Medical can assist candidates in obtaining sufficient medications if their prescription plans limit the quantity allowed at each refill.

Payment for this Examination: The candidate is responsible for payment! This includes insurance deductible(s), payment of all charges incurred by this exam if no insurance is available, or insurance payment is denied. ASC MEDICAL WILL NOT REIMBURSE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION WITH THIS
MEDICAL EXAMINATION.**

Regards,

ASC Medical