ISI Health & Safety Guidelines

Many efforts have been made to ensure your health & safety while you travel on ISI trips. In order to take responsibility for your own health & safety, please read this important information and discuss with your family before you travel. Please alert us of any questions or concerns you may have.

**Travel Insurance:** All international travelers purchase travel insurance through *Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI)* insurance, a policy established by the Office for International Programs. *It is extremely important to follow the ISI emergency protocol, contacting the insurance company as soon as you require medical attention, even if the situation is well controlled.* Contacting the insurance company when the incident occurs is the only way to later submit any bills incurred due to illness for reimbursement.

**Passports & Tickets:** Please make 2 copies of the front page of your passport. Leave 1 copy at home with a family member/your emergency contact. Bring the other copy with you and keep it in a SEPARATE place from your passport in case it gets lost or stolen. Generally you will not need to use your passport once you arrive at your site, so we ask that you keep your passport in a secure location as recommended by ISI staff and/or site partner.

We encourage you to research the country where you will be traveling as much as possible. We also ask that you take advantage of the resources available to you by actively participating in group orientation meetings, using the reading list we provide you, talk with past ISI participants, look up U.S. State Department information at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) and CDC health guidelines at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

**Dress Code:** It is important to pack clothes that are comfortable and appropriate for both the climate and culture as well as your status as a guest in the community. You are representing Loyola University Chicago and the health professions. If traveling internationally, you will be seen as “an American,” and perceptions of you will be shaped by the socio-political history of your host country in relation to the United States, as well as the personal experiences of the people whom you encounter.

In general, we advise modest and simple clothing for all participants, regardless of sex or gender. This applies not only to the “cut” of clothing but also to style (for example, designer clothing, brand-names and logos are generally not appropriate). For your safety and the safety of your group, your clothes, jewelry and other belongings should not draw attention to you or offend the cultural norms of your hosts. Women in ISI groups have sometimes been the target of cat-calls and whistling – generally, this is harmless, yet it is advised to travel together and ignore such behavior.

In the coming months, you will receive a detailed recommended ISI packing list as well as site-specific supplements where applicable.
Food & Water Safety: Unless otherwise instructed by a trusted source (ISI staff member or site host), do not drink the water or even use it to brush your teeth at any time in the country. You will be given specific instructions about safe drinking water. Make sure you have a water bottle that you can refill, and drink plenty of purified water every day. While we encourage you to “immerse” yourself as fully as possible, try to avoid eating any foods that are not cooked, boiled, or peeled. In general, all of your meals will be prepared by people who are taking precautions to assure your safety, but the possibility always exists that you may experience some type of traveler’s diarrhea or other G.I. “rumbling” despite attempts to avoid it. When you do feel ill, it’s best to notify the ISI staff on your trip of your illness at its onset.

If you suffer from food allergies or sensitivities, please be aware we cannot guarantee that our sites have the capability to accommodate specific diets. It is best if you assume personal responsibility for your meals, bringing as many snack bars or ready-made alternatives to meals that may be served. Please also be aware that you should discuss your food allergy with your ISI team leader prior to travel, in order to establish a plan for dealing with reactions should they occur.

Political Unrest/Violence: In the coordination and preparation of ISI sites, great lengths are taken to ensure that our travel to and from the sites and our stay at the sites will be safe. While we cannot predict every possible danger, we do take any perceived threats to safety seriously, and will cancel any ISI trip where we cannot determine the safety of our participants. We rely heavily on our contacts at each of the sites to assess level of safety, and keep in regular contact with them. These people are trustworthy sources, most of them are U.S. citizens or have lived in the U.S., and nearly all of them are working through agencies affiliated with the Catholic Church. We trust that they would recommend, and in the past they have recommended our canceling of ISI trips in cases when levels of safety cannot be properly determined.

Immunizations: In order to avoid some common, preventable infectious diseases, immunizations are recommended for each international site. See the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website [http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list) for a list of recommended immunizations. All ISI participants are required to visit the Loyola Travel Clinic or personal PCP for a consultation appointment before travel. Representatives from Loyola’s Travel Clinic are available by appointment to offer the recommended immunizations and to provide prescriptions for other medical prophylaxis. The cost of these medications will be your responsibility. If you have an insurance policy from your parent(s) or spouse, these may be covered under your primary care physician. If you have student insurance, there is no coverage for these and you will have to pay out of pocket.

The total cost of these immunizations and prescriptions can range from **$150 - $400**, depending on the site where you will be traveling. Please be aware that you often have to pay up-front and submit to insurance following your visit.
Risk of Other Personal Illness and Injury: While the ISI team has made every effort possible to ensure you are staying in a healthy environment that would minimize personal illness, the nature of international work is simply unpredictable. Each trip will have access to necessary medications locally. Participants are encouraged to consider bringing some basic medications with them (i.e., ibuprofen, acetaminophen, OTC allergy medications). In the event of potential infectious disease or allergy exposure, please alert your ISI staff or site lead immediately. Your trip leader will assist you in accessing local health resources to the extent appropriate, and, if necessary, you will be sent home early. Particular health concerns to be aware of:

1. **Blood-borne pathogen exposure.** If you are working in a setting where patient care is provided, there exists the risk of exposure to a patient with infected or potentially infected bodily fluid exists in the international setting. Examples of such infections are HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C. The most important method of dealing with blood-borne pathogens is to prevent exposure. All students should review the LUHS policy on standard precautions prior to travel.

2. **Transportation.** Motor vehicle accidents are the number one risk to your health while abroad. The ISI staff dedicates time and additional resources to ensure that the transportation modes groups travel in are the safest possible. Should you attempt individual or small-group travel outside of ISI programming while on-site, please recognize different standards in driving and road safety that exist and put your safety in jeopardy. Do not ride a motorcycle or motorbike of any kind. Do **NOT travel alone and always communicate to group members where you’re going.**

Cultural Sensitivity & Personal Conduct: Please pack any prescription drugs with clearly marked original labels. Be aware that drug laws in these countries are different and are strictly enforced. Use of illicit drugs is strictly prohibited.

Some ISI sites do not allow any consumption of alcohol – either on-site or off-site – during the duration of your stay. While use of alcohol is not prohibited at other ISI sites, we encourage you to use discretion, realizing that the norms you may have for drinking alcohol at home may not be appropriate in the place we are being hosted. It is not appropriate to consume more than 2 drinks at one occurrence. In addition, norms of personal behavior in social situations may also be different; this can lead to miscommunication which could put yourself or others in potentially dangerous situations.

It is common for local people to keep a close eye on visitors while we stay in their community, so be aware of your actions at all times. All in all, it is imperative to constantly be conscious of the impact of our presence and actions on our hosts and on our group. We also must keep in mind that we are sent as “ambassadors” that represent the United States (in international settings), Loyola, and the health professions, and so our decisions and behavior should be professional and respectful at all times, and reflect the community context in which we operate.
**Packing Items of Value:** In the interest of safety and simplicity, avoid bringing expensive and unnecessary items. In general, if it’s not on the packing list, and you’re debating about whether to bring something, leave it at home & try to live without it for a couple weeks. Groups revise a site-specific packing list from year to year which will be made available to all participants.

**Photos:** In general, ask before taking photos. Do not take photos of children without asking parent(s) or guardian(s) for permission. Some people (especially older people) may have beliefs against having their picture taken. As a group, make a plan to share photos both within your group and with Ministry.

**Social Media:** Please be intentional about your presence on social media. Both HIPAA guidelines and ethical guidelines should assist you in determining appropriate photos or information to post to social media, including not posting names, faces, or other identifiers. Social media can serve as an excellent advocacy platform for the community with whom you are working and/or to raise awareness around various aspects of social justice that you may encounter during your trip. Please ask yourself if you are capturing the essence and motivations of your travel as you post on social media. Also, be especially mindful of your various degrees of privilege as you post and avoid temptations of “volun-tourism.” Many previous ISI participants and alumni of Loyola HSC follow us on social media--invite them to "travel with you" by tagging Ministry (@HSCMinistry on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) in photos which represent the "ISI experience."

**Connectivity:** Plan on having limited access to mobile phone service, email, and internet access while on your ISI trip, and please share this information with anyone who might expect to be in contact with you. There may be several days when you have NO access. Where appropriate, the trip coordinator or chaplain will carry a cell phone to be used only in emergency situations. We encourage you to limit contact with family/friends back home in order to participate fully in the immersion experience. ISI staff will contact the HSC Ministry 3-4 times during your trip, and your family may call the Ministry Center (708.216.3245) to get updates regarding your trip. In the event of a family emergency, your family should contact the HSC Ministry or HSC Ministry staff on their personal phones (use the ISI Emergency Information phone list provided) or contact the ISI site directly, if absolutely necessary. When internet is available at your sites, please make a conscious effort to be present to your group, setting aside “device-free” time in order to be fully present to your surroundings in the evenings, on road trips, or whenever the group deems appropriate.

**ISI Health and Safety Signature**

I have read the “ISI Health and Safety Info” document and have discussed such issues with my family. I understand the inherent risks of my participation in ISI and agree to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this document.
Signature: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________