

# Health Care in CUBA!



## **Carolyn Love, RN-BSN – Director of Sales/Tour Consultant**



Carolyn's work as a nurse in urban hospitals and connecting international high school foreign exchange students with American host families at Youth For Understanding USA (YFU) gave her a passion for learning about other cultures. Her experiences instilled a belief in the power of people-to-people inter-cultural experiences as a way to promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship in our global world.

- RN specializing in adult critical care services (1982-1989)
- RN specializing in pediatric and emergency services (1990-2013)
- District Director YFU international exchange (2002-2009)
- Director of Volunteers, Volunteer & Alumni Manager, Staff Training Specialist YFU (2011-2015)
- Extensive personal and professional travel over five continents



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## Day 1 Saturday-Havana

Check-in procedures at Dallas Ft. Worth International Airport – Follow normal check-in procedures. American will issue boarding passes all the way to Havana. Upon arrival at Miami International Airport check the monitors to locate your departure gate. American Airlines operates out of concourses D & E. Passengers are required to check-in with an agent to choose which one of the OFAC twelve categories they are traveling under. Then proceed to one of the “Cuba Ready Booths” operated by CTS located by your gate. A CTS agent will check your travel documents and will stamp your boarding pass as “Cuba Ready”. You may then proceed to your departure gate. Suggest you report to the American Airlines check-in counter at least three hours prior to departure time.

Upon arrival at the Havana International Airport, you will need to make your way through passport control where they will take your photo (be prepared to remove any hats, scarves or glasses) and check your paperwork for entry into Cuba. Make your way to baggage claim and from there exit through customs to where your national guide will be waiting for the delegation.

Upon arrival, the delegation will transfer to your hotel for check-in at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel in Miramar. Check-in and settle into your rooms before meeting in the hotel conference center for your welcome briefing.

Late this afternoon the delegation will meet in the hotel for a welcome and overview briefing on Cuba. Time will be included this afternoon to gather and sort professional gifts for your meeting hosts as well as get to know your fellow travelers officially.

**Enjoy a welcome dinner at San Cristobal Paladar.**

## Day 2 Sunday-Havana

**Please Note: Breakfast will be provided daily during your stay in Cuba.**

This morning enjoy a walking tour of the historic center of Old Havana, a village founded in 1519 and declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1982. There will be an explanation of the projects carried out by the City Historian’s Office for the rehabilitation of Old Havana.

**Lunch will be provided at El Templete Restaurant.**

This afternoon meet with Dr. Rosa Lopez Ocegueda, professor of (CEHSEU) Center of Hemispherical Studies and on the United States. Rosa is a brilliant woman and multi- talented and is excited to share information about Cuba with the delegation. Her lecture today will focus on “Cuba’s Health diplomacy,” which touches the situation in Cuba in the world of healthcare. She is excited to hear your questions and discuss any additional items you may have for her after her presentation.



### Professional program focus:

- Cuban health programs in Venezuela, Haiti, Guatemala and Bolivia
- The “Milagro Mission” which has treated more than 3 million people in the restoration of their vision
- The “More Doctors” program on the way to Brazil
- Cuban nurses mission programs to Guatemala
- Dinner will be provided at “El Guajirito Paladar”

This evening enjoy a musical performance at “El Tablado de Pancho” by Buena Vista Social Club musicians.

## Day 3 Monday-Havana

This morning the delegation will have a welcome orientation to Cuba on behalf of the staff at the Cuban Institute of Friendship with People in conjunction with our local team at the Casa de la Amistad. This mandatory meeting focuses on Cuban/U.S. relations.

Immediately following, a meeting has been requested with staff from the Ministry of Health (MINSAP). Meet with a speaker from the Ministry this morning as well as other invited physician educators for a professional exchange.

### Professional program focus:

- Learn about the Cuban health care system and how it is changing
- Overview of the policies of the National Health System
- Development and ongoing reforms of the healthcare infrastructure in Cuba since the 1959 revolution
- An exploration of the primary health care system in Cuba, including the use of consultorios, community doctor relationships, and policlínicos
- Leading causes of morbidity and mortality as well as other health outcomes in contemporary Cuba
- The challenges faced by Cuba in achieving their target of ‘free healthcare for all’ in terms of equity, equality, quality, efficiency and scale





- The education and role expectations of health care professionals (physician and nursing) in Cuba
- How nursing leadership and research can/are changing healthcare practices in Cuba
- The impact of cultural traditions and beliefs, health tourism, and healthcare worker migration on the Cuban healthcare system

**Lunch and cooking class will be provided at Jardin de los Milagros Private Restaurant**

This afternoon a request has been submitted for the delegation to visit the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) and participate in a roundtable discussion with their staff. The school is for locals as well as foreign students.

It currently has 122 students from Latin America, the Caribbean, U.S., Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Enrollment is based on the students' background and generally those students accepted are required to be young and from a poor community where they will be of benefit to the local community by providing care to the poor when they return home. Total school enrollment is approximately 1349 students. Learn about the training and education of medical professionals in Cuba, as well as present and future developments and healthcare standards.

Later the delegation will stop at the Centro Cultural Antiguos Almacenes to visit and talk with private sector owners of more than 300 different booths selling art, handicrafts, clothing, and a variety of Cuban products.

**Dinner is by individual arrangement (own expense) this evening.**

This evening enjoy a neighborhood street party with all the residents of the block participating. It's a great opportunity to interact with the locals.

### Day 4 Tuesday-Havana

This afternoon the delegation will visit a local polyclinic to meet with the caregivers and learn more about the care they provide in this community. Spend time in the family doctors office. Learn how Cuba practices preventative medicine for children, young adults, and elderly patients respectively and discuss what are the biggest challenges faced in their daily work.

**Lunch will be provided at La Concordia Paladar.**

This afternoon depart for a visit to the city of Regla. Visit the church of Nuestra Señora de Regla, one of Cuba's most frequented pilgrimage churches. Most impressive is the statute of the Virgin of Regla who is black and cradles a white infant in her arms.



She is the patron and protector of sailors and is considered the equivalent of Yemaya, the goddess of the sea in the Yoruba religion. Visit the Municipal Museum of Regla. There will be a ritual dance of Santeria, the religion brought to Cuba by African slaves.

**Dinner will be provided at La Fontana Paladar.**

This evening the delegation will go down to the Cannon Blast ceremony, a tradition evoking the announcement of the closing of the gates of the city and of the channel at the entrance of the bay. This ceremony takes place every evening at the 18th century San Carlos de La Cabaña fortress.



### Day 5 Wednesday-Havana

Depart Havana for an approximately two-hour ride toward Pinar del Rio. Visit "El Patio de Pelegrin" located in the Puerta de Golpe town. Visit the diverse children's arts, drawings, and handicrafts workshops. Join the children and parents in some of their music and dance activities. Visit the city orchard and meet the workers that provide food for the community.

**Lunch will be cooked and provided by the workers. A great opportunity to exchange on the day by day living in this town.**

**Return to Havana.**

**Dinner is by individual arrangement (own expense) this evening after your return to Havana.**

### Day 6 Thursday-Havana

This morning a meeting has been requested with staff from the Cuban Society of Nurses (SOCUENF). SOCUENF is a scientific society and non-governmental organization under the National Council of Scientific Societies of Public Health Ministry of Cuba. It includes nursing staff (technical and university), and its primary purpose is to raise the scientific and technical level of its affiliates in terms of the health of the population.



Since its founding in 1976, the Cuban Society of Nursing has worked on the technical and professional training of its members and affiliates, contributing to improving the quality of scientific and ethical levels of care. As a professional organization, it has managed to change the traditional image of the profession and recognition of the vital role of nursing in health care.

**Professional program focus:**

- Educating nurses
- Nursing as a profession
- Developing advanced curricula for nursing
- Recruitment of nurses
- Impact of the U.S. embargo on nursing
- Financial resources
- Population health, preventative care & health education
- Health guardians-neighborhood-based physicians & nurse teams
- Polyclinics - community based multispecialty clinics

**Lunch at El Bodegon de las Brisas Paladar**, a place related to the life of the famous writer Ernest Hemingway and to Gregorio Fuentes, the captain of his fishing boat. This afternoon visit the Hemingway Museum located in the Finca Vigia, former residence of Hemingway located in the San Francisco de Paula neighborhood on the outskirts of the city. We will tour along the beltway of the city reaching Cojimar, a fisherman’s village where Hemingway docked his fishing boat “El Pilar,” which was a source of inspiration for his famous novel “The Old Man and the Sea.”

**Dinner is by individual arrangement (own expense).**



**Day 7 Friday-Havana**

This morning meet with the staff a local maternity home. Cuba has a network of over 300 maternity homes providing comprehensive care and childbirth education in either live-in or ambulatory modalities. This strategy has helped the country achieve a nearly 100% in- hospital birth rate and lower infant and maternal mortality rates.

The goal of this meeting will be to meet with the staff to gain an overall understanding of the system and interact with their staff including doctors and care givers as well as the family doctor.

Diagnosis and referral processes are supported throughout the health system, beginning with each woman’s neighborhood-based family doctor and community polyclinic, and including her obstetrician and the resources of the National Maternal-Child Health Program.

Cuba built its first maternity waiting home in 1962. By 1984 there were 85 such homes in the country and 99% of babies were delivered in hospital. Maternal mortality fell from 118 to 31 per 100,000 live births. The purpose of maternity waiting homes is to provide a setting where high-risk women can be accommodated during the final weeks of their pregnancy near a hospital with essential obstetric facilities. Some maternity waiting homes have expanded their purpose to include not only decreased maternal mortality but also improved maternal and neonatal health. In these homes additional emphasis is put on education and counseling regarding pregnancy, delivery and care of the newborn infant and family.

**Professional program focus:**

- Admission Criteria
- Pregnant teens
- Anemia
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Obesity
- Multiple births



- Hypertension and diabetes
- Preeclampsia
- Risk factors for preterm labor
- Adverse social determinants, including geographic
- Women over 35 with any other risk factors Lunch will be provided at La Casa Paladar.

**Lunch will be provided at La Casa Paladar.**

This afternoon a meeting has been requested with the staff at Centro Nacional de Educación Sexual (CENESEX). They are the National Center for Sexual Education and are best known for advocating tolerance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered issues on the island. The head of the center is Mariela Castro, daughter of Cuban leader Raúl Castro, the brother of Fidel Castro. CENESEX's mission is to contribute to "the development of a culture of sexuality that is full, pleasurable and responsible, as well as to promote the full exercise of sexual rights." The center plays a primary role in education concerning contraception and AIDS.

The center pushed for passage of a law that would provide transgendered persons with free sex reassignment surgery and hormone replacement therapy in addition to granting them new legal identification documents with their changed gender. A draft bill was presented to the Cuban parliament in 2005. Prior to being approved, it was suggested that the bill would make Cuba the most liberal nation in Latin America on gender issues. The measure passed in June 2008.

**Professional program focus:**

- LGBT rights and advocacy in Cuba
- Overview of the Center and their health and safety education programs

This evening you can enjoy the farewell reception at the Santa Isabel Hotel terrace in Old Havana. The stilt walkers dance group will entertain you as you follow them dancing in the streets to your farewell dinner.

Share your memories of Cuba with other delegates at a farewell dinner at Café Del Oriente Restaurant in the historic center.

**Day 8 Saturday Depart**

Today you bid farewell to Cuba, "The Pearl of the Antilles" Transfer to the airport for departure. Our guide and local airport representative will be available to help you with the check-in procedures.

