

Nov. 24, 2025

Dear friends of MHI/IHM,

**Greetings to you all, and blessings to you all,
in the name of our Lord.**

With Thanksgiving behind, and Advent before us, I cherish this time of reflection. I want to THANK YOU for continuing to support the work of MHI/IHM in thought, prayer, and finances. Our mission is “To enhance the health and resiliency of expatriates and their families involved in cross-cultural endeavors by providing medical, psychological and spiritual care and education which promote preventive principles and practice”. Sometimes our spirits flag, but this verse comes to mind: **“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up”** (Galatians 6:9 ESV). With the demand on ALL of us these days in a busy culture, we can grow weary, but we do not give up by God’s grace.



Thus, our team of six doctors (Drs. Gamble, Heath, Ho, Liao (locum), To, and Stel) continues to work together in the service of international workers (IWs). This year we have already fulfilled 750 appointments (full assessments, or follow-up; in-person or virtual) which does not include the email communication that happens back and forth.

What does our “process” look like? For those who appreciate systems (and what does MHI actually do?) I will summarize the steps here:

- 1) Mission organizations send referrals to us for “intake” screening of new candidates.
- 2) Our administrator Priya Pandit arranges an MD appointment for these candidates, in person or a virtual visit from our conference room.
- 3) The physician then generates a report (including health concerns, health maintenance / prevention advice, and specific travel / assignment recommendations) which we then forward to the client and / or organization.
- 4) Our nurse Margaret VanDyke follows up on the recommendations we make (eg. testing, vaccines) and communicates with us when the results are in.

Once the IW has been assigned, we are available to communicate as needed to help “weather” health crises from a-far and then have the joy of seeing them when they return.

But what does this process ACTUALLY look like? This process is made of real individuals and couples / families, who may initially be reluctant to answer the hundreds of questions we ask them to complete; once we meet, however, we have the joy of truly getting to know them as they trust us with their vulnerabilities. We have received urgent messages for counsel, whether related to injuries or emotional crises, that we manage remotely and then in person. It was sobering to see a couple who had been serving in Africa for years and hear their story of a rabid dog who entered their compound, causing some bodily injury to the gentleman. They contacted us about their rabies status; with appropriate immunization counsel and then follow up testing when back home in Canada, we could reassure them of their immune status, and

that there would be no health repercussions. Another senior missionary after years of sun exposure identified a skin cancer on his leg, and MHI/IHM was able to expedite a plastic surgery consult to have this removed in a timely manner. A young man working in Bible translation in West Africa with a history of recurrent ear infections, concerned about his hearing, just saw an ENT doctor in record time who could reassure him that no intervention was needed. Our connections with NYGH facilitated urgent hospital admission for a child in critical condition. Another family needed to relocate home after several stressful years in Asia; I just had the joy of delivering their third baby, while they continue their ministry “from afar”. These are real faces with real people and hearts behind them, and so we cannot grow weary in doing good. The resilience of these workers as they continue to share Christ is a daily testimony to us, and we do not take the privilege of care for these IWs for-granted.



I would also like to introduce our wonderful psychotherapy team: Dr. Merry Lin, Ms. Shelley Burry, Ms. Rachel Barough, Ms. Andreia Roman, Ms. Celia Fung, and Dr. William Wilkinson. This group of psychotherapists offers a wide range of expertise including screening and diagnostics; Child psychotherapy; Art therapy, Trauma-informed psychotherapy, end-of-term debriefing; Critical Incident Stress Debriefing; plus, much more, including over fifty years of field

experience. **We are still looking at raising at least \$100,000 to create an even better space for the mental health aspect of our care and invite you to join us in this endeavor.** This effort will help our IWs exponentially, and the communities surrounding them, as they go in healing, in the grace of God. Please consider giving at www.missionaryhealth.ca.



Thank you again for continuing to support as the Lord stirs your heart. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time. I would love to share more with you.

In His service,

Karen Stel, MD



MHI/IHM

missionaryhealth.ca

Email: kstel@ihmcanada.org

“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now” – Philippians 1: 3 – 5 ESV