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Health needs in Nicaragua are the result of poverty, geographical positioning, and a disorganized health care system. A high prevalence of malaria and parasitic diseases, gender inequity, large numbers of children, and periodic natural disasters all contribute to a portrait of suffering and necessity. Infant mortality and maternal mortality remain high, especially in disadvantaged groups – rural areas, indigenous populations, the poor, adolescents, and women with low levels of schooling. Malnutrition is another pressing problem so that nearly a quarter of children living in rural areas suffer from not having enough to eat. In addition, communicable diseases continue to increase. Malaria is concentrated in municipalities with indigenous populations and tuberculosis is prevalent in the poorest, most inaccessible areas. The incidence of HIV/AIDS is also rising, especially among the female population. To add to all of these concerns, only about six percent of the population is insured and government spending, already low, has been steadily decreasing since the eighties. This has created a situation where out-of-pocket health expenditures constitute a serious barrier for the majority of Nicaraguans.

FSD interns and volunteers have the opportunity to contribute directly toward healthier Nicaraguan communities by assisting nurses and doctors, training youth to be peer health educators, helping to organize vaccination and education campaigns that address a variety of problems, and doing other important work. Participants work at rural clinics, urban hospitals, women's health centers, and public health organizations that apply funding and human resources directly where it is needed most.

Internship/Volunteer opportunities in health in Nicaragua include:

- Assist preventative and curative medical attention at a hospital for children and adults. Work in any of these areas: pediatric care, epidemiology, gynecology, family planning, emergency services, nutrition, TB care, immunizations, internal medicine, and physical therapy.
- Expand an FSD project that provides individual and group counseling to middle and high school students with the support of other teachers and administrators trained in counseling by the Ministry of Education.
- Work in a women's health clinic focused on reproductive health counseling, prenatal and postnatal care, and breastfeeding promotion. Support the pediatrics division focusing on hydration, vaccinations, and methods to prevent malnutrition in children.
- Offer physical therapy, education, medical, and psychological support to rehabilitate mentally and physically handicapped children and adults who have been abandoned by their families.
- Work with parents to help them understand their children's disabilities, teaching them ways to cope with the emotional and social difficulties facing their children and themselves.
- Provide psychological help through counseling and intervention for those overcoming addiction and intra-familial violence.

For more opportunities in health in Nicaragua, visit our website or contact us directly.