USAP

PALMER STATION

An introduction to the Medical Department
Palmer Station  64.77° S  64.05°W

• Located on Anvers Island
• Anvers Island is part of the Antarctic Peninsula
• The only access to Palmer is by Boat
Palmer Station

• The smallest of the USAP Stations
• Approximately 45 staff and scientists in the summer season
• Approximately 20-30 staff and scientists in the winter season
• Scientists come to Palmer to research local virus, bacteria, algae, insect, fish and bird populations (among other things)
How does one get to Palmer Station?

• After orientation in Texas, you will fly to Punta Arenas, then you will board the Laurence M Gould, a modified icebreaker.

• On the LMG, you will sail through the Straits of Magellan, then across Drake Passage to Anvers Island.

• The trip on the LMG is usually 4 days depending on weather conditions.
LMG
Life aboard the LMG

• You will have the opportunity to assist the scientists aboard the vessel
• You may choose to read or watch movies
• There is limited internet access in the lounge area
• If you are prone to motion sickness, be prepared with the anti-emetic of your choice. It can be a rough trip!
What are the medical responsibilities of the Palmer doc?

1. Treating a wide variety of medical conditions
2. Maintaining clinic equipment
3. Maintaining clinic pharmacy
4. Designing and implementing fire drills
5. Training station trauma team
6. Assisting in ocean search and rescue
7. Assisting in glacial search and rescue
8. Working closely with the scientific divers
9. Safety inspections/Quality control testing
10. Assisting in a spill response
11. Community health education
12. Science Support
1. Patient Care

- You will see walk-in patients for a variety of medical conditions
- Documentation of medical visits is done using a simple EMR program
- Injuries requiring more than first-aid will require additional reporting
- Generally, Palmer has a very healthy and safe population
Fifth metatarsal fracture
2. Maintaining Clinical Equipment

- Among the tools available at Palmer are:
  - Portable ventilator
  - X-ray
  - Slit lamp
  - Polycom
  - Ultrasound
  - Dental equipment
  - Blood testing equipment
Portable Ventilator
Portable X-Ray
Dental Equipment
Blood Testing Equipment
3. Maintaining Clinic Pharmacy

- Ordering and receiving medications and clinic supplies
- Maintaining pharmacy inventory
4. Designing and Implementing Monthly Fire Drills
5. Training a Trauma Team
6. Glacial Search and Rescue (GSAR)

• Assisting in planning and implementing GSAR drills
• Providing medical support in a rescue situation
GSAR
Sno-bulance
7. Ocean Search and Rescue (OSAR)

- Assisting in the planning and implementation of OSAR drills
- Providing medical support in a rescue situation
OSAR
8. Working with Divers

- Palmer has a long history of supporting highly skilled scientific divers
- As the Palmer physician, you will be their medical support in the event of illness or injury
Hard-working diver
9. Safety Inspections/Quality Control

- Inspection of the kitchen and food storage areas
- Eyewash stations
- Water quality testing on station and the LMG
- Quality control testing on clinical equipment
Safety Inspections and Quality Control
10. Assisting in a spill response
11. Community Health Education

• Discussing hand-washing with stationers during meeting
• Reviewing safe lifting techniques
• Discussing eye protection, hearing protection, etc.
• Fall prevention
• Safe sex
• Use of the AED’s on station
AED Practice
12. Science Support

• There will be instances when the scientists will need assistance with weighing penguin chicks, dive tending, digging for insect larvae, and other tasks. This is a very special part of the Palmer experience.
What are my Community Responsibilities?

• GASH: cleaning the kitchen and galley once weekly
• House Mouse: a 2-hour deep clean of an assigned area once weekly
• Safety Meeting: giving a 30 min presentation on a safety topic of your choice once during the season
• Snow shoveling and helping to keep the station tidy and safe, in general
Palmer Recreation: what can I do in my free time?

- Enjoy the large DVD and book library
- Play an instrument
- Knit, paint, screen print, sew, carpentry
- Hike, snowshoe, or ski on the glacier
- Go boating; explore the many islands surrounding Palmer
- Play music, darts or pool in the bar
- Call home, e-mail
Pier Jump
What Wildlife might I see at Palmer?

- Lots of sea birds: Southern Giant Petrels, Skua, Sheathbills, and Cormorants
- Adelie, Chinstrap, and Gentoo penguins
- Leopard, Elephant, Crab-eater, Weddell, and Fur seals
- Minke and Humpback whales, possible an Orca
- Various species of fish and other smaller species of underwater life
Leopard Seal
Humpback Whales
Elephant Seals
Southern Giant Petrel
Are there specialized medical skills which would be particularly useful at Palmer?

- Dentistry
- Ultrasound
- Dive Medicine
Hope that helps…