



HEAL Initiative Fellow Role Description

Position Title: Mental health/Primary care HEAL Fellow

Organization: [Compañeros En Salud, Mexico](#)

Compañeros En Salud (CES) is a Partners in Health affiliated organization that started working in Mexico in 2011 and now operates out of 10 rural public clinics in the Sierra Madre mountains of Chiapas—one of the most marginalized regions in the country. Our goal is to improve staffing and supply of the clinics, and link them to more specialized care in hospitals outside the communities.

CES recruits Mexican physicians entering a required social service year to staff clinics. The first-year physicians, or *pasantes*, receive supervision, mentorship, and training from our staff. This comprehensive support and training program helps build Mexico's next generation of social justice physicians. CES also manages community health workers (CHWs) who visit patients with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, mental health and high blood pressure. The workers, called *acompañantes*, help patients better understand their conditions and adhere to medications.

Department: Mental health

CES created the mental health program in 2014, in response to the high burden of mental health disorders and the scarce resources allocated to mental health in the State. The on site-team is constituted by a mental health coordinator (physician), two case managers (clinical psychologists) and one COVID response psychologist. The program has its basis on a primary care and community-based care models, which includes training and supervising non-specialists (*pasantes*, nurses, CHWs) how to screen, diagnose and treat mental conditions. Mental health curriculum training happens once a month and a mental health topic is taught to health providers. Supervision consists of a member from the mental health team travelling for two-to-four days to remote communities to observe mental health consultations along with the *pasante* and tailor treatment plans together. Home visits and complex cases assessments for establishing diagnosis and/or treatment is common.

Community-based interventions include psychoeducation groups for people living with common mental disorders and community mental health workers (*Cuidadoras de salud mental*) delivering low-intensity psychotherapy: Problem management plus during home visits. Additionally, *Cuidadoras* facilitate community groups with women, the Reflective Circles, which have a gender perspective, and promote collective dialogue among participants in order to talk about mental health, wellness, violence and more. Moreover, there are reflective circles with men living with substance use disorders at Jaltenango de la Paz.

Position Description: The fellow position includes 65% working in rural primary care clinics, 35% for office hours (development of materials, case discussion, trainings, etc). Fellows will also have urgent care responsibilities and receive administration time. The role of the fellow is to:

- Provide training to CHWs on mental health issues based on the training manual and facilitate these sessions
- Provide on-site training and supervision to *pasantes*, according to the mental health curriculum, to reach the necessary competencies, by modelling and observing mental health consultations.



- Assess patients with complex cases and build a plan along with the *pasantes* and the *Cuidadoras* at the community.
- Participate in the development of psychoeducational support materials and edit existing materials (protocols, algorithms, scales, etc)
- Facilitation of monthly lectures around mental health for medical and nurse students, along with the mental health team.
- Participation in monthly collaborative panels with clinical supervisors (physicians and nurses) and a psychologist in order to discuss treatment plan for mental health patients.
- Provide written or oral feedback and consulting for clinical cases that *pasantes* deal with
- Discuss clinical cases with mental health team (psychologists and 1 physician) with a comprehensive perspective, on a weekly basis.

Clinical Work

- **Clinical hours per week:** These hours include three-to-four days a week at rural clinics in the communities. This schedule would be kept 3 weeks per month, meaning 1 week a month the fellow can stay in Jaltenango to support the mental health consultories work or the office hours.
- **Administrative / Project hours per week:** These hours include one-to-two days of office hours at CES headquarters where phone reception and wi-fi is available. Every other Friday there is a call with the Cross-site mental health team based at PIH Boston, which includes a multi-disciplinary team such as MEQ experts, psychiatrists and a psychotherapist who provide advise and support to CES Mental health team.
- **Any after hours call or weekends?:**

At the end of every month there is a two-day course directed to nurses, midwives and physicians at CES headquarters. This course is facilitated by CES staff members, including HEAL fellows that want to participate by giving a one-to-two hour lecture on a specific topic. Sometimes at the communities house visits might be needed in order to assess a patient with psychosis, etc. along with the clinical staff. The worked hours can be made-up.
- **What is typical work schedule on a given week?:**
 - Monday: 9 am to 6 pm at a rural clinic (1 hour for lunch)
 - Tuesday: 9 am to 6 pm at a rural clinic (1 hour for lunch)
 - Wednesday: 9 am to 6 pm at a rural clinic (1 hour for lunch)
 - Thursday: 9 am to 6 pm-office hours (1 hour for lunch)
 - Friday: 9 am to 6 pm-office hours (1 hour for lunch)
 - Saturday: Day off except one weekend a month for trainings
 - Sunday: Day off except one weekend a month for trainings

Project Work

- **Is there an expectation to participate in projects, committees, or other activities outside clinical duties?**
 - Yes. We usually have multiple projects surrounding mental health and we welcome the Fellows' involvement. Projects are chosen according to areas of expertise, organizational needs and personal preferences when possible.

- **Is there protected time for those activities in the schedule?**
 - Yes. At least one day of "office-hours" per week.

Additional Details

- **Who does the fellow go to with clinical and/or administrative questions?**
 - Fellows must reach the Mental Health Coordinator
 - For information regarding each particular community clinic the Fellow can address the Clinical Psychologist allocated to that community.

- **Is there any formal or informal mentorship for new clinicians at this site?**
 - The HR department provides an introduction to the organization and then the team to which the new clinician is assigned will complete the induction to the area. We provide continuous mentorship at many levels for as long as anyone is involved with the organization.
 - The Cross-site team based at PIH Boston provides mentorship and supervision if required.
 - There are volunteer psychiatrists that can be contacted remotely in case case co-supervision is required. Time schedule and availability depends completely on these remote volunteers.

- **How are schedules made? Is there flexibility for shift or schedule requests?**
 - Schedule is made considering the needs of the clinical teams at different communities and at the maternal home. There can be some flexibility and the schedule is usually drafted taking into consideration personal preferences whenever possible.

Job Requirements: By 1 July 2024 applicants must have completed residency training at a US-based residency program. Applicants must be able to provide highly competent clinical care and have a clear passion for serving the underserved. Important traits are the ability to be mentors and trainers and a deep affinity for education. Ability to perform without supervision in an environment that does not have the same resources as the US is vital.

HEAL Initiative

HEAL (Health, Equity, Action, and Leadership) trains and transforms front line health professionals through building a community dedicated to serving the under-served as their lifelong choice.