



Note & Policy on Travel to Haiti for Adoptive Parents

As each of you know, adoptive policy and regulations around the globe are in a constant state of evolution. This is especially true in Haiti as there have been major changes in the process over the past couple of years. These changes each enhance our opportunity to “respect the process” as they have brought additional confusion to a process that was already confusing.

For the past several months it has been CCAI’s position that travel to Haiti Lifeline for adoptive parents, prior to being officially matched was not acceptable and would violate Haiti’s new adoptive guidelines. This included all parents who had received a “soft match”, but had not traveled on their official “bonding trip”. HLM immediately restricted travel for any adoptive parent that was not officially matched in order to fall within our understanding of this guideline.

Recently, we were made aware of a potential policy change regarding travel to Haiti for adoptive parents. CCAI informed us that travel may, in fact, now be permissible for medical teams traveling to Lifeline. As our desire is that we not allow anything that violates Haitian law and would potentially jeopardize adoptions for children at Lifeline, we were initially skeptical of this change and we felt the need to look into it further. We asked CCAI to verify this information with the attorney they work with in Haiti. The response that CCAI received back was that Haiti views medical teams as a humanitarian mission and that travel for adoptive parents was allowed “so long as bonding was not the goal of travel”. All of this said, CCAI still admits that there is some ambiguity about travel to Haiti prior to being officially matched, as there is for the entire adoption process currently.

Faced with this clarification from CCAI, we now feel more comfortable allowing such travel. However, while we feel adoption is a huge part of the overall ministry of Lifeline, adoption bonding is not the goal of our medical trips. As mentioned above, the government has said as much as well. Therefore, until adoption policy in Haiti evolves further, HLM’s policy will be as follows:

- Adoptive parents considering travel fully recognize and agree that the adoption process in Haiti and this new position on travel do have elements of ambiguity attached. HLM makes no attempt to interpret adoption law and is relying completely on the opinion of CCAI. We make absolutely no assurance that travel to Haiti will not adversely affect your adoption process in the future, and recommend that prior to travel you make a personal decision after consulting with CCAI
- Medical teams traveling to Haiti go with the expressed purpose of sharing the Love of Jesus through medical missions to the Haitian people and will not be used as an avenue for adoptive bonding purposes

- Adoptive parents who are medical professionals may travel with limited restrictions, so long as they are approved through the normal application process, so long as the mission of the trip would be enhanced by their services and so long as there is team capacity.
- Adoptive parents who are not medical professionals may still be allowed to travel, but we will limit the number of parents traveling who are not medical professionals to a total of 4 per trip, unless there are additional needs or team spots to fill.
- Adoptive parents traveling on any HLM team will be expected to participate fully in the mission of the team.
- Adoptive children (prior to official match) will not be allowed in the guest house for sleeping or meals. After official match, adoptive children may or may not be allowed in the guest house depending on team size & desires of the team leader.
- Adoptive parents shall make every effort to guard both all parties emotions by continuing to honor the process and “hold the end goal loosely”, realizing that until your child touches down on American soil, the adoptive process can be cut short by any number of factors

We understand that there may be questions about this policy. Please don't hesitate to ask for clarification. We also understand that this policy creates very limited capacity for adoptive parents to travel. That is by design so that medical teams can continue to fully realize their goals for travel to Haiti.

Adoptive Parent – Please sign and return prior to travel

Adoptive Parent 2 – Please sign and return prior to travel