

Recent UC Travel Assistance Events

New Caledonia

In March 2007, a UC Berkeley professor, in New Caledonia to conduct research in the mountain forests, fell down a ravine into a fast moving stream filled with large rocks and boulders. The strong undercurrent and rapids carried him downstream and he was thrown up against the many rocks and boulders. The professor suffered a crushed right leg below the knee and extreme bruising to his entire body. He was not found for at least 12 hours. Because of the delay in getting medical treatment, a septic infection had set in and was spreading. Two surgeries to remove infected tissue were performed while he was in the hospital in Noumé. He was in intensive care there for more than two weeks before moving to a regular post-ward. Once the infection was fully eliminated he was released to come back to the U.S. The professor was the only UC employee on the research trip, the doctors and hospital employees spoke very little or no English, and he was in a country half way around the world by himself.

The Travel Assistance provided by the University's Business Travel Accident policy was immediately engaged. They arranged and provided payment for emergency medical evacuation and repatriation, provided translation services, and maintained a communication line between the medical professionals, the employee's family, and the University. The Travel Assistance is a 24 hour service and they have people working around the clock to assist UC travelers worldwide.

When the professor was released from medical care to fly home, the Travel Assistance arranged for his flight home with an escort. Upon his arrival in the U.S. he would be transported to a hospital for further medical treatment. Coverage was provided for the airlift from the remote area to a hospital and the medical services provided during the transport, ground transportation to the airport, flight home with an escort, and ground transportation to a hospital close to his place of residence. The total costs were \$40,414. The Travel Assistance arranged for and paid the service providers.

The Travel Assistance also provided for flying the professor's wife to be with him while he was hospitalized in Noumé, and to fly back with him when able. Although she elected not to, this is something that could be arranged and paid for by the Travel Assistance. They maintained a communication line with the professor's wife the entire time to keep her apprised of his condition. This is particularly beneficial when a patient is in a medical facility where very little or no English is spoken.

Uganda

In October 2007, a UCSF researcher had been in Uganda conducting medical research when he suffered a knee injury, a torn patella tendon, and required orthopedic surgery. Uganda does not have the facilities to provide the surgery or treat to western medical standards, therefore, necessitating emergency medical evacuation. The insurance paid \$3,366 to cover the cost of the commercial flight back to U.S. for his surgery.