Founded in 1984, Acción Médica Cristiana (AMC) is recognized as one of the top ten nongovernmental organizations working in Nicaragua. It interfaces closely with the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health and other nongovernmental organizations and alliances.

AMC’s strategies have evolved to address the deeper causes of health problems through a public health approach, and enable local communities to identify problems, create solutions and lobby support for long-term strategic development. AMC successes include the promotion of health models that are appropriate to the needs of poor, remote, multicultural communities, and a model of development based on community participation and empowerment. AMC has influenced health policy and health laws at a regional and national level. AMC has helped to reduce infant and maternal mortality, improve sanitary conditions, mitigate natural disasters, integrate women into health and development, and promote the integration of traditional medical practices with the official health system. Initially, AMC’s staff were clinical care doctors, dentists and nurses, but as health strategies have evolved to address systemic issues, the multidisciplinary staff now include, public health specialists, agronomists, psychologists, social workers, educators and disaster management experts. Top priorities continue to be food security (nutrition and agricultural sustainability), HIV-AIDS prevention, clean water and sanitation, disaster mitigation and prevention, health education and promotion. AMC carries out this public health work from a perspective of faith using the more than 2,000 community health volunteers among them teachers, pastors, empirically-trained midwives, and agricultural promoters. These volunteers are the grass-roots social capital that is often the first and only response to a health need in their community.
AMC’s Central offices are located in Managua. Community Health Program projects are found in the following locations:

- Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) – Waspam/Coco River, Sahsa/Tasba Pri, Alamikamba/Prinzapolka,
- Southern Autonomous Atlantic Region (RAAS) – Pearl Lagoon, Bluefields
- Central Regions (El Tuma/La Dalia, Matagalpa).

After their first year of study, Penn medical students have the opportunity to work in diverse projects such as health brigades, developing sanitation projects, potable water, and a variety of nutrition and other programs designed to improve maternal and child health. Upper level students augment their service with a strong clinical component in coordination with the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health services. Project site placement depends on student’s expectations and placement availability. Having a professed faith is not required, but sensitivity and respect for AMC’s Christian philosophy is expected. Project sites are rustic, remote and far from internet or healthcare. Students are placed in secure housing and board is provided. Dr. Belinda Forbes is the onsite professional contact. For further information, please contact Dr. Steve Larson. Applications should be submitted to Global Health Programs.