

## **Observation of Healthcare and Culture in Bolivia Abstract**

**Truc Bui, Morgan Heinz**

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During the Summer of 2023, I traveled to Tarija, Bolivia for three weeks through the Child Family Health International (CFHI) program to observe their universal healthcare system, compare it to the U.S. healthcare system, and immerse myself in Bolivian culture. Coming from a place of economic privilege, I wanted to see what the medical field and general life were like outside of the U.S. Studying abroad helped me overcome language barriers and see the diversity as I encountered different walks of life. I set goals to observe the health issues, quality of care, and local customs. Three clinical rotations were divided up by severity of patient condition and intensity of care. A neighborhood clinic focused on preventative care and simple patient consultations. A center specializing in treating Chagas disease in recurring patients. Lastly, a hospital where major operations occur. Despite the lack of resources, I saw the medical team make the most of their resources to improve their patient's quality of life. The patients are trusting and grateful and I aspire to be as caring and positive as the doctors there. I learned that there can be many treatments in observing the large Indigenous communities that value their traditional medicinal practices. The Bolivian healthcare system does not need elaborate technology to provide adequate care, but there is room for reformation. I took away experiences that improved my communication skills, broadened my mindset to new approaches, and increased my confidence to make me a well-rounded future healthcare provider.