PROSPECTUS / Program IHCAI P07A

Medical Spanish & Introduction to Tropical Medicine

with observational clinical rotation in the Costa Rican Health System

for junior medical students from Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

1. Overview

The goal of the International Health Elective is to offer students an opportunity to learn about health and healing with a more global perspective by living and working in another country. Students will have the opportunity to learn medical Spanish and directly observing clinical performance, living in a different culture, usually with little of the technical and medical facilities he or she is accustomed to using. The student will have a chance to see a different way of organizing health care to achieve good results in the health situation of the population, as is the case of Costa Rican health system.

This program integrates the following components:

- **Short medical Spanish Course**
- **Introduction to tropical medicine**
- **Critical approach of the Costa Rican health system**
- **Shadowing clinical experience**

This organization has developed over many years these components through its programs P010A & P01 (www.ihcai.org). They are usually targeted at senior students in medicine. Only for the four weeks period of **June 15th—July 10th 2026** we opened this special session for RUTGERS junior medical students.

Space availability: **9 spots**.

Spanish level required to participate in the program
Students with *intermediate* and *advanced* proficiency in Spanish are welcome to this program. *Beginner (novice) high* level students can take an online interview with IHCAI Institute staff to consider their participation. Students with *none Spanish* or *beginner low* or *beginner medium* level can apply to the P010A program from our catalog.

Requirement to apply to the program
This program is coordinated academically and logistically with the RUTGERS Office of Global Health. All applications must have the express approval of:

Angela Gitau MD
Program Manager - Office of Global Health
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
Phone: 848-932-0230
angela.gitau@rutgers.edu

2. The Medical Spanish Course

This is a very intensive Medical Spanish Course focusing on the interaction between the physician or health professional and the patient. Common medical problems and diseases are considered in the Medical Spanish learning models, such as chronic diseases and different medical aspects.

Intensive grammar and Spanish pronunciation, comprehension and vocabulary sessions and clinical scenarios are offered from 9 to 12 a.m. and 1p.m to 4 p.m. with two 15-minute breaks. Lunch is at noon. Some academicals and social activities can be scheduled outside this schedule.

The introductory content of six tropical diseases are integrated in clinical cases will be developed.

Some essential contents of the course are:

- **The Human Body**
- **Signs and Symptoms**
- **Patient Interviewing**
- **Medical History**
- **Standardized simulated patient**

The course runs at IHCAI Institute facilities in the east of San Jose downtown (http://www.ihcai.org/location.htm). IHCAI instructors are highly trained in teaching Spanish as a second language and clinical scenarios are in the hands of young well-trained bilingual physicians.

Grammar Manual and Tropical Medicine Manual will be given to participants. Course grants: Intensive Medical Spanish Course & Introduction to Tropical Medicine Certificate.

3. Clinical rotation identification

This rotation is designed to give the student the opportunity to observe the activities of the health team from the first or the third level of care of Costa Rican Health System (Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social – CCSS).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costa_Rican_Department_of_Social_Security
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Healthcare_in_Costa_Rica

According to the country regulations for medical care, and the international regulations on bioethics for medical care for health professionals and students, junior medical participants will only observe. This is known internationally as “shadowing”.

In the first level, preventative services are emphasized, including immunizations, maternal child services, prenatal care, growth and development of children, nutrition, community education, community sanitation and environment, as well as continuity of care in cases chronic diseases. The rotation on the third level of attention is going to focus on some hospital units with access to medical specialties.

In USA and others countries, the Spanish speaking population represents an important number of people to whom the health professional must give appropriate care. To promote competence based medical education means to prepare the professional to face the reality of working, understanding, and

communicating with this group. This rotation is competence based to expose the student to work with Hispanic populations, learn, and accept the culture differences as an important scientific and ethical principle of the medical practice. Primary care clinic (EBAIS) hours are usually 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

What is an EBAIS?
https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebais

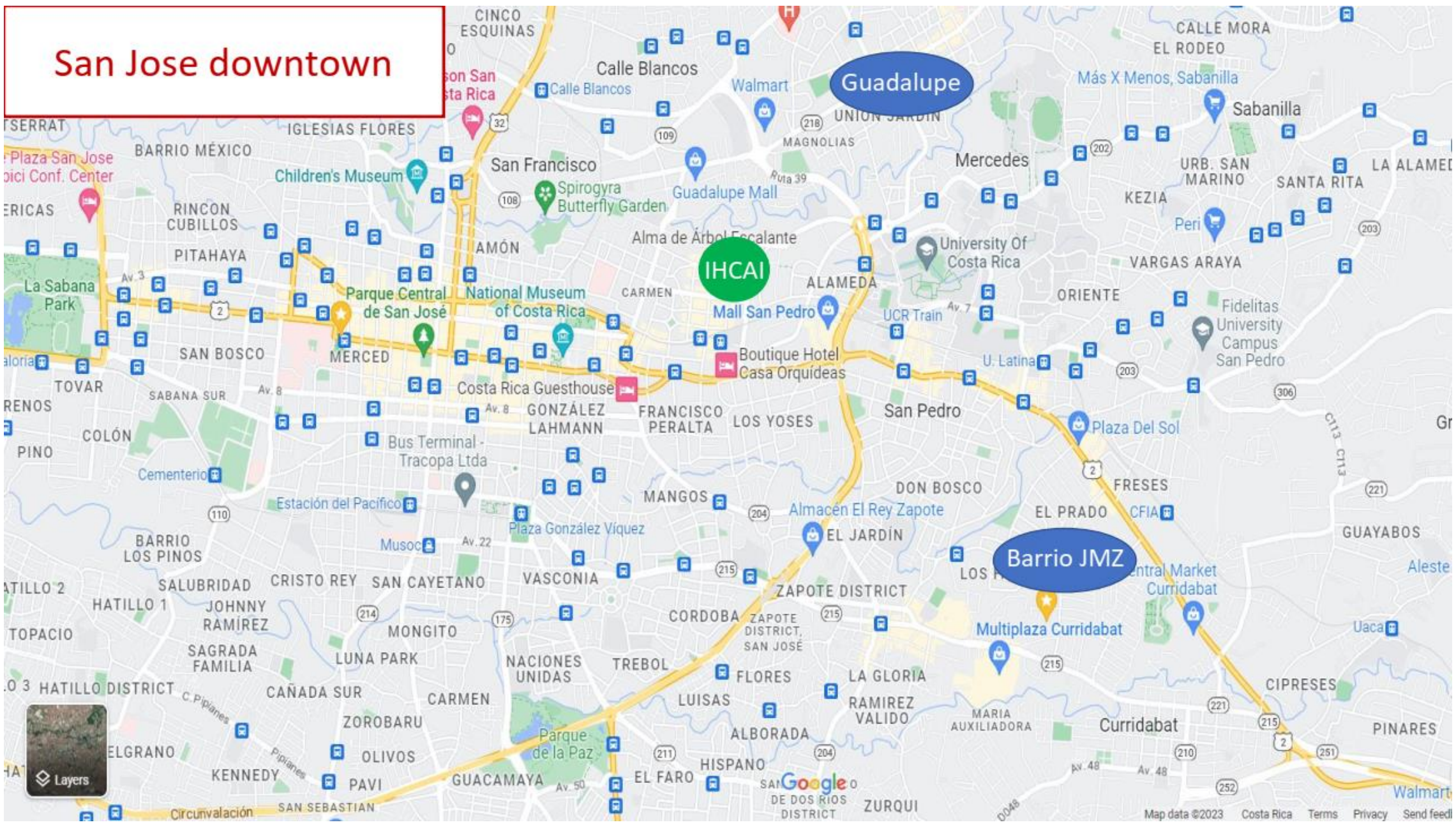
4. Where will I live?

Home Family stay

As part of the training program and the cultural immersion, student will stay with a Costa Rican middle class family. The family will be providing a single room, breakfast and dinner, laundry service with family dynamics. IHCAI Institute offer free Wi-Fi access at home and in his facilities. As a complementary service airport transportation is provided at arrival and departure 24/7.

The program has two stages. The first 2 weeks, during the Spanish course, the students will live in the suburbs of downtown San José, since the IHCAI Institute facilities are located on the eastern edge of the center of the capital city, near the Mall San Pedro, in Barrio Escalante.
https://ihcai.org/location/

In San José, IHCAI Institute has a network of houses for middle-class Costa Rican families who have extensive experience hosting our students in two locations: Guadalupe Centro and Barrio José María Zeledón (JMZ) in the city of Curridabat, near Multiplaza del Este Mall.



Transportation from both locations to the IHCAI facilities is easy, a 15-20 minute bus ride ($0.6 US) or a 25-35 minute walk.

The last 2 weeks, for the clinical rotation stage, most students must travel to the Grecia city (coffee plantation region), in the western Central Valley, 1 hour and 15 minutes from downtown San José. In that city, IHCAI Institute also has a network of houses to house its students who live less than a mile from the center of the City of Grecia.



Most of the clinical fields of the IHCAI Institute in the Costa Rican health system are located in this health area, and it is an excellent opportunity to learn about the scope of the system and the living conditions of its inhabitants outside the capital.

Other available clinical sites may be the city of Naranjo (near Grecia) or the province of Cartago. For each site the IHCAI staff will give detailed information and will provide the transfers and the proper orientation.

More useful information for your travel at: http://www.ihcai.org/advice.htm

5. Program fee

Tuition fee per student = $ 2.280 US
The tuition is completed in two payments. A first payment of $300 after submitting the online application to reserve your spot, and a second payment of $1980 to complete the tuition at the beginning of the program. Payments are made online through the *PayPal* platform which is easy and safe.

6. Registration

There is an application form available online at:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdG5KL8Q1fxnwhR8inAcHUYEAmaQn4IpmKIOXgP63GPZl9KRw/viewform

Registration deadline for P07A-2026 session: May 06th 2026.

There are currently two versions of the P07 IHCAI program in our catalogue. The normal version that lasts 2 months and the P07A version that lasts 1 month and is intended for RUTGERS students only. All RUTGERS students applying for July program will be contact by email to confirm their application is for P07A program under the terms of this prospectus.

All RUTGERS students must be approved by Angela Gitau MD, as mentioned in Section 1 of this document. All RUTGERS students must comply with the submission of the required documentation before the deadline as detailed in Section number 7 of this document.

If you need more information, please contact us at info@ihcai.org we will be very pleased to assist you.

7. Required documentation

In order to complete your registration, you must submit:

1. Personal Resume (CV) in Spanish. Please include your photo.
2. Copy of your passport identification page.
3. Record vaccine.
4. Copy of personal health insurance coverage. Your personal health insurance must cover you in Costa Rica and for the duration of your rotation. Keep in mind that it is possible that your medical school has an international insurance that covers you. If you don't have one, we recommend you an international travel health insurance plan with HCC Medical Insurance Services under the fallow link: https://www.worldtrips.com/quotes/default.asp?referid=99690

Deadline to submit the required documentation for P07A-2026 session: May 19th 2026.

These are requirements that the Costa Rican health system (CCSS) requires of all foreign visitors who are going to do an observational clinical rotation at its facilities.

Additionally, it is required to send a copy of your air ticket before May 30th, 2026.

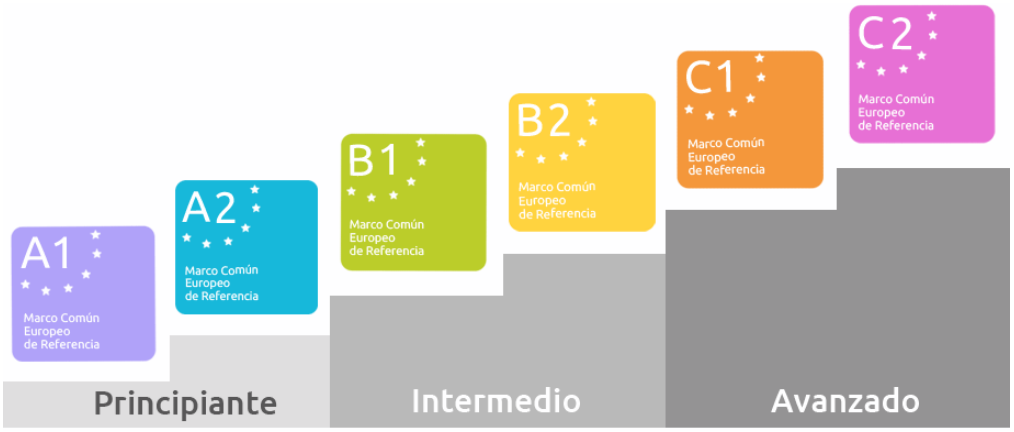
All documents must be sent in PDF format to: info@ihcai.org

8. What's my current Spanish level?

There are 6 Spanish levels determined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). These levels are expressed as A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. The CEFR Spanish levels are widely accepted as the global standard for grading an individual's language proficiency.

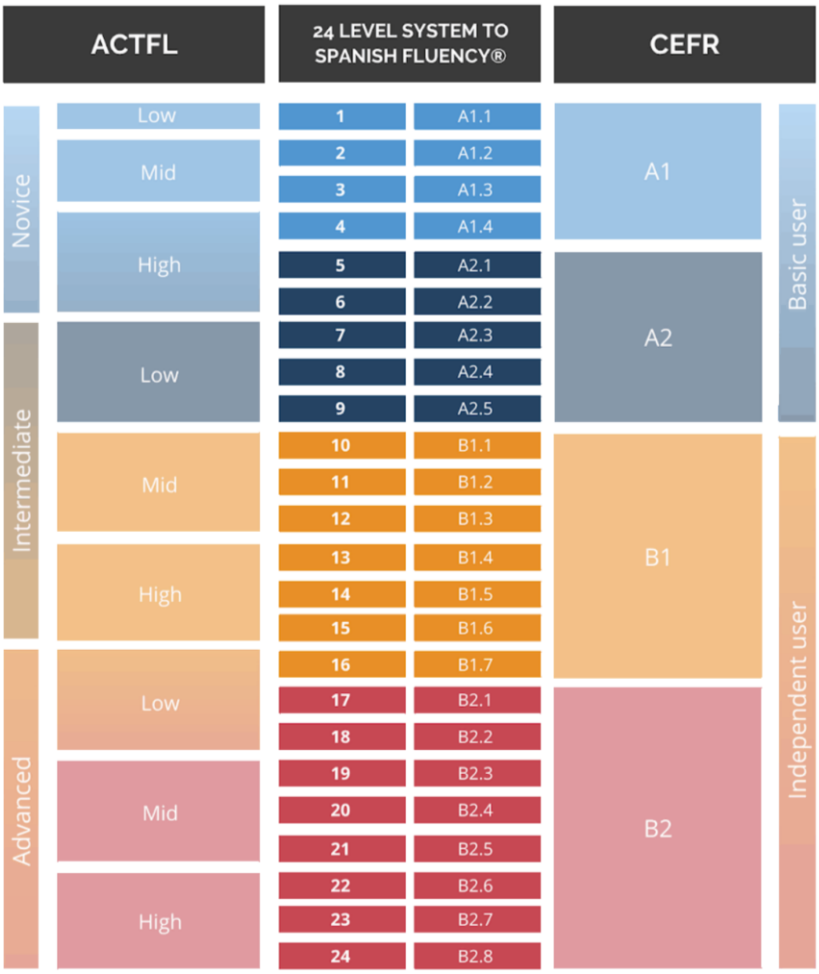
This program does not pretend, in the content of medical Spanish, to give all the necessary skills for the best use of your time in Costa Rica. It is necessary that the student has an initial base of Spanish, especially in the domains of comprehension (LISTENING) and oral expression (SPEAKING). Minimal skills are required to interact with clinic staff and have an understanding of doctor-patient interaction.

The two weeks of intensive course will help to refresh previously acquired Spanish and generate new skills, but the short time limits the objectives and scope.
A consolidated A2 level could be a good starting point to participate in this program. However, it's not always easy to figure out the borders of an A2. If you are not sure of your current level of Spanish, we recommend you consider the following graph.



Taken from: TLCDENIA web site

The American Company for the Teaching of Languages (ACTFL) addresses the levels of Spanish with a more user-friendly approach. Please consider the following graphic to get closer to the nomenclature used in this document and define your Spanish level.



Taken from: Let's Speak Spanish web site

In case of doubt, you can write to the IHCAI Institute staff at info@ihcai.org and we will do an online interview to define if your current level is optimal to participate in this program.

9. More info

For a better understanding of the teaching methodology, evaluation, teachers, materials, family and community experience, among other topics related to this program, we suggest you read the P01 and P010A program prospectus from our catalogue, since they the P07B program is a hybrid of both.

P010A / https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iyWd45v-yopILEz7CTl6MLxeaVMj1D7n/view?usp=share_link
P01 / https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ugXrBMW7ptLTOZfGF8IQmpMhjKyZZCfc/view?usp=share_link

Warmest regards,

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http://ihcaip010a.blogspot.com/
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Simulated patient and sports activity in P010A – 2020



IHCAI Institute Clinical Scenarios and Grammar Instructors with 2019 students.



2020 IHCAI Institute multi-program student group weekend trip.