



Thanks  
To You

OPERATION MEDICAL NEWSLETTER

Providing Global Healthcare

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Just as early Spring temperatures are starting to warm up here in Central Pennsylvania, Op Med is starting to “warm up” for its first mission trip since early 2020! Following up on initial interest in our organization on sending a surgical team to Katani Hospital in the suburbs of Nairobi, Kenya....Terry Baker, MD and Modesta Vesonder, CRNP, who are co-founders of the Hospital, have been communicating with us via email and video conference over the past several weeks as we work to confirm our plans for mid-October 2022. Further details on the hospital and our mission team are to be found elsewhere in this newsletter, but no amount of words can express the enthusiasm of our volunteer team as we look forward to getting back to work!

This mission to Kenya will no sooner wrap up than we will be getting ready to return to Gujarat, India. Plans call for us to be hosted by long-time Op Med friend Paritosh Joshi at his new hospital in Valpi in late January, 2023.

Since we were unable to do in-person surgical care over the past two years, we did wish to somehow support mission-related services. Following initial discussions by our Executive Committee, the Operation Medical Board of Directors agreed upon a financial contribution to Americares, an organization that helps provide supplies for mission work and whose services have benefited us in the past.

It's nice to be able to pass along some positive news and we continue to hope that we move forward with both of our trips unhampered by any new COVID issues. We also look forward to other opportunities for mission service in the years to come! Thank you all for your continued interest in and support of Op Med's endeavors!

*Ken Arthur MD*  
Ken Arthur, MD



## THANKS TO YOU!

The Board of Directors and volunteers extend a hearty **Thanks to You** to **Lisa Pedersen** who has served very effectively as our part-time Executive Director for the past three years. Lisa joined Operation Medical following her early retirement from Highmark Blue Shield where she had served as a Senior Client Manager, assessing and meeting the benefit needs of health insurance customers. A longtime volunteer at The Caring Place: A Center for Grieving Children, Adolescents and Their Families, Lisa expressed an interest in taking on additional duties in a non-profit organization that would help underserved people in need. Her talents, knowledge of health care administration and reputation for being an engaging and effective professional came to Op Med's attention and she came aboard in May 2019.

Her tenure at Operation Medical began with assisting the Team Leader Dr. Parikh with preparations for a scheduled mission trip to Khambat, India. A team of 21 professionals was assembled, credentials, logistics, supplies, and travel arrangements were completed and a week-long mission that provided long-delayed surgeries to 129 patients in need was completed amidst considerable praise for all team members.

Planning, volunteer recruitment and preparation for mission trips to Haiti in late 2020 and India in early 2021 were underway with Lisa's support but had to be canceled due to political unrest in Haiti and the Covid pandemic. Lisa's hours were then limited yet her commitment and administrative skills helped keep our small operation timely in meeting its obligations. Importantly, Lisa found time to assist the Marketing Committee to establish a practice of quarterly electronic newsletters to keep our volunteers and supporters informed on our activities and plans for the future.

Lisa and her husband, Mark, are entering into a fuller retirement at the end of our June 30 fiscal year, although we are delighted that she will continue volunteering with our Warehouse Committee and warehouse team. She describes her time with Operation Medical as both challenging and rewarding, saying “the work is so important, the volunteers truly are unheralded heroes giving up weeks of earning power and vacation time to meet the needs of strangers and I am proud to have helped facilitate their journeys of service.”

## ON THE ROAD AGAIN.... ONWARD TO KENYA

Operation Medical is pleased to announce that we are resuming missions outreach this year. After a two-year COVID suspension of international operations, our volunteers are eager to get back to work promoting and providing high quality medical care and education to communities that do not have adequate access to medical care.

We are headed to Kenya, Africa to Katani Hospital, which is located in the Katani suburb of Nairobi, within Mlolongo Division in Athi River, Machakos County. The hospital is approximately 25 kilometers from the Nairobi International Airport.

The hospital was co-founded by Modesta Vesonder, CRNP, who is the CEO of the facility, and Terrance L. Baker, MD. Both are members of the non-profit charity Sollay Kenyan Foundation. Katani Hospital opened its doors in 2018 and offers a range of healthcare services with both in-patient and out-patient settings and a mission of taking care of the community. They are committed to rendering quality and efficient healthcare and patients receive good care.

This flagship mission will consist of a group of 13 volunteers who will make the journey in mid-October, laying the groundwork for what is desired to be a long-term relationship with the hospital and community. The hospital has 2 operating theatres and Operation Medical will conduct a one-week surgical camp focusing on Obstetrics/ Gynecology and Plastic surgeries. Additionally, we will work with the hospital to develop a breast cancer screening and treatment program.

*"Our goal is to provide affordable and accessible healthcare to the locals. The hospital covers the entire country with the majority of our patients coming from Nairobi, Machakos, Kitui, Makueni, Kajiado, Kiambu, Nakuru and Western region counties,"*  
The hospital's CEO Modesta Vesonder says.

Keep an eye out on our Facebook page for updates as well as real-time reports during the mission camp.



**How do we continue our mission work when we can't travel?** What can we do while global pandemic restrictions are in place? These were questions that came up during every Operation Medical board meeting since mid-2020, and like most non-profits during these past few years, our board struggled to continue our initiatives and looked for creative ways to keep moving forward.

Where can we direct some of our funding that resonates with what we do? Board President Ken Arthur, MD, led the discussion: "The goal for this would be to both meet current needs of another entity and to show good stewardship of our finances while we have been unable to complete our own mission trips." He suggested Americares. ([www.Americares.com](http://www.Americares.com))

Americares will probably not ring any bells for the average Central PA citizen. Still, they have been a long-time friend to Operation Medical. Arthur continued, "In looking at some

options, it appears that Americares could be a candidate for this (modest donation). This organization is one that our Warehouse Committee members are familiar with, as Operation Medical has received donations of supplies from them in the past."

Sue Miller, co-chair of the Warehouse Committee and one of our mission volunteers, states, "we have received thousands of  
(continued on page 3)







dollars in supplies from Americares in the past. Anesthesia meds are very expensive, valuable, and typically hard to come by, and Americares has provided these to us.

In addition, Americares has provided pulse oximeters for us to take to a hospital, provide teaching, and leave the pulse



oximeter at the hospital for their future use. Another example are Americares' donations of sterile surgical gloves. For instance, if purchased on Amazon, they are \$86.00 a box for 50 pairs." One can see how these small but necessary items add up quickly.

Another interesting fact is nothing Americares provides is ever expired. All medications and supplies are never outdated – eliminating concerns for inconsistency and issues with potency. Also, they keep their administrative costs at 2% - meaning – the other 98% goes directly toward those in need. They distribute over \$1 billion in medicine and supplies to approximately 85 countries each year.

There was no hesitation from the board as the positive response for a donation to Americares was a resounding YES. As we navigate the future with Covid-19, we are diligently watching and carefully planning future missions and are confident that our partnership with Americares will help us obtain essential and free-of-charge medical equipment and supplies.

## ABOUT US:

Operation Medical is an organization of volunteers made up of trained medical professionals and other individuals committed to promoting and providing high quality medical care and education to communities that do not have adequate access to medical care.

Our emphasis is on the medical needs of the community, with the safety of our patients and our volunteers our #1 priority. Our safety and quality protocols ensure our patients receive the best care possible. All trips are carefully coordinated with local hosts and their medical community in order to optimize the success of our visit and make certain our volunteers have a positive experience. We audit results and provide training for all of our partners.



## CONTACT US:

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## DONATE AT:

<https://www.operationmedical.org/donate/>

## HOW TO SHARE | HOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

You have received this issue of our quarterly newsletter because you shared your email with us in the past five years. This newsletter aligns with our goal to provide an electronic communication platform which will hold down printing and mailing costs while keeping you informed of our current initiatives, upcoming mission trips and more.

Please consider sharing with friends and family. Know that we will never share your contact information with anyone outside of Operation Medical or any third-party advertiser or organization.

You can make sure we have your most up-to-date information three ways:

1. Log on to [www.operationmedical.org](http://www.operationmedical.org), and click on the Subscribe tab, complete the contact form and submit
2. Use your smartphone to scan the QR code here to be taken directly to the contact form



3. Email us at [info@operationmedical.org](mailto:info@operationmedical.org)

If you would like to speak with someone, you can reach us at 717-685-9199.

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