



*Thanks  
To You*

OPERATION MEDICAL NEWSLETTER

Providing Global Healthcare

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summertime is a busy time for most families, and it can also be a busy time for Operation Medical. We are currently in the planning stages for a mission to Malawi in late September, and the mission preparation will require the time and coordination of several of our volunteers over the next few months. We hope to send an experienced surgical team to this southeast African country to serve impoverished individuals, as well as share knowledge and provide education to the local healthcare professionals. The education component of our mission has always been an important part of Operation Medical, as we hope to both serve patients in the short term and to enhance their future care in the long term by educating our local counterparts in other parts of the globe.

We are also looking to expand our services and have some early plans to consider increasing the number of missions that we do per year, particularly with the addition of a dedicated medical mission. Historically, our missions have been surgery-focused with occasional participation by internal and family medicine physicians. However, discussions are ongoing with several university-based Family Medicine faculties regarding opportunities for medical missions, which would include the chance for resident physicians to participate. It is hard to describe the impact that these missions can have on the healthcare providers themselves. I once asked a young anesthesia resident on his first mission how he was enjoying the experience. His reply was an enthusiastic, "Now this is why I became a doctor!" Ideally, increasing exposure of younger physicians to mission work will both expand our education focus and our volunteer group in the future.

It is my desire to expand this aspect of our mission in the coming years and I will look for other opportunities as well. The Board of Directors of Operation Medical remains supportive of our volunteers and our commitment to service and will also help guide our continued growth. Finally, all of us at Operation Medical appreciate your generous support, as we strive to continue to build relationships and go forward to offer more services to our underserved people around the world.

Scott G. Barnes, DO



## IN REMEMBRANCE: KD PATEL

KD Patel was a Founding Board Member of Operation Medical and served actively until his passing in February of this year. As a principal and partner at HERSHA Hospitality, KD, along with other partners, was instrumental in setting up the Op Med organization by providing office space with a corporate address as well as warehouse space, free of charge. He also helped scout potential mission sites in India and arranged for our first mission in 2014 to Kasturba Hospital in Valsad - the town he had grown up in and where he hosted all of the mission volunteers for dinner and cultural programming during mission week.

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## THANKS TO YOU!

Operation Medical would like to extend a very warm "Thanks To You" to both **Dr. Parul Krishnamurthy** and **Krishna Iyer** for answering our SOS volunteer call regarding our Katani, Kenya mission trip.

Our team received word that one of the surgeons couldn't make the trip and once Parul and her husband, Krishna Iyer, found out there was a need for more help—they said "it was a no-brainer" and really - a calling to join the Kenya team. "We didn't want it (the mission) to fall apart and we never lose an opportunity to help," Dr. Krishnamurthy, an OB-GYN in Central PA, mentioned.

For this couple, it would be two volunteer mission tours in 3.5 months! Parul has assisted Operation Medical on 9 mission trips since inception and Krishna has joined in on the four most recent missions.



**DR. PARUL KRISHNAMURTHY**



**KRISHNA IYER**

This particular trip lasted eight days, with five of those days dedicated to surgery. Dr. Krishnamurthy conducted 15-20 hysterectomies – approximately, four each day. While Parul spent her time in the operating room, Krishna, a non-medical team member, had just as much to do. One of his duties was troubleshooting and solving miscellaneous problems so that the surgeons could devote their time, attention, and focus on their surgeries and outcomes. Other times, he assisted with logistics, record keeping, and being a liaison with the local hospital staff.

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## IN REMEMBRANCE: KD PATEL *continued*

During that initial mission over 250 impoverished individuals benefitted from surgical procedures. That total has now grown to over 1,500 needed surgical services provided to patients in India, Africa, Haiti and Nepal.

KD migrated to the US as an engineering graduate student in the 1960's. While excelling in his professional career at DuPont, he simultaneously pursued business interests in the hospitality industry, purchasing his first motel in 1984. While growing his hotel business in Mechanicsburg and Gettysburg he welcomed an invitation to bring his properties and join Hasu Shah as a partner in the rapidly expanding HERSHA, which today is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange with over a billion dollar valuation.

Community engagement was a hallmark of KD's career, serving in leadership positions on the Boards of The American Red Cross Central PA Chapter, the United Way of the Capital Region, The Pinnacle Health Foundation, the Asian and Indian Americans of Central Pennsylvania and the HARI Temple, among others.

KD was a consummate family man and deeply cared for his extended family too. In addition to raising two boys of their own, after KD's sister and brother-in-law's demise in a fatal car accident, KD and his beloved wife, Rehka, adopted and raised his sister's two children as their own.

Operation Medical will miss KD's presence and generous support for all of its activities and missions and we are all strengthened in our commitment to service by his fine example.

## THANKS TO YOU! *continued*

One of his specialties was to ensure a smooth, coordinated handover of recovering patients. Krishna mentioned, "Despite being a non-medical person, I derive immense satisfaction on seeing the positive change in individuals and families due to camp activities and thus feel motivated to assist in any way possible."

They both overwhelmingly stated that all of their trips with Operation Medical have been rewarding, but it's heartbreaking to see so many people in need of medical care – especially when they encounter sub-par facilities. Parul stated "Safety is our #1 concern. Many times, we get to see a sorry state of affairs and while we try not to get attached emotionally, it's hard not to be." In addition, she added, "People need (Operation Medical's care) so much because not everyone has sufficient healthcare."

Despite the emotion that accompanies these trips, the couple said the trips definitely recharge them. Krishna added – "it's difficult to articulate but easy to experience!"

## OUR FIRST MISSION TRIP OF 2023! OPERATION MEDICAL RETURNS TO CAMBAY GENERAL HOSPITAL IN KHAMBHAT, INDIA!

Operation Medical's first visit to Khambhat in 3 years took place from January 28 to February 3, 2023 and included an energized team of 29 members strong, including nine new members and volunteers. It was our second mission trip in four months. Our outstanding team performed 144 surgical procedures and 32 dental procedures on behalf of very grateful patients.

With nearly 100,000 residents, the city of Khambhat lies on the west coast of India a few miles north of Mumbai. Cambay General Hospital is the essential provider of healthcare in the region and the mission's smooth operation and ultimate success was due to the efforts of our Hosts, Dr. Dinish Pandit and Dr. Jatin Patel, who held screening camps in advance to identify, inform and schedule patients for their surgeries and effectively coordinated the hospital logistics.

Our support staff played an integral role keeping track of patient data, overseeing logistical matters, keeping the inventory of supplies updated and ready for deployment to each of the surgical teams.

We were honored to serve the residents of Khambhat and thank every member of the Cambay Hospital staff and our team for their efforts in the mission's success!

To read the entire Khambhat, India trip report, visit our website at [www.operationmedical.org/past-missions](http://www.operationmedical.org/past-missions)





## MALAWI MISSION PLANNED FOR AUTUMN 2023

### Good news! We are planning another mission trip for 2023!

Operation Medical will be traveling to Kamuzu Central Hospital (KCH) Hospital in Lilongwe, Malawi. This is a larger referral hospital serving a population of approximately four million people from areas such as other parts of Malawi and parts of neighboring Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The mission dates are 09/29/23 – 10/08/23. We are currently seeking medical volunteers as well as support staff volunteers.

If you are interested in participating in this mission and/or have any questions about this mission, please email directly to Mukul Parikh ([mukulparikh@gmail.com](mailto:mukulparikh@gmail.com)) and cc: [Executivedirector@operationmedical.org](mailto:Executivedirector@operationmedical.org)



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND OPERATION MEDICAL FOUNDING MEMBER RETIRING

For the past year Operation Medical has benefitted from the leadership of Cheryl (Peck) Arthur as she has served as our Executive Director. Timing is often said to be everything. In our case, Cheryl, one of our most active and valuable volunteers since Op Med's founding In 2013, was in the process of retiring as Project Manager at Lancaster General Health System when the Executive Director position came open. With encouragement from the Board she took on the role, performed exceptionally. She has made the decision to retire later this year but continue her volunteer work with Operation Medical going forward.

We will be seeking a successor as either an Executive Director or "Administrative Leader" based on the background and experience of interested candidates. If you know of someone who might be interested in learning more about this opportunity, please have them contact Dr. Scott Barnes at [sgbarnesdo@gmail.com](mailto:sgbarnesdo@gmail.com) or George Grode at [georgegrode@gmail.com](mailto:georgegrode@gmail.com)

## 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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