

# 2016 Medical Mission

**Kathmandu, Nepal**

A team of five volunteers returned to the Nepal Orthopedic Hospital (NOH) from March 24-29, 2016. This marked the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Foot and Ankle Surgical Mission in Kathmandu.

The trip is orchestrated through a non-profit organization – Healing the Children’s Southern California chapter. However, the mission is only possible with the financial support of numerous groups and individual donors. The Podiatry Institute (Decatur, GA) and Dr. Craig Camasta’s (Atlanta, GA) Operation Walk non-profit organizations continue to support the mission. First-year podiatry student, Bilal Khan, generated substantial funding through an online GoFundMe campaign. This financial aid completely subsidizes all costs associated with surgery for these patients of the third world – anesthesia services, surgical fixation, medications, labs, imaging studies, bandaging supplies, durable medical equipment and the patients’ in-hospital post-operative recovery and rehab that can last weeks to months.

Drs. Carl Kihm (Louisville, KY) and Jennifer D’Amico (San Diego, CA) lead the team and this was the fifth trip for each of them. Operating room circulating nurse and mission-trip veteran, Bojan Kuure (Anacortes, WA), returned for her 10<sup>th</sup> mission at the NOH; this was her 98<sup>th</sup> mission experience overall! Two first-time members rounded out this year’s team. Dr. Swapnil Patel (Decatur, GA), 3<sup>rd</sup> year resident at the DeKalb Medical Center, was a great addition in surgery. Physician assistant, Alexis Willey (Asheville, NC), was also helpful in many areas, including patient registration/screening and surgical assisting.



Our team worked intimately with the NOH staff. The NOH has a new medical director, Dr. Rajesh Maharjan, who continues to support the planning and implementation of the mission. In surgery, we continue to work alongside and train Drs. Sujan Singh and Rajiv Shrestha. As we share our surgical techniques with them, we again learn much from their experience and perspective.

This year, we again saw many challenging deformities. Ponseti casting was performed on two pediatric clubfoot deformities. The majority of our surgeries corrected neglected congenital and traumatic deformities in an adult population. Our team screened a total of 54 patients. Of these, 45 procedures were performed on 27 patients. For us, this was impressive given that our team was knocked out-of-commission for 24 hours with food poisoning. Following our own admissions for intravenous fluids and antibiotics, we were back to work to wrap up the trip.



As always, seeing our past surgical patients doing well was a highlight of the trip. This year, more than ever though, the best part was to see the NOH running strong. Weeks following our March 2015 trip, Kathmandu was devastated by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake. Building structures and iconic temples collapsed as thousands perished. The rest of Nepal was forced to persevere. Although the NOH remained structurally sound, ongoing aftershocks continued to rock the ground and create fear of further collapse. For one month, the hospital migrated its operating rooms and patient wards outside into tents. Many disaster relief organizations and individual support was felt during this critical time of need. Notably, Dr. Thomas Chang (Santa Rosa, CA) traveled to the NOH to offer his surgical expertise and service. Dr. Stephen Miller (Anacortes, WA) and the Fidalgo Island Rotary Club provided supplies and financial support. Dr. Carl Kihm connected the NOH with MedShare (Decatur, GA) who donated and express-shipped 1,000 boxes of requested supplies.

