



Operation Walk is an international volunteer medical humanitarian organization dedicated to providing high quality hip and knee replacement surgery to patients free of charge. It is made up of skilled volunteers from many backgrounds, including nurses, physical therapists, and doctors, all of whom work together as a team to restore mobility and quality of life. These patients suffer from debilitating bone and joint conditions such as arthritis and would otherwise not have access to the complex medical care required to treat them.

Operation Walk was founded by Dr. Lawrence Dorr in 1996, and over the last 25 years, this organization has provided life-changing treatment to over 17,000 patients in 25 different countries around the world. “I am amazed at the tremendous growth of Operation Walk programs over the years,” states Dr. Vishal Hegde, the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons Liaison for the Operation Walk Education Subcommittee. “Operation Walk continues to attract remarkable individuals dedicated to providing life-changing medical treatment to those in desperate need.”

Operation Walk surgical missions require extensive planning and resources. All equipment, medications, implants, and personnel are transported from the home country of the visiting group. Prior to embarking on a mission, planning trips to the host nation are conducted, including site assessments to understand any potential limitations that patients may encounter prior to or after surgery. In addition to the surgery itself, each group provides a preoperative and postoperative plan for patients and local providers to follow, including preoperative educational materials for patients and healthcare providers in preparation for surgery.

Preoperative home assessments are also performed for patients to ensure they have appropriate support and accommodations for their recovery. Dr. Hegde believes this is important for the success of any Operation Walk mission: “The extensive perioperative planning and creative educational approaches required ensures both that patients who come to us with limited health literacy feel comfortable with our care, and that our host nation colleagues are fully equipped to manage these patients after we have returned home.” The attention to preoperative and postoperative details ensures a safe and streamlined process that provides comprehensive care for 50-60 patients per trip. Procurement of funding, acquisition of surgical supplies and medications, and reviewing patient medical records are all necessary tasks prior to any Operation Walk mission.

Education is clearly a hallmark of Operation Walk missions. The goal is to foster long-term community improvement, thereby multiplying the overall impact in that society. The organization encourages each member of the team to “bring one thing” with them to impart to their hosts: from simple hand hygiene techniques or surgical wound care, to technical tips on using assistive devices. According to Dr. Hegde this education is central to Operation Walk: “Educational programs for patients and team members are at the heart of our mission as we aspire to sustainably advance medical care for both our patients and our host nations.” In this way, Operation Walk can empower their hosts with knowledge and skills to provide a lasting improvement in the overall healthcare of their community.



Operation Walk USA is an independent charitable organization that provides hip and knee replacement surgery to economically disadvantaged patients at no cost specifically in the United States. It was founded in 2011 and is active in several cities throughout the country. It drew its inspiration from Operation Walk, and its founder Dr. Dorr. It has provided over 800 hip and knee replacements for patients to help restore mobility and improve quality of life. The Operation Walk USA program occurs annually in early December. Their partnership with hospitals and the orthopaedic industry allows this organization to provide comprehensive care including hip and knee replacement surgery, hospitalization, and preoperative and postoperative joint replacement care to those in the United States that are most in need.

Operation Walk started 25 years ago as a non-profit charitable medical service organization to provide hip and knee replacement surgery to underserved and vulnerable patients internationally. Its mission was to improve mobility, function, and quality of life through hip and knee replacement. It has expanded and grown to the large humanitarian organization that it is today through the commitment and dedication of its volunteers, nurses, therapists, and physicians. Its work has allowed the crippled to walk, and the disabled to work. But as its founder Dr. Dorr has eloquently stated, it has also provided a rebirth for many of its volunteers. It has rekindled a love of medicine in its practitioners by facilitating an immersion in the glory of medicine.

To donate, please visit: <http://www.operationwalk.org>



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Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons.

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