

Medical Clinics

"The patients' welfare must be your topmost priority. Serve them with dedication. Service to patients is service to God. There is no service higher than this."

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 2003

The provision of free medical care for the uninsured and underinsured is something that is much needed throughout the world irrespective of the perceived financial status of a given country. In the developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, the number of people who need help for their medical care, not only from a financial perspective but for several logistical and psychosocial reasons, is enormous. As in underdeveloped countries, in certain areas of developed countries, there is a shortage of healthcare professionals and medical services.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings on the importance of love while caring for patients, is the hallmark of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. A number of medical clinics have been established in several countries that reflect His message of unconditional love and the Sai ideal of providing medical care free to all irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, or nationality. The health-related services that are being provided in the medical clinics include health screening, health education, immunisations, and medical treatment (both acute care and ongoing medical care). In addition, dental clinics have also been set up in certain countries.

The Sai ideal of having a universal, loving, comprehensive, preventive, and most importantly free health care system is needed everywhere. The hope is that many such clinics will be established wherever there is a need and that all patients will receive unconditional service.

North America

USA

Since January 8, 2005 in the heart of Oakland, California, the Ashland Free Medical Clinic (AFMC) has been providing free medical care for patients who do not have health insurance and cannot afford medical care. On May 3, 2007, the AFMC was recognised for its selfless community service. On behalf of all the volunteers at the AFMC, Dr. Joseph Phaneuf, Medical Director, received the Sidney R. Garfield, MD 2007 Exceptional Contribution Award from Kaiser Permanente, a large health maintenance organisation in California. A presentation followed which explained how this clinic was inspired by Sri Sathya Sai Baba's model of free health care in India. On May 5, 2007, a video of the Ashland Free Medical Clinic was shown to approximately 500 Kaiser Permanente physicians, along with their spouses and children. The AFMC provides adult primary care services, dermatology specialty care, health education, free laboratory testing, and free medication every Saturday. At present, 18-29 patients are seen each time; there were 914 patient visits in 2006, 1,232 patient visits in 2007 and 1,162 patient visits in 2008. Over 100 volunteers from the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation have served at this clinic as physicians, nurse practitioners, receptionists, clinic coordinators, Spanish interpreters, and are responsible for administrative duties and the day-to-day operation of this clinic.

Central America

El Salvador

Ever since 1993, a rural medical service on a monthly basis was initiated with the participation of six medical doctors and several volunteers of the Sathya Sai Organisation. General medical services are provided and free medication disbursed as needed to about 120 patients per clinic.

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San Salvador Since 1997, a free nursing home for physically challenged individuals has been run by the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation in San Salvador. On

April 1, 2006, a permanent Sathya Sai Medical Clinic was inaugurated at this site and it provides free medical care to patients on an ongoing basis while continuing to care for physically challenged individuals. The home has both sleeping quarters and workshops for the invalids where they learn different occupational trades such as watch repair, wheel chair repair, shoe repair and shoe manufacture, appliance repairs, and baking. There are 20 men living in the home at all times. A fully equipped pharmacy housed in the clinic also provides free medications as needed.

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Santa Tecla A medical clinic for general medicine in Santa Tecla offers free medical care once every month with the participation of two medical doctors. They see about 60 patients every month. This service has been running since 1998. Food is provided to families that come for medical treatment.

Mexico

Since January 2001, in one of the poorest and most populated neighborhoods of Iztapalapa district in Mexico City, the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of Mexico has run a medical dispensary, free of charge. This dispensary was established by the Mexican Sri Sathya Sai Foundation to serve the residents suffering from severe lack of medical services and hospitals. At present, the doctor's office has basic and essential medical equipment; the services are provided by a general doctor, a nurse, and a dentist. In addition, the health secretary and the municipality office offers the temporary services of a second general doctor.

The dispensary operates Monday to Friday, from 10 AM to 5 PM and offers medical services completely free of cost. Patients with different conditions such as respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases and a high percentage of pregnant women are treated. On average, about 500 consultations are provided each month. Other services rendered by the dispensary are dental care for children; health education for families on nutrition, purification of drinking water, and dental hygiene; promotion of hygiene through cleanliness campaigns; and supply of medications, clothes, and basic provisions. Care has been given to about 20,000 patients in the last several years.

A dispensary was opened on April 9, 2009 in Saucito, San Luis Potosí and is open five days a week. Medical services are provided by physicians and nurses. Currently more than 200 patients are seen per month and medications are provided free of charge.

Panama

In the last six years, more than 200 cataract surgeries and 80 hernia operations have been performed free of cost. In 2005, 80 cataract surgeries were performed for patients in the city of Colon. The minister of public health has offered the Sathya Sai Organisation space in the Santo Tomas hospital in Panama City to set up a Sathya Sai eye clinic for cataract operations.

Since 2006 a paediatric clinic is held every month in Los Abanicos, a neighbourhood of poor people and in 2009, clinics were started in three additional communities.

South America

Argentina

In San Marcos Sierra, general medical consultation services are offered on a monthly basis, with the participation and collaboration of 7 to 12 medical practitioners from different cities and towns such as Neuquén, Córdoba Capital, Rio Cuarto, and La Falda. On average 20 patients receive free medical service every month.

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Permanent Doctors' Offices The Sathya Sai Organisation has permanent doctors' offices where medical services are offered on a monthly basis; they are located in the Buenos Aires Province, and in the San Marcos Sierra facility in the Cordoba Province. In addition to the medical services provided in these locations, patients are also offered free medications.

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Vision health Since this service was inaugurated on October 15, 2005, in Grand Bourg, Province of Buenos Aires, more than 1,500 prescription eyeglasses have been prescribed and given to patients.

Brazil

A free dental clinic was established in August 2005 by Sathya Sai volunteers in Sao Paulo, Brazil. This clinic runs for three hours every Tuesday and sees poor children between the ages of 6 and 12 years. The goal is to provide loving preventive dental care and dental treatments when required. During the first six months, 82 fillings, 20 tooth extractions, and 4 dental surgeries were carried out. The perennial love of the volunteers and the overwhelming appreciation by patients' families keep volunteers committed to the clinic.

Colombia

The Sathya Sai Organisation has conducted several medical camps in Bogota in the past, and in February 2006, a permanent medical clinic was inaugurated at the Institute for Human Values building. Seven Sathya Sai doctors conduct four clinics every weekday free of charge. From the inauguration until December 31, 2006, 1,567 patients were seen and 31 volunteers have been trained for delivering first aid. Operating concurrently with the medical clinic in the same building, in 2008, the clinic provided more than 1,630 medical consultations to patients.

Peru

A Sri Sathya Sai School with a free medical clinic was inaugurated on March 23, 2005 in a poor rural area on the outskirts of Ariquipa, Peru, in the presence of the honourable mayor of Ariquipa and the deputy mayor of Ariquipa.

Venezuela

Sathya Sai doctors operate in a local eye clinic on Sundays. There have been over 120 cataract operations to date, with lens implants given completely without cost to the patients. These people are so grateful because finally they can see again and be useful in the society.

Africa

South Africa

Optometry continues to be a highly successful programme of the Sathya Sai Organisation. A team of committed optometrists and volunteers run clinics on virtually a weekly basis, providing eyeglasses to the destitute and the poor, allowing them the rare gift of vision.

Middle East

Abu Dhabi

A free Sathya Sai Medical Clinic operational every Sunday and alternate Fridays, offers services, medicines, annual physical checkups, and laboratory tests to approximately 120 patients each time.

Asia

Indonesia

A free cataract clinic was organised in Surabaya in February 2006. At the opening of the clinic, 388 patients were seen, and 112 of them were deemed as requiring cataract operations. The first surgeries were conducted on February 4, 2006 and were followed by more surgeries every weekend.

Sri Lanka

Hospice The Sri Sathya Sai "Suva Sevana" is a cancer hospice opened in July 2002, with the noble



objective of treating and nourishing terminal cancer patients, and inculcating love in them in a multi-religious environment. Located in the most spiritual of surroundings, the atmosphere at the hospice is permeated with Divine Love and provides facilities for 50 patients. There are two separate wards for male and female inmates. At present there are 20 residents, and except for one, all are above 50 years of age. A doctor and a support staff of about 10 look after the patients at this hospice, and the patients are taken to the government cancer hospital for regular treatment.

Vietnam



The Sathya Sai Huong Van Health Centre was opened in the historic capital city of Hue, Vietnam on December 22, 2007. The two-storey health centre was built to serve an estimated population of 10,000. The goal is to provide primary healthcare, health education, prenatal and neonatal care, immunisations, treatment of malaria and tuberculosis. During the opening ceremony, local Vietnamese officials expressed their gratitude to the Sathya Sai Service Organisation for providing free health care facilities to the needy.