

Sri Sathya Sai International Centre for Medical Services

"Doctors should realise what they owe to society, which has preserved and imparted to them their knowledge of the medical sciences. Medical knowledge has been enriched by the contributions of dedicated investigators over centuries. Doctors should be grateful to society for all the knowledge and skills they have acquired from the dedicated labours of others. They should realise their deep indebtedness to society for all they have received from it. Only then, they will use their knowledge and skills in the right way"

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba, February, 7, 1993

Sri Sathya Sai International Centre for Medical Services (SSSICMS) – Established to Ship Medical Supplies and Medical Equipment Free of Cost to Sai Medical Institutions in India and Other Parts of the World

With the Blessings and Grace of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Sri Sathya Sai International Centre for Medical Services (SSSICMS) was established in January 2009. This project was set up to ship donated medical supplies from the USA to Sri Sathya Sai medical institutions and hospitals in Puttaparthi and Whitefield, India.

An inaugural meeting, chaired by Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman, Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee, was held on January 24, 2009. Doctors and many other professionals from all parts of the USA participated in the meeting to discuss and streamline operational procedures and protocols for this very special opportunity the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation in the USA has been blessed with. Dr. Reddy explained the importance of the Sri Sathya Sai Global Healthcare Mission and presented details of medical services offered at the Super Specialty Hospitals and General Hospitals in Puttaparthi and Whitefield, India. He added that the Sathya Sai medical institutions in India provide free medical care to all without regard to race, gender, age, nationality, caste or religion.

Regular rotations of surgical teams and medical personnel wishing to volunteer their services at the above Sri Sathya Sai medical institutions have been organised by the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee. These medical professionals are from many parts of the world. They provide medical care for patients and also participate in medical education and teaching programmes at the hospitals. As a natural extension of volunteering their time, many doctors and volunteer teams have attempted to carry medical supplies and equipment to the medical institutions in India. Sometimes they encountered difficulties because of the regulations of Indian customs and the import duties and taxes of 34 percent on medical supplies. This problem is now resolved by the establishment of the SSSICMS.

The SSSICMS now operates on par with other charitable relief organisations that ship donated goods to India and other parts of the world. Much-needed supplies, such as heart valves and stents for cardiac surgeries, can now be shipped from the USA to India under an existing bilateral Indo-US agreement. Under this agreement, when the receiving entity in India and the sending entity in the USA are registered and

approved by the Indian government, all medical supplies shipped as charitable donations under the bilateral Indo-US agreement will be completely free of import duty and taxes.

The Sri Sathya Sai Medical Trust, India was approved as a receiving entity in 2008, and the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, a non-profit charitable foundation and the governing body of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organisation, received approval as a sending entity in 2009. The SSSICMS now operates under this agreement.

Before shipment, a detailed list of medical supplies and equipment prepared by the SSSICMS is forwarded to the Sri Sathya Sai Medical Trust, India for approval. This initial procedure is adopted to ensure supplies shipped are in accordance with the medical institutions' needs, depending on the services they provide. Once approved, the consignment is dispatched either by air or by sea, depending on the urgency of the need for the items or the quantities prepared for shipment.

- The first shipment consisting of cardiac surgical supplies was dispatched by air in March 2009.
- The second shipment also carried cardiac surgical supplies such as Bileaflet mechanical heart valves. In addition, Prolene sutures and medical equipment including an Echo probe was air freighted on August 28, 2009.
- The third consignment by 40 foot container shipped in September 2009 included medical supplies and equipment required for all departments of the Super Specialty Hospitals at Prasanthigram and Whitefield, India.

The SSSICMS has set up a main hub and three regional satellite hubs across the USA for receiving, storing, inventorying, packaging, and shipping medical supply donations.



The main hub is located in Los Angeles and serves also as a West Coast collection point for Regions 6-10 (Pacific North, Northern California and Nevada, Pacific South, Southwest, and South Central, stretching from Washington to Texas).

The other three hubs are in:

- Rochester NY/Boston, Massachusetts (serving Region 1—Northeast, and New York City),
- Washington, DC (serving Regions 2 and 3—Mid-Atlantic and Southeast),
- Detroit, Michigan (serving Regions 4 and 5—Mid-Central and North Central).

Questions about the project may be addressed to:

- **Dr. Ganesh Yadlapalli** (ngy51@hotmail.com)
- **Mr. Rohan Balasuriya** (RohanLBa@aol.com)

The regional hubs and contact persons are listed below. The contact individuals are available to answer questions from devotees, donors, physicians and allied healthcare professionals interested in participating in this noble service project.

SATELLITE CENTRES AND CONTACTS BY REGION

Northeast Satellite Centre – Region 1 and NYC

Rochester NY/Boston Massachusetts

Dr. Krishna Rao, srao@rochester.rr.com

Mrs. Shantha Sarangapani, s.shantha@verizon.net

Midwest Satellite Centre – Regions 4-5

Detroit, Michigan

Dr. Hari Conjeevaram, hconjeev@hotmail.com

Southeast Satellite Centre – Regions 2-3, (except NYC)

Washington, D.C.

Dr. Nandakumar Vellanki, nbvellanki@gmail.com

Mrs. Sheela Nayak, sveryhappy@msn.com

West Coast Centre, Regions 6-10

Los Angeles, California

Dr. Chandra Das, drchandradas@gmail.com

Mr. Rohan Balasuriya, RohanLBa@aol.com