

From AZ to the World: A Story of Community Service

Since 1983, Valley Anesthesiology Consultants in Phoenix has been providing exceptional care to the citizens of Arizona and has become recognized as one of the premier anesthesia service organizations in the country. Starting off with just seven physicians, the group has since grown to include 200 anesthesiologists and pain medicine specialists serving in more than 25 facilities.

It was this very success that made the group's shareholders conclude that they should be doing even more.

In 2006, the group formed the Valley Anesthesiology Foundation, a 501c(3) organization shepherded by now-retired neuroanesthesiologist Lisa Wilkinson-Fannin, M.D. The catalyst for the foundation was the prevailing sentiment among Valley Anesthesiology's shareholders that the group's members had been extremely fortunate, having enjoyed interesting and diverse professional opportunities, camaraderie and economic benefits.

Funded exclusively through contributions from Valley Anesthesiology's physicians and employees, the foundation supports medical relief efforts nationally and internationally and has provided financial assistance to numerous charitable causes, such as the American Red Cross, AmeriCares, Partners in Health, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Ryan House and Ronald McDonald House.

"Our group is very proud to be in a position to help the community through the continuing volunteer efforts of our physicians and employees," stated Aubrey Maze, M.D., Valley's CEO. Added James Fleck, D.O., the foundation's current president, "Valley Anesthesiology Foundation is the reflection of our commitment to excellence in patient care and community service."

The structure and spirit of the foundation can be traced back to Dr. Wilkinson-Fannin, who served as its first president in 2007. Dr. Wilkinson-Fannin, whose husband is former U.S. ambassador to the Dominican Republic, has a long-standing personal commitment to community service throughout Arizona. Among her many philanthropic activities, she currently serves as a member of the boards of directors of the Flinn Foundation, an organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of Arizonans, and United Blood Banking Services, a non-profit organization which seeks to inspire individuals to donate blood.

Her passion for charity lives on in the foundation. More than 40 percent of Valley's members have contributed their time toward volunteer activities, and all of the group's physicians and



Valley member Dr. Isabelle Simoneau with a pediatric patient on a medical mission in Brazil.

several staff members contribute a portion of their earnings to the foundation.

Valley Anesthesiology credits its physicians with up to five vacation days a year for humanitarian work. More than 20 of Valley's anesthesiologists have participated in missions in countries such as Haiti, China, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Jordan, Brazil, Philippines and Peru.

Members have planned several medical missions for the coming year, and the foundation is continually processing requests for donations from local hospitals and charities as well as global non-profit organizations. Additionally, when a national or global emergency occurs, Valley is able to quickly deploy foundation resources to provide assistance. Long-term, the foundation will continue to promote education and research in the specialty of anesthesiology. Valley Anesthesiology has contributed to the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation, the Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research, and provides time for its members to take leadership positions in the Arizona Society of Anesthesiologists, the Arizona Medical Association and ASA.

ASA President Alexander A. Hannenberg, M.D. believes that Valley Anesthesiology Consultants should be an inspiration for other groups who may be thinking about embarking on community service ventures themselves.

"I can't think of a better model for the power of humanitarian service than Valley Anesthesiology," said Dr. Hannenberg.



Valley members, families and friends volunteering at the St. Mary's Food Bank in Phoenix.

"Their collective commitment to their community, the profession and patients worldwide is compelling testimony to their citizenship. By acting as a group, this commitment is identified with the specialty of anesthesiology in a way that individual acts are not, and by doing so they are enhancing the stature of all anesthesiologists. I applaud them for their efforts, and I look forward to witnessing the new and creative ways that my fellow anesthesiologists will be giving back to their communities in the future."

The physicians and staff at Valley Anesthesiology are eager to collaborate and share lessons learned with other physician groups, and any interested ASA member is encouraged to contact Valley members about their experiences in their rewarding ventures. You may direct your questions or comments to Pat Durlam, RN, MAOM, Practice Administrator, at (602) 262-8903.

**Valley Anesthesiology Foundation
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Dr. Mike Dupuy participating in an Operation Smile mission.