

Biography of Drs. Kiran C. and Pallavi Patel

Born in India, Pallavi Patel and the Zambia-born Kiran C. Patel first met while studying medicine in Ahmedabad, India. Upon completion of their degrees, they married and began their new lives and medical practices in Zambia. There, the two practiced medicine for five years before arriving in the United States on Thanksgiving Day, 1976. While they did not realize it at the time, the doctors were later to see this significant date as part of their destiny.

Both doctors received their advanced specializations in New York at Columbia University: he in cardiology, and she in pediatrics. Seeking to join family already living in Florida, the Patels moved to Tampa Bay in the early 1980s and set up practice.

While in private cardiology practice in the Tampa Bay area, Dr. Kiran C. Patel not only earned a respected reputation as a physician, but also gained a unique vision of the future of medical care. Rather than shun the growing trend towards managed health care, he began to develop solutions that made sense from the physician's point of view.

In 1982, the Patels started a physicians' practice ownership and management company, which quickly expanded to 14 practices including family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics and cardiology serving more than 8,000 patients. As a result of their successful work in the industry, they became involved with Wellcare HMO, Inc., and Dr. Kiran C. Patel became chairman of the board. Under his leadership, Wellcare grew to become the second largest HMO in Florida, serving more than 200,000 members. Continuing to develop the managed health care field, in 1999 Dr. Kiran C. Patel acquired and turned around a struggling New York HMO, and together the companies became the WellCare Management Group. By this time, WellCare had revenues of over \$1 billion, served over 400,000 members and employed more than 1,200 members.

In 2003, the Patels sold their majority of his interest in their business, and Dr. Kiran C. Patel turned his attention to the family's many philanthropic endeavors. That same year, he became chairman of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), a professional organization representing over 40,000 physicians. It was from this vantage point that he began to tackle several significant humanitarian projects in India, including the construction of numerous hospitals, a diabetes research study, and improved health care access for poor and rural citizens.

In 2001, a major earthquake had devastated villages throughout Gujarat, India, killing thousands, collapsing buildings and homes and leaving masses of crippled people and orphaned children. Dr. Kiran C. Patel united the Tampa Bay community and AAPI and led an effort that eventually rehabilitated the villagers' homes, constructed an orphanage and model school and created four modern hospitals.

As the Patels were in India opening the fourth of the earthquake relief hospitals, a devastating tsunami struck Asia. Moving into action, they organized fundraising efforts and secondary relief plans to build schools and clinics along India's devastated eastern shore. This effort is on-going thanks to a generous response from the Tampa Bay community matched by the Patels' own money.

Dr. Pallavi Patel's current activities center on her growing family medicine practice. Today, Bay Area Primary Care has 10 clinics which she oversees along with the help of her two daughters and son-in-law, who also are physicians.

Dr. Kiran C. Patel serves as the chairman and Dr. Pallavi Patel is president of the Patel Foundation for Global Understanding, a non-profit organization that develops and funds a wide variety of programs in health, education, arts and culture. Together they have made possible the USF/Dr. Kiran C. Patel Charter School along with the Dr. Pallavi Patel Pediatric Care Center at the school as well as the highly celebrated Dr. Pallavi Patel Performing Arts Conservatory.

In 2003, Dr. Kiran Patel was appointed by Florida's governor to the University of South Florida Board of Trustees. In 2004, the Patels were awarded the Cultural Contributor of the Year Award by the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce.

The Foundation also supports a yearly U.S. scholarship fund for underprivileged youth and the IMAGINE Project, which teaches philanthropic entrepreneurship to young leaders. USF CHART-India Program, another innovative foundation project, works aggressively to provide HIV/AIDS treatment, prevention and education programs throughout India's rural and urban populations.