

# Omni Med

*“Working to fulfill the essential calling of the medical profession:  
To improve the standard of health care for those who need it most.”*



## OMNI MED UPDATE

[www.omnimed.org](http://www.omnimed.org)

### President's Message



Greetings to all of you. As in other years, there is a lot going on here to share with you. This year, however, you will notice a more concise format; we'll try to keep these newsletters shorter.

On several fronts, Omni Med is doing very well. Our programs in Belize and Kenya are continuing along well. In Guyana, Dr John Varallo received recognition from the Bush White House for his

great work in building the Guyana Cervical Cancer and Treatment Program (GCCTP), (see related stories), which also received a large USAID grant.

In March, we started a new program in Uganda as part of a larger global service initiative as the lead organization in a Brookings Institution coalition (see related story). Partnered with the Brookings Institution's Dr Jessica Cohen, Omni Med and several NGOs are developing a program in which US health volunteers train local community health workers in prevention and treatment

of the main killers of children in Africa: malaria, diarrheal illness, and pneumonia. Our goal is to develop a health service corps that can make a measurable difference on the ground. While there are many service programs, there is precious little prospective data that any of them make a real difference; our goal is to document exactly that.

On the domestic front, Omni Med continues to be a leader in the realm of global service. The two books, *Awakening Hippocrates* and *A Practical Guide to* (continued on page 3, bottom)

### White House Honors Dr John Varallo and Omni Med

### Omni Med Develops New Website and Places its Database of Global Health Service Opportunities On-Line

### USAID Funds Omni Med's Guyana Program

### Omni Med Initiates New Health Service Initiative in Uganda

### Awakening Hippocrates and A Practical Guide go Global Health Service Going Strong

### Omni Med Partners with Johns Hopkins University in National Cervical Cancer Prevention Program in Guyana

The past year has been an exciting and encouraging one for Omni Med in Guyana, especially with regards to the Guyana Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Program (GCCPTP). In January 2008, Omni Med, under the direction of Dr. John Varallo, conducted (continued on page 3 left)

### President Bush, White House Honor Dr John Varallo & Omni Med

On September 6 2008, President George W. Bush invited 1500 guests to the South Lawn of the White House, including Omni Med's Dr John Varallo. President Bush used the occasion to thank those who serve the United States—both domestically and abroad. In a widely read

report issued the same day, The White House recognized Dr Varallo and Omni Med as the best example of global service work in the Bush Administration's Volunteers for Prosperity (VFP) initiative. President Bush established VFP as Executive Order 13317 on September 25, 2003 as a means to bring more American professionals—doctors, teachers, engineers—into global service.

(continued, page 2 top)

### Omni Med Initiates New Program in Uganda *The Omni Med Health Service Corps in Uganda*

Uganda is an East African country of 31.3 million, with an average annual per capita income of \$340. Life expectancy is 52.3 years, and one of every 15 infants dies before their first birthday. The leading cause of death and disability in Uganda is malaria.

Omni Med began work in Uganda in March '08 as part of the Brookings Institution's International Volunteering and Service Initiative. This initiative is designed to increase the number of US volunteers who serve around the world each year. In April of 2007, Dr O'Neil was asked to chair a working group at Brookings on the dire healthcare worker shortage in Sub-

(Continued on page 2 left)

### Omni Med Launches New Website with Database

It's been a project under construction for several years now. But in November we are unveiling our new website. Please visit us at [www.omnimed.org](http://www.omnimed.org). Our Database of Global Health Service Opportunities will now up on-line. Soon anyone can now quickly search and find the right service opportunity. #



Dr. Varallo teaching medical students at bedside in Guyana

**Board Members**

*Edward O'Neil, Jr., MD, President and Founder*

*Ambassador Harry Barnes*

*Ms. Kathryn Johnson*

*Robert Sparks, MD*

*Roger Sublett, PhD*

**Director, Belize Program**

*Ms. Loretta Garcia Palacio*

**Director, St. Mary's, Kenya Program**

*Father Bill Fryda, MD*

**Director Guyana Cervical Cancer Screening Program**

*John Varallo, MD*

*(Uganda, Continued from Page 1)*

Saharan Africa, estimated to be around 1.5 million short. In this program, we are creating an innovative means to employ US health volunteers to address this critical health worker shortage. Along with Co-Director Dr Jessica Cohen, a Brookings research fellow, Omni Med's Drs O'Neil and Varallo are developing a model in which US health volunteers train Ugandan community health workers several primary care areas, with an initial emphasis on malaria prevention and treatment. The Ugandan Ministry of Health has embraced the program and Omni Med is working under the aegis of the Village Health Teams Initiative in which local community health workers provide immediate care for local villagers, offering a full range of preventive and treatment services to the most rural populations. An innovative aspect of the program is Dr Cohen's rigorous evaluation of the direct impact of the volunteers' efforts, something decidedly lacking but desperately needed in the service sector.

*(Continued top of page 3, left column)  
(continued from page 2 left column)*

The program is based in the Iganga district of Eastern Uganda. Once launched in 2009, US health personnel will undergo training in Boston and then in Kampala

*(White House, Continued from page 1)*

**ANSWERING THE CALL TO SERVICE**

*September 2008, The White House*

engineers—into global service.

The report, reproduced in the next column, placed a spotlight on Dr Varallo's selfless dedication to a cause larger than self. Congratulations to Dr Varallo; we're all proud. #

**Omni Med Joins Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) #10999; see [www.latinamericafund.org](http://www.latinamericafund.org)**



Every year, federal employees donate to charitable organizations through their workplace. Last year alone, over 1.3 million federal employees pledged over a quarter of a billion dollars. Given the strict requirements to join, many organizations simply don't make the cut. Omni Med, however, has been a successful non-governmental organization (NGO) for a decade. We conduct annual audits which show that nearly 98% of our funds go directly to programs, not executive pay or fund-raising. Because of our track record of success and fiscal frugality, Omni Med is receiving more donations through the CFC each year. The CFC requires each member organization to conduct a rigorous GAS-GAAP audit annually, which Omni Med has done since 2003. All audits are available on request. Omni Med's sponsoring federation is the Latin America Fund, on the web at [www.latinamericafund.org](http://www.latinamericafund.org).

*The following is reproduced from the White House report, Answering the Call to Service, September 2008:*

**VOLUNTEERS FOR PROSPERITY  
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT****JOHN VARALLO, GUYANA**

Since 2004, Dr. John Varallo has traveled to Guyana eight times with Omni Med to help implement a national cervical cancer screening initiative. Guyana suffers from one of the highest cervical cancer rates in the world, with the highest rates among the Amerindian women in remote villages. In an effort to address this problem, Dr. Varallo worked with his Guyanese colleagues to develop an effective and sustainable cervical prevention program, which led to the creation of the Guyana Cervical Cancer Prevention Program (GCCPP). Dr. Varallo served as the first director. GCCPP utilizes mobile clinics to bring same-day screening and treatment to the remote villages, greatly improving access to care for women. Guyanese health workers trained by or undergoing training by Dr. Varallo and other Omni Med volunteers staff these clinics. With the success of these mobile clinics, at the request of Guyana's Minister of Health, Dr. Varallo drafted a national policy for cervical cancer prevention. He is currently working to expand the training of local health workers to provide a solid foundation for a national GCCPP. Dr. Varallo plans to take four two-week trips a year to Guyana in the future, based largely on the deep, trusting relationships he has built and the rich personal and professional rewards he receives volunteering. ###

before heading out to the field to teach—and then follow up on—community health workers for a minimal period of two months. The Ugandan-generated Village Health Team Manual will serve as the basis for the training, and US instructors will cover all areas within, including malaria, diarrheal illness, pneumonia, clean drinking water, etc. Dr Cohen will study the impact of the volunteers' efforts through rigorous, controlled trials comparing the US volunteers' impact in selected areas vs. comparable areas without US volunteers. Where we find and demonstrate successful impact, we will then involve the control areas. The larger goal is to develop a scalable program that can serve as a template throughout the country, and East Africa. We fully expect that the benefits to the volunteers, the US image abroad, and, most importantly, to those in the villages served, will be substantial.

We will be searching for the first group of volunteers in the program in 2009. Please watch this pace for details. Anyone interested in getting involved, please contact Dr O'Neil at [ejoneil@omnimed.org](mailto:ejoneil@omnimed.org) ###

*(Guyana, continued from page 1)*

the first full *Cervical Cancer Prevention Course* at GPHC, with follow-up training and supervision. This course produced physicians formally certified to competently perform VIA, Cryotherapy and LEEP to identify pre-cancerous lesions and treat them in the same visit. Continued training, building of capacity, and running of mobile clinics to the remote interior has resulted in over 1200 women screened and treated in the last 3 years (most occurring in the last 12 months), with over 90 percent of the women from the interior screened for the first time in their lives.

In July, the Guyana Ministry of Health officially adopted their first-ever national policy on cervical cancer prevention, a document prepared by Dr. Varallo. In addition, Minister of Health Dr. Leslie Ramsammy launched the National Oversight Committee for the GCCPTP, with Dr. Varallo as a member.

*(next column)*

Early in the year, USAID approved a grant for over \$300,000 for the Jhpiego-Omni Med project, *Cervical Cancer Prevention in Guyana: Supporting a National Program In collaboration with the Government of Guyana Ministry of Health*. Jhpiego and Omni Med will provide the technical assistance for this PEPFAR-related project, which aims to integrate comprehensive cervical prevention services as part of routine care for HIV-infected women enrolled in the care and treatment program. Guyana is the first PEPFAR country to have cervical cancer prevention services covered by PEPFAR funding, and is largely due to the advocacy of both USAID Guyana and Omni Med. The funds were recently released, and this project rolls out in November 2008. This will become a multi-year project, with a large crossover benefit to the general population. Negotiations are underway for a three-year contract.

In addition, the Rotary Club recently approved a \$22,000 grant for a complementary project that focuses on training of Medex (mid-level providers) and others to provide comprehensive cervical cancer prevention services to women in the general population, including a focus on the indigenous women living in the remote interior. The incredible energy and support of Mary Kowalczyk, from First Rotary in Ketchikan, Alaska was instrumental in securing this funding, as was the support from Dr. Claudette Harry of the CDC and the Georgetown Rotary Club in Guyana.

Dr. Varallo continues his plans for quarterly visits to Guyana through 2009. Recently, Dr. John Durfee, a Gynecologist Oncologist from Boston who has done volunteer work in several other countries, has teamed up with Omni Med. In July 2008, he joined Dr. Varallo on a trip to Guyana. During that trip, Dr. Durfee conducted in-service training and performed several radical hysterectomies for cervical cancer, one on a 19 year-old woman. Dr. Durfee brings much valued expertise and experience in the management of cervical cancer cases to the program. He plans another trip with Dr. Varallo in November and will help develop clinical guidelines for the management of cervical cancer in Guyana. ###

## OMNI MED HIGHLIGHTS

**Omni Med's Database of Global Health Service Opportunities goes up on-line**

***Awakening Hippocrates and A Practical Guide to Global Health Service* continue strong sales**

**Cervical Cancer Prevention Program in Guyana grows, becomes national model, and receives large USAID grant**

**Omni Med Initiates a Health Service Initiative for Uganda for the Brookings Institution**

**Omni Med total donations of medical supplies approaches \$800,000; mostly to Kenya**

*President's Message (continued from page 1)*

Global Health Service, have sold over 4,700 copies, and I have given talks in over 60 venues in the past two years. In short, our message is getting out there.

We recognize that these are difficult times for everyone financially. However, please recognize that we have been extremely productive with all of our donations through the years. When you receive our fund-raising letter next month, please continue the support you have shown us previously. Since nearly 98% of all funds raised goes directly to our programs, we are a proven value for the dollar. Please continue to help us help those who deserve so much more. Thank you. ###

For more information, contact:

Dr. Edward O' Neil Jr.

81 Wyman St #1

Waban, MA 02468

Phone: (617) 332-9614

Fax: (617) 332-6623

email:ejoneil@omnimed.org

www.omnimed.org

## Participate in Omni Med

### Provide support

Omni Med is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. We rely on donations from individuals, companies, foundations and governments to fund all of our efforts. Most of our services are donated, but we still incur significant costs running the international programs and maintaining our database on global health service opportunities. Your contributions help us make a difference in the lives of those who need better health care.

### Physicians needed for Belize and Guyana Programs:

Omni Med sends physician volunteers to Belize five times yearly, and to programs in Guyana quarterly. Most specialty areas are needed, particularly Ob-Gyn for Guyana. All program emphasizes teaching, recognizing that knowledge is the best gift any short-term visiting health provider can give an indigenous colleague. As of late 2008, over 120 health providers, mostly physicians, have traveled abroad through Omni Med programs. Please contact us if interested.

**\*Medical Supplies:** Since 2001, Omni Med has shipped **\$786,723.66** worth of medical supplies to Belize and Kenya, mostly in the form of highly valued suture to St Mary's (in Nairobi) bustling Operating rooms. We thank our friends at Ethicon for their generous donations through the years. We also thank our many other corporate donors, including Olympus, Glenwood, Meda-Johnson, Becton Dickinson, and our donors.

### **Omni Med Bequest Society**

*Leave a Lasting Legacy:  
Remember Omni Med in  
Your Will or Estate Plan.*

*For more information,  
please call:*

*Susan DameGreene,  
Planned Giving Volunteer  
(978) 744-3180*

*If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to Omni Med,  
please make check payable to:*

*Omni Med  
81 Wyman St #1  
Waban, MA 02468*



Omni Med  
81 Wyman St #1  
Waban, MA 02468

### **RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



### **INSIDE:**

-Omni Med establishes new program in Uganda  
-Cervical Cancer Prevention in Guyana receives strong government support  
-Dr John Varallo & Omni Med honored by White House

*Omni Med comes from the Latin, loosely translated as "health care for all." Our mission is to reduce global disparities in health care, primarily through health volunteerism and education. Recognizing the interconnected nature of this shared human experience, we heed Dr. Albert Schweitzer's "ethical imperative," calling all health providers to bring quality health care to all the world's people—including those not in our traditional realm of concern. Omni Med runs teaching/ service programs cooperatively with indigenous health providers, currently in Belize, Kenya, Guyana and Uganda, helps physician volunteers develop ongoing relationships with host providers, and works collaboratively on other projects deemed important by host providers or governments. We also publish books on global health, poverty and health service that prepares prospective volunteers for service opportunities throughout the world.*

Volume 6, Issue I  
Fall 2008

**Omni Med News**