

SPOTLIGHT

Moments of Hope

Powered by 1,800 volunteers, 23 staff members and an endless supply of compassion, Shepherd's Hope provides care to uninsured, low-income families at their five Central Florida locations. The organization is backed by a strong alliance of community partners, including Orlando Health, to help provide care to this vulnerable population. Many of our physicians and team members also donate their personal time and skills to caring for Shepherd's Hope patients.

For Central Floridians who face challenges in receiving appropriate healthcare because they earn too much to qualify for certain health coverage programs, but not enough to afford insurance, Shepherd's Hope is their saving grace.

In 2014, the organization had more than **21,000** patient visits — a 22 percent increase from 2012. If not for the care Shepherd's Hope provides, these individuals would likely seek their medical care at an emergency department, which would cost Central Florida's healthcare system almost \$4,600 per patient, compared to just \$77 at Shepherd's Hope.

However, Shepherd's Hope is much more than just a cost savings for the healthcare system. True to its name, it is a place where good-hearted people come together to provide quality medical care along with a healthy dose of hope and kindness.

For volunteer physician Asad Ali Sheikh, MD, medical director of medical oncology and hematology at UF Health Cancer Center – Orlando Health, Shepherd's Hope has been a place for both healing and giving back. In 2011, Dr. Sheikh's sister was diagnosed with gastric cancer and passed away less than a year later. Devastated, he felt he needed to do something — both to help himself heal and to honor her memory.

"I wanted to do something for her. She was one of the kindest people I'd known and she liked to help people."



"Shepherd's Hope is truly a blessing for patients who are in need of help. All the staff is just amazing. Every volunteer finds a way to help you no matter what—no excuses—and it's very easy to talk to people at Shepherd's Hope."

After talking to a couple of friends who volunteer at Shepherd's Hope, Dr. Sheikh decided to volunteer. At the time, there were no other oncologist volunteers, so he was enthusiastic about making an immediate impact. Not knowing whether modern services were available at Shepherd's Hope (i.e., labs, diagnostics, radiology), Dr. Sheikh was nervous. However, he soon discovered a strong support system of specialists and volunteers willing to help.

Mayra Cruz Rivera was one such patient. Coming to Shepherd's Hope after losing her longtime teaching job, Mayra was desperate. Left with no insurance and fighting an ongoing battle with lupus, Mayra stopped getting treatment and

taking her medication for five months. Through Shepherd's Hope and Dr. Sheikh's commitment, she was able to get the care she badly needed.

When Dr. Sheikh shared with Mayra how he became a volunteer, she was touched by his story. It's no surprise that for his dedication, Dr. Sheikh was named Shepherd's Hope 2014 Physician Volunteer of the Year. Despite his accomplishment, he remains humble and committed. He even takes his daughter to volunteer every so often so she can experience the joy of helping others.

"Shepherd's Hope has been a blessing," says patient Mayra Cruz Rivera. "I wouldn't be here without them. It's an amazing place that really gives you hope that you'll get better and reminds you that there are people who still care."

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ORLANDO HEALTH COLLABORATES WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES. BY WORKING TOGETHER, WE ARE STRENGTHENING THE CENTRAL FLORIDA COMMUNITY.

Shepherd's Hope, Inc.

Primary Care Access Network • True Health

Community Health Centers, Inc. • Health Care Center for the Homeless

County Health Services • Grace Medical Home