

Nick & Terri Morrison (Phoenix)

Amigos de Salud

Amigos de Salud is a USA-based, non-profit, volunteer medical organization that allows members to assemble medical equipment and supplies and travel to developing countries to treat several thousand patients and perform hundreds of diagnostic and surgical procedures. Donated medical services, equipment, supplies, medications, and money have made possible the continuing success of these all-volunteer trips.

For over 20 years, Nick Morrison, MD, and his wife Terri Morrison, RN have annually led a group of medical volunteers to Central or South America to deliver medical care to the indigent people of Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua. Starting with just 14 volunteers in 1989, Amigos de Salud has grown to over 90 persons, including specialists from the fields of phlebology, general medicine, pulmonary, ENT, Ob-Gyn, gastroenterology, orthopedic, plastic surgery, colon and rectal surgery, audiology, and general surgery accompanied by nurses, nurse practitioners, technicians, and even family members.

Phlebologic services were added in 2006 involving phlebologists from Italy, France, Belgium, Ukraine, and USA, and include endovenous thermal and chemical ablation, ambulatory phlebectomy, CHIVA (including “laser-assisted” column interruption), ultrasound-guided and visual sclerotherapy, and perforator ligation.

The “Amigos” group has no paid staff and no overhead, assuring that it is a 100% volunteer effort. As you might imagine, this is a huge endeavor only made possible by generous supporters. The volunteers of Amigos work throughout the year to gather equipment and donations to go to Central and South American countries so they can set up and perform complex operations in a matter of days. Surgeries and medical care is provided in established hospitals and clinics. Over 5000 patients are evaluated and treated each year over the course of 7 days, so hours are long but ultimately very rewarding.

Poverty and political unrest is a devastating problem throughout South and Central America.

Access to medical care is often restricted for the indigent population. Each volunteer has his or her own motivation for sacrificing their time, money, and effort to help these deserving patients. The common thread is a desire to help others less fortunate than themselves.