

## 20 Spine Surgeons Leading Charitable Care Efforts **Featured**

Written by Heather Linder and Laura Miller | October 24, 2012

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Here are 20 spine surgeons leading charitable spine care efforts. If you would like to recommend a surgeon is added to this list, please contact Laura at [lmiller@beckershealthcare.com](mailto:lmiller@beckershealthcare.com).

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**Fabien Bitan, MD (Lenox Hill Hospital, New York City).** Dr. Bitan is the chief of spine services at Lenox Hill Hospital and an assistant professor at Albert Einstein Medical College in New York City. He is active in Children of China, an organization that offers humanitarian medical evaluation and treatment to young Chinese orphans with spinal deformities. He also participates in humanitarian missions through Children of China Pediatric Foundation. During his career, Dr. Bitan has been at the forefront of using minimally invasive endoscopic techniques and participated as a principle investigator in artificial disc technology studies. Dr. Bitan earned his medical degree at Paris University and completed his residency at Assistance Publique Hopitaux de Paris. His additional training includes a pediatric orthopedics fellowship at Hospital for Special Surgery and a spine surgery fellowship at Beth Israel Medical Center, both in New York City.

**Robert L. Brady, MD (Coastal Orthopaedics, Norwalk, Conn.).** Dr. Brady founded a non-profit organization called the Straight Caribbean Spine Foundation with a charitable mission to provide comprehensive care to children in third world countries with spinal deformities. He joined Coast Orthopaedics in 2005 to bring spine services to the facility. He's an orthopedic spine surgeon with an expertise in pediatric, adolescent and adult conditions of the spine, and he treats many conditions, including degeneration, deformity, trauma and tumors. Dr. Brady is skilled with minimally invasive spine techniques, disc arthroplasty and the use of biologic healing proteins. He trained to be an orthopedic surgeon at St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Center at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. He completed a spine surgery fellowship at the Spine Institute of New York at Beth Israel Medical Center.

**Oheneba Boachie-Adjei, MD (Hospital for Special Surgery, New York City).** Dr. Boachie-Adjei is the chief of the scoliosis service at Hospital for Special Surgery. A native of Ghana, Dr. Boachie-Adjei is also the founder and president of the Foundation of Orthopedics and Complex Spine, where he has helped provide orthopedic medical care to the underserved populations in West Africa and other third world nations. In 2004, his humanitarian work was recognized by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons with the Humanitarian Award, and the following year he received the Science and Peace Gold Medal from the Albert Schweitzer International University in Switzerland. He has been featured in a Discovery Channel documentary "Surgery Saved My Life." During his career, Dr. Boachie-Adjei has been elected president of the Scoliosis Research Society and published extensively on scoliosis. Dr. Boachie-Adjei earned his medical degree at Columbia University in New York City and completed his fellowship at the Twin Cities Scoliosis Center and Minnesota Spine Center.

**Charles L. Branch, Jr., MD (Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Winston-Salem, N.C.).** Dr. Branch is the chair of neurosurgery at Wake Forest University School of Medicine and previously served as president of the North American Spine Society. During his career, Dr. Branch has directed several medical mission programs in Haiti, Guyana, Nigeria and Guatemala. He also serves on the governing board of Eastern European Missions, which facilitates Bible distribution and faith-based humanitarian relief efforts in former Soviet countries. Dr. Branch holds 13 patents recognizing his fusion techniques and the technology he developed for minimally invasive spinal procedures. Dr. Branch earned his medical degree at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School and completed his neurosurgical training at Wake Forest

University. His additional training includes a fellowship in neurological surgery at the University of California in San Francisco.

**Jeremy W. Denning, MD (Dallas Neurosurgical & Spine).** Dr. Denning volunteered through Eagle Condor Humanitarian, a nonprofit charitable organization providing medical outreach programs to people in less developed countries. He and five other surgeons performed 12 spinal surgeries on people in Lima, Peru, who would not have had access to such care. Dr. Denning has clinical interests in adult spinal deformity, complex reconstructive spine surgery, scoliosis, microsurgery of the brain and spine, cerebrovascular surgery and minimally invasive spine surgery. He attended medical school at The University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston. He completed a general surgery internship and residency in neurosurgery at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. Dr. Denning was awarded a fellowship in complex and minimally invasive spine surgery at New York University Medical Center and a preceptorship in cerebrovascular surgery with Juha Hernesniemi, chairman of neurosurgery at Helsinki University Central Hospital in Finland.

**Dennis P. Devito, MD (Children's Orthopaedics of Atlanta).** Dr. Devito has participated in charity work in Central America for more than 15 years. He treated scoliosis and other orthopedic conditions. He also serves as a board member of Children's Cross Connection International and is the founder of a nonprofit foundation, the International Pediatric Spine Mission to help underprivileged children. Dr. Devito has worked at the Children's Orthopaedics of Atlanta since 1991. He now runs the center's spine program and specializes in the treatment of scoliosis and complex spine disorders and deformities in children, adolescents and young adults. He completed a pediatric orthopedic surgery fellowship at Boston Children's Hospital and is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and a member of the Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America. Dr. Devito is also one of the founding members of ASAMI-North America, now known as the Limb Lengthening and Reconstruction Society.

**Arash Emami, MD (Seton Hall University, New York City).** Dr. Emami worked with the Butterfly Foundation to participate in a medical mission for impoverished scoliosis patients in Vietnam. The mission provided 25 surgeries for patient without access to advanced technology. Dr. Emami is a board-certified orthopedic spine surgeon and the director of spinal deformities at Seton Hall University. He also holds a teaching appointment at New York University Medical Center. He received his medical degree and his orthopedic training at the University of Chicago, Pritzker School of Medicine. He completed a spinal surgery fellowship at the University of California in San Francisco. His clinical interests are in minimally invasive surgery, complex cervical spinal reconstruction, adult and pediatric scoliosis and lumbar and cervical disc replacement. Dr. Emami is a member of the North American Spine Society and Scoliosis Research Society, as well as a fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

**Daveed Frazier, MD (Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York City).** Dr. Frazier is an orthopedic spine surgeon who supports many charitable causes, including serving on the board of directors of FilmAid International, an organization offering assistance to displaced people worldwide through the power of film. He also serves on the board of directors of NuVasive Spine Foundation, and he traveled to Kenya on a medical mission to the Spine Injury Hospital to perform spine surgery on patients. Dr. Frazier has advanced training in spinal surgery and correction of spinal deformities. He's an assistant clinical professor of orthopedic surgery at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and a lecturer, researcher and author on spine disorders and treatment. He received his medical degree from Harvard Medical School, where he also completed a combined surgical internship based at the New England Deaconess Hospital and an orthopedic residency at Massachusetts General Hospital. He completed the Jackson Memorial Spine Fellowship and the Doctor's Hospital Spine Fellowship in spine deformity surgery. He also helped develop two successful spinal surgery centers in New York City and New Jersey.

**Matthew Geck, MD (Seton Spine & Scoliosis Center, Austin, Texas).** Dr. Geck is the co-

chief of the Seton Spine and Scoliosis Center in Austin, Texas. He is also the founder and medical director of SpineHope, a charitable organization for advancing spine treatment to underprivileged children around the world. He has a professional interest in minimally invasive scoliosis reconstruction. Dr. Geck is also an active researcher of minimally invasive scoliosis reconstruction, surgical planning and complex osteotomy surgery. He earned his medical degree from the University of Wisconsin Medical School and completed his residency at the University of California Los Angeles Medical Center. Dr. Geck also completed an adult and pediatric spine surgery fellowship at the University of Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital and Miami Children's Hospital.

**Stanley D. Gertzbein, MD (Aspen Orthopaedic Associates, Aspen, Colo.).** Dr. Gertzbein is a spine surgeon with Aspen Orthopaedic Associates with a special interest in complex spinal trauma. During his career, Dr. Gertzbein has traveled to third world countries to provide medical care. His service includes a 1994 trip to war-torn regions of Croatia to provide aid to underserved populations. In addition to his clinical work, Dr. Gertzbein has held appointments on the executive boards of the International Society for Study of the Lumbar Spine, North American Spine Society and Scoliosis Research Society. He has also served on the editorial boards for Spine and The Spine Journal. Dr. Gertzbein earned his medical degree at the University of Toronto Medical School in Ontario, Canada, and completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at St. Joseph's Hospital and Orthopaedic Hospital & Sunnybrook Hospital, both in Toronto. His additional training includes a research fellowship at Sunnybrook Medical Center in Toronto, Northwick Hospital in England and St. Mary Hospital in Hong Kong.

**Rick Hodes, MD (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee).** Dr. Hodes is an American physician who has lived and worked in Ethiopia for more than 20 years and provides spine and medical care to anyone who needs it through the American Joint Distribution Committee and the Mother Teresa Mission. He has also fostered and adopted more than 20 children. Dr. Hodes is currently the senior consultant at a Catholic Mission helping sick people with heart disease, spine disease and cancer. He has also worked with refugees in Rwanda, Zaire, Tanzania, Somalia and Albania. He graduated from Middlebury College and University of Rochester Medical School and trained in internal medicine at Johns Hopkins. He made his first trip to Ethiopia as a relief worker in 1984 and returned on a Fulbright Fellowship to teach internal medicine. In 1990, he was hired by the JDC as a medical adviser for the country.

**Isador Lieberman, MD, MBA (Texas Back Institute, Plano).** This past April, Dr. Lieberman was recognized with the Health Volunteers Overseas Golden Apple Award for his contributions to international humanitarian work. He was instrumental in the concept and design for Uganda Spine Mission and has participated in several fundraising and mission trips supporting the organization. During his career, he has served on the Global Outreach Committee for the Scoliosis Research Society. Dr. Lieberman also performs robotic-assisted spine surgery. He earned his medical degree at the University of Toronto in Ontario, Canada, and completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto. His additional training includes spine surgery fellowships at The Toronto Hospital and Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham, United Kingdom.

**Jeffrey R. McConnell, MD (OAA Orthopaedic Specialists, Allentown, Pa.).** Dr. McConnell co-founded Operation Straight Spine, a charitable mission to provide spinal disease and deformity treatment for poor and under-served people in India. The operation's first mission took place in 2006. In the U.S., Dr. McConnell also established the Spine Education and Research Foundation to help fund the project. Operation Straight Spine was the first-ever charitable project of its kind in India and consisted of outpatient clinics, major spine surgery interventions, ward rounds and teaching seminars for local support staff and physicians. Dr. McConnell has interests in treating pediatric spinal deformity, motion preservation technologies for spine surgery and minimally invasive surgery techniques. He is active in spine research and was the lead investigator for the SECURE-C Cervical Disc Replacement FDA IDE clinical trial. He completed his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and an internship

at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pa., where he also completed an orthopedic residency. Dr. McConnell also served spine surgery fellowships at the University of Maryland Hospital in Baltimore and the Centre for Spinal Studies and Surgery at Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham, United Kingdom.

**Hooman M. Melamed, MD (DISC Sports & Spine Center, Marina del Rey, Calif.).** Dr. Melamed is the co-director of the spine surgery program at DISC Sports & Spine Center and a spine consultant at Shriners Hospital in California. For the past few years, Dr. Melamed has spent time traveling to impoverished countries around the world to treat children with scoliosis, including time in Haiti after the earthquake in early 2010. He also volunteers his services with International Humanitarian Aid Foundation, where he works with orphans in Haiti. Dr. Melamed is a member of North American Spine Society and American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. He earned his medical degree at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His additional training includes a fellowship in complex spine surgery at Cedars Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

**Andrew Moulton, MD (University Orthopaedics, Hawthorne, N.Y.).** Dr. Moulton is a spine surgeon with University Orthopaedics and director of the Scoliosis Clinic at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, N.Y. He is the president and co-founder of the Butterfly Foundation, a non-profit organization aimed at sending spine surgeons from the United States to the Dominican Republic to teach local surgeons the latest techniques. Dr. Moulton is a member of the Global Outreach Program of the Scoliosis Research Society and committee chairman of the Spine Care Relief United Beyond Borders program sponsored by the North American Spine Society. During his career, Dr. Moulton has volunteered with the Children's Relief Mission in Honduras, co-coordinated the Spine Harvesting Program and co-founded a program to teach practical Spanish to physicians. Dr. Moulton earned his medical degree at SUNY-Downstate School of Medicine in Brooklyn, N.Y., where he also completed his residency. His additional training includes a spine surgery fellowship at the Hospital for Joint Disease in New York City.

**Duane D. H. Pitt, MD (Desert Institute for Spine Disorders, Scottsdale, Ariz.).** Dr. Pitt is the president of Desert Institute for Spine Disorders and serves as medical director for Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn, Shea and Thomas Peak campuses. Dr. Pitt was the first spine surgeon to support the Surgical Humanitarian Mission to the Dominican Republic. He currently serves on the board of the International Surgical Foundation and has been involved in several additional humanitarian efforts. In addition to his clinical practice, Dr. Pitt consults on sports-related spine injuries for the Phoenix Suns, San Francisco Giants and the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim. Dr. Pitt is also an aerospace medicine trained flight surgeon in the Air National Guard, holding the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Dr. Pitt earned his medical degree at the University of California at Irvine School of Medicine and completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at Loma Linda (Calif.) University Medical Center. His additional training includes a spine fellowship at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where he focused on minimally invasive surgery, spinal deformity correction and sports-related spinal injuries.

**Kamshad Raiszadeh, MD (Spine Institute of San Diego).** Dr. Raiszadeh is the medical director of the Advanced Spine Institute & Minimally Invasive Spine Center at Alvarado Hospital in San Diego. He is also the founder of the Spine Humanitarian and Research Education foundation, which is devoted to providing charitable care and advancing the science of spine care across the world. In addition to his clinical work, Dr. Raiszadeh also founded Spine Zone, a medically based spine strengthening program, and is an active member in the Scoliosis Research Society and North American Spine Society. Dr. Raiszadeh earned his medical degree from the University of California in San Francisco and completed his residency at UC Davis. His additional training includes an adult and pediatric spine surgery fellowship at the Hospital for Joint Disease in New York City.

**Anthony Rinella, MD (Illinois Spine & Scoliosis Center, Homer Glen, Ill.).** Dr. Rinella is a

board-certified, fellowship-trained spine surgeon and the co-founder of SpineHope, a nonprofit that helps children with spine deformities worldwide through surgery, education and research. He leads two weeklong missions to Columbia each year and participates in other spinal missions around the world. Dr. Rinella's interests include adult and pediatric scoliosis and kyphosis, cervical disc replacement, revision procedures of the previously operated spine and minimally invasive procedures. He attended medical school at the University of Illinois College of Medicine. He completed his residency at Northwestern University and completed a fellowship in adult and pediatric spinal surgery at Washington University in St. Louis.

**Krzysztof B. Siemionow, MD (Chicago Center for Orthopedics at Weiss Memorial Hospital).** Dr. Siemionow is a surgeon at the Chicago Center for Orthopedics at Weiss and an assistant professor of orthopedic surgery at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He participates in an annual spine surgery mission to Uganda in East Africa where he treats adult and adolescent patients with spinal trauma, scoliosis, tumors and infection. During his career, Dr. Siemionow has published several professional articles on spine surgery and received a National Institute of Health grant for his studies. He also holds several patents for developing devices and technologies that are used in nerve and spine surgery. Currently, he is working on applications for terahertz electromagnetic waves in collaboration with scientists at Case Western Reserve University. Dr. Siemionow earned his medical degree at Karol Marcinkowski University in Poland and completed his residency at Cleveland Clinic. His additional training includes fellowships at the Cleveland Clinic Spine Institute and Rush Medical Center in Chicago.

**Lokesh Tantuwaya, MD (Scripps Memorial Hospital, La Jolla, Calif.).** Dr. Tantuwaya is a founding member of Doctors Offering Charitable Services, a charitable mission donating surgical reconstruction and continuing care to people in the local community unable to obtain treatment for disfiguring medical conditions and severe injuries. He is a board-certified neurosurgeon who specializes in skull base surgery, cerebrovascular surgery and complex spinal surgery, including back and neck injuries. Dr. Tantuwaya practices at Scripps Memorial Hospital and Sharp Memorial Hospital in La Jolla. He completed his medical degree from Northwestern University and completed a neurosurgery residency at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh. He then completed a fellowship in interventional neuroradiology at the University of California San Diego. Dr. Tantuwaya is a fellow of the American College of Spine Surgeons.

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