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**December 7, 2017, San Antonio, TX** - Many of us plan to step into the New Year with renewed energy, well thought resolutions and an optimistic outlook. But what if taking that step literally is so painful that we're stopped in our tracks, immobile and struggling how to make strides forward.

Millions of Americans today experience unimaginable hip and knee pain that sidelines them from the quality of life they once enjoyed. It may limit their ability to work, to participate in activity or fitness and to enjoy the mobility they took for granted. This can affect both their physical and mental health.

While the answer may be hip and knee replacement surgery, what if they can't afford it? They know what needs to be done but they don't have the financial means and may feel they have no options. That's where [Operation Walk USA 2016](#) comes in. Nationally, from December 4 - 9, 2017 an estimated 60 patients will receive free joint replacements from 40 volunteer orthopaedic surgeons at 36 hospitals.

Operation Walk USA takes place each December as an annual tradition of giving back and allows for greater hospital, surgeon and medical staff participation. The program provides all aspects of treatment — surgery, hospitalization, and pre-and post-operative care — at no cost to participating patients who may not qualify for government health coverage, have insurance or afford surgery on their own.

Arthritic disease is the most common cause of disability in the U.S., affecting approximately 46 million Americans, or more than 21 percent of the adult population. The debilitating end stages of hip or knee degenerative disease often makes working, or completing even the simplest of daily tasks, exceedingly difficult and challenging.

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“We are so very committed to this program, stated Dr. Marshall-Rodriquez with South Texas Spine & Surgical Hospital. It has become an annual tradition and a way we can all give patients a new lease on life. These individuals will start the new year with mobility, renewed hope, and spirit. This is a real collaborative effort and we so appreciate the support of our local volunteers, other orthopaedic surgeons and their staff, and the many donors and supporters for their generous time and expertise.”

Operation Walk USA began in 2010 following the tremendous success of Operation Walk, an international volunteer medical service organization that provides treatment for patients with

arthritis and joint conditions in developing countries. To date, nearly 650 patients received help through Operation Walk USA, held in the month of December, annually since 2010. Since inception, Operation Walk USA provided knee and hip replacement surgeries and related care that valued at more than \$17.3 million.

#### **Operation Walk USA 2017 facts:**

- Operation Walk USA 2017 will be held at 36 hospitals throughout the country, December 4-9.
- An estimated 40 orthopaedic surgeons will provide hip and joint replacements, free of charge, to 60 patients in 23 states.
- Operation Walk USA 2017 is based on the successful experiences of Operation Walk, which has provided hip and knee replacements to thousands of patients throughout the world since 1996.
- This is the eighth year for Operation Walk USA, which has provided free total joint replacement to more than 700 patients to date.
- To find a list of participating orthopaedic surgeons and cities, visit [www.opwalkusa.com](http://www.opwalkusa.com), or follow Operation Walk USA 2017 on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Want to learn more about joint replacement, or how to better take care of your joints? The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) hosts an informative and interactive patient education site at [www.orthoinfo.org](http://www.orthoinfo.org). [Orthopaedic surgeons](#) restore mobility and reduce pain; they help people get back to work and to lead independent, productive lives. Visit ANationInMotion.org to read successful orthopaedic stories.

#### ***About South Texas Spine and Surgical Hospital***

Surgery Partners has partnered with local physicians to establish South Texas Spine & Surgical Hospital. In this partnership, the physicians assist in management of the hospital, resulting in a hospital solely run for the benefit of the patient. This innovative approach creates an integrated and holistic approach to healthcare. As a nationally recognized center for spine and joint care excellence, STSSH takes pride in providing the highest quality clinical care in a one-on-one, warm and caring environment. For additional information, please visit [www.southtexassurgical.com](http://www.southtexassurgical.com) or like us on Facebook.