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DR. SMEETA SARDESAI

More than just
a profession





Dr. Smeeta Sardesai was born to be a baby doctor.

More than Just a Profession

As a little girl in India, Smeeta knew most of the expectant mothers in her little village and when they were due to deliver their babies. There were few hospitals available to the villagers and most of the pregnant women delivered their babies at home with a midwife. Smeeta would always be there for the delivery and to hold the new baby. She was so small herself that to ensure that she did not drop the baby, she would always sit on the floor as she held them. “I loved the newborn babies and would hold them for hours.”

Today, Dr. Sardesai is Medical Director of Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Good Samaritan Hospital’s Davajan-Cabal Center for Perinatal Medicine and one of the top neonatologists in Los Angeles. She has over twenty years of experience treating the city’s most critically ill infants. For Dr. Sardesai, her work as a neonatologist isn’t just a profession – it is a calling. “To be present for this new life – it is so humbling,” she explained.



As a key member of Good Samaritan Hospital's Mother and Baby Care Campaign, Dr. Sardesai works to secure the most cutting-edge medical equipment available.

Dr. Sardesai works especially hard to ensure that parents of the babies in the NICU have full knowledge and understanding of their baby's condition. She works with many new parents who have struggled for years to have a baby only to have the baby come weeks or even months premature. These very early babies suffer serious and potentially life-threatening complications such as under-developed lungs, feeding disorders, and pulmonary hypertension. Dr. Sardesai cared for one little boy that was born at 25 weeks and weighed just one pound. His lungs were seriously compromised and he had to be put on a high-frequency ventilator for a significant period of time. His recovery was slow and complicated, but after three months in the NICU he was able to go home with his parents. Today that little boy is doing "just great." When a very sick baby can recover and go home healthy – "that is what makes it all worthwhile."

As an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California, Dr. Sardesai is training the neonatologists and pediatricians of tomorrow. Her skill as a neonatologist and a professor is reflected in the glowing reviews by her interns. "Dr. Sardesai is an excellent attending. Her style of teaching is excellent for the field of medicine...I hope one day to be able to teach residents and students the way she does."

Dr. Sardesai's medical expertise extends far beyond the Los Angeles area through her volunteer work with the Global Medical Brigade and the Children's Medical Care Foundation, as well as her decades of research in neonatal medicine. The Global Medical Brigade provides medical care to communities that have limited access to essential health care. Dr. Sardesai has traveled with her students from the Keck School of Medicine to Mexico, Honduras, and Haiti to provide desperately needed medical care to children and infants suffering from serious medical conditions. And as a leading researcher in the prevention of acute and chronic lung injury, pulmonary hypertension, and feeding and nutrition problems in premature infants, her research informs pediatricians all over the country. Dr. Sardesai and her colleagues' research on the effects of dexamethasone (steroids) on chronic lung disease in very low birth weight babies informed the entire medical community about the significant improvement in respiratory outcomes when these therapies are applied.

For the Sardesai family, medicine is a family affair. Her one son is a doctor, another son is a biomedical engineer who makes medical devices, and her daughter is in medical school. And the glue that holds it all together is her husband, Raj Sardesai. His constant support has given Dr. Sardesai the ability to have it all – a beautiful family and an exemplary medical career.

Over the last 25 years, Good Samaritan Hospital has delivered more than 100,000 babies. We have a success rate in the care of premature babies that is 25% higher than the California state average and as the Medical Director of Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Dr. Sardesai is a huge part of that success. She oversees the day-to-day functioning of the NICU to ensure that critically ill babies get the highest quality care. Each additional day that we can extend the life of a critically ill infant increases the odds that the baby will survive and thrive. “When it comes to premature babies, every day counts; it’s not a count down, it’s a count up,” she explains.

As a key member of Good Samaritan Hospital’s Mother and Baby Care Campaign, Dr. Sardesai works to secure the most cutting-edge medical equipment available. Our Mother and Baby Care Campaign is working very hard to raise \$3.3 million to purchase new state-of-the-art maternal EKG monitors, fetal monitors, NICU monitors, and other equipment for the Davajan-Cabal Center for Perinatal Medicine. In 2013, we delivered 4,000 babies and about 400 of those babies were admitted to the NICU. This new equipment will allow Good Samaritan Hospital’s outstanding medical team to continue to lead the way in the care of premature and critically ill infants.

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