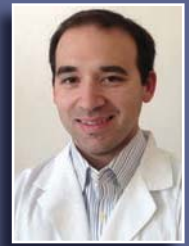


## Dr. David Hip-Flores: From the War Zone to the ER



Last fall, 34-year-old orthopedic surgeon Dr. David Hip-Flores joined our practice to treat patients suffering from hip and knee ailments. In less than a year, the physician has performed approximately 200 procedures, sometimes doing more than 10 per week. It can often be a high-pressure position with much work to be done.

For the mild-mannered Hip-Flores, however, it's been fun.

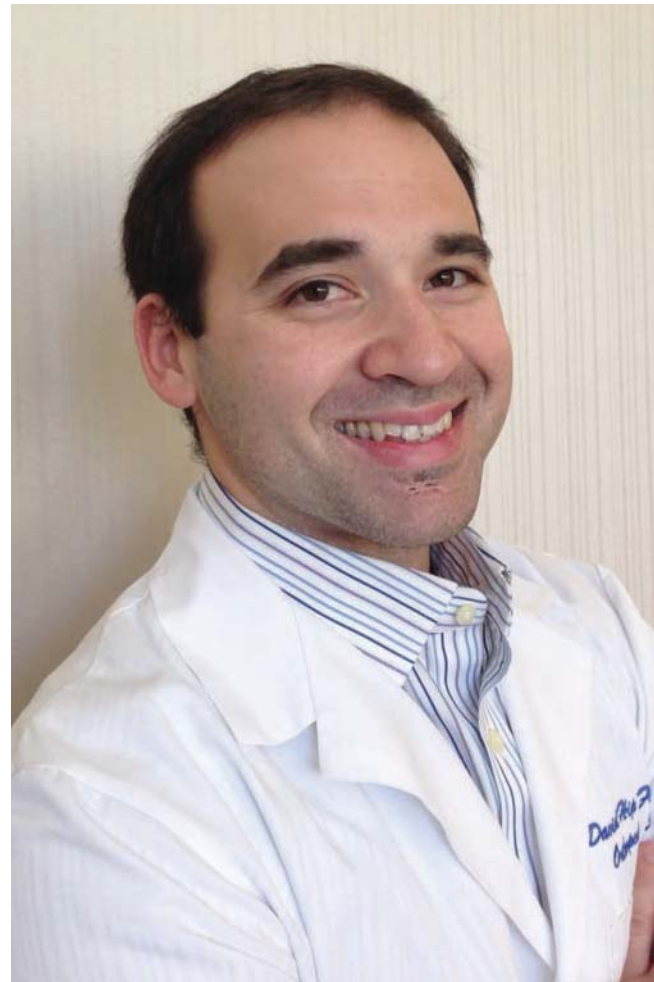
"I enjoy it," said the doctor. "I like the whole community, all the businesses around here. I think it's fun to work here and to be able to go up and down Hylan Boulevard to the different stores and restaurants. I like the patients. I knew the patients before during my residency at SUNY Downstate so I knew what the patient population was from then. It's also been rewarding to see all the positive results."

A Major in the U.S. Army Reserve since September 2002, Dr. Hip-Flores recently returned from a five month tour in Khost Province, Afghanistan. Originally from and currently living in New Jersey, Hip-Flores worked in different hospitals and clinics in Salerno (in Khost) and Sharana in Paktita Province, both in the southeast of the war torn country. While violence in the latter region was minimal, the former had earned the moniker of "Rocket City" for the large amounts of incoming rocket and mortar fire that rained on it daily.

If being a doctor in a war zone wasn't difficult enough, Dr. Hip-Flores had additional concerns, namely terrorists disguised as security forces. Al-Qaeda-linked terrorists in the region would often feign interest in training only to later detonate explosives or open fire on U.S. forces. "It didn't happen to me but apparently it happened quite a few times while we were out there," he said. "It just makes it so you can't trust anyone. You're always looking around, wondering if the people around you are going to be shooting at you."

His work in the Reserve, however, is not limited to overseas.

"A lot of what we do when we're stateside is keeping up with medical readiness," he explained. "For soldiers with orthopedic issues, we evaluate them to see if they need to have their assignments modified in any respect to accommodate their injuries. We also determine if they're cleared to go back. That's what I do 90 percent of the time. When we were overseas, of course, it was different. It was mostly just taking care of acute



trauma and training the Afghan people to run their hospitals."

Since returning back to the States, the bilingual physician has been able to let his guard back down. The lack of excitement, he said, is a good thing. "No big surprises," he added.

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"I've had a couple of patients who were on the younger side that had really good recoveries. I think that's partially because they were young and the surgery was a good indication that they really needed to have it done. I've also had a couple of older people who I didn't expect to be up and walking around so quickly. They were also able to come back from hip fractures and actually demonstrate that they were able to walk without a cane. That was encouraging."

Married for eight years with two boys (ages six and two), the physician recently moved to Holmdel, New Jersey. As the days turn to weeks and weeks to months, he has become an integral part of the HCA family. Dr. Hip-Flores said while he enjoyed his time overseas he also welcomes the calmer duties of treating hip and knee ailments. "I got some practice doing trauma," he said, "but I'm happy to be helping patients here, too."

Dr. Hip-Flores is racking up the frequent flyer miles. In 2014 he traveled to India to participate in "Operation Walk," an organization supported by Doctors without Borders. The humanitarian-aid, non-governmental organization is perhaps best known for its projects in war-torn regions and developing countries facing endemic diseases. As part of the operation, Dr. Hip-Flores and his team performed approximately 70 surgical procedures during a two-week period in the country. The doctor completed 20 procedures during his time there, his second visit to India to help citizens in need of deformity corrections and joint replacements. Operation Walk also assisted many people suffering from arthritis and a series of orthopedic deformities. Despite the workload during the two weeks, Dr. Hip-Flores says he will take off 2015 but anticipates returning to help sometime in 2016, potentially flying to Latin America or Morocco.

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