

## ALTRUISTIC PHYSICIAN MARK BABO PROCTORS STUDENTS, ESPOUSES OTHER WORLDVIEWS

Family practice physician Mark Babo wants not only to help medical students become physicians sooner than usual, but also wants to expose them to alternative worldviews that can influence how they practice medicine.

Babo (pronounced BAY-bo) practices medicine in the Kaiser outpatient clinic on Fair Oaks Boulevard east of Howe Avenue in Sacramento. There, he proctors UC Davis medical students who are enrolled in the Accelerated Competency-based Education in Primary Care (ACE-PC) program, which UC Davis operates in collaboration with Kaiser Permanente Northern California. ACE-PC enables carefully selected students to complete medical school and residency within six years rather than the customary seven years.

Mark Babo is driven by compassion and a compulsion to help patients, not only in Sacramento but also in equatorial Africa. Ever since he served rotations overseas during the mid-1980s while he was a medical student at Oral Roberts University (ORU) School of Medicine in Tulsa, he has been a tireless proponent of and participant in missionary medicine. He and his wife, Doreen Dennis-Babo, put their money where their emotional commitment was by founding Heal Our World ([healourworld2day.org](http://healourworld2day.org)), a not-for-profit organization that gathers financial and human resources to build hospitals in developing parts of the world. Doreen, who holds a DrPH degree (doctor of public health), is an adjunct professor of global health systems and development with Tulane University in New Orleans.

Mark Babo, who was raised near Buffalo, New York, was the first member of his family to attend college.

“As a teenager I had a strong desire to serve needy people in other parts of the world through medicine,” explained Babo who, following his residency,



Mark Babo (courtesy photo)

became a faculty member at ORU School of Medicine and then was appointed international medical director for Faith Mediplex Group of Hospitals, which serves Nigeria. Beginning in 1998 he also spent 13 years as an assistant professor with the Tulane University School of Medicine, and he was a senior physician with the Ochsner Clinic Foundation in New Orleans from 1996 to 2011.

Babo has been licensed to practice medicine not only in Oklahoma, California and Louisiana, but also in Kenya, Nigeria and Jamaica. He says he has learned valuable lessons about human relations from his work overseas.

“In the United States we’re job- and task-oriented, while people in African nations are more person- and family-oriented,” he said. “That realization has carried over to my work in the U.S. – really listening to patients and caring for them. In our task-oriented society, having a patient feel that he or she has been heard is therapeutic in itself. I relay to my students how important that is.”

Tonya Fancher, founder and director of the ACE-PC program, admires Babo’s integrity and his interactions with UC Davis medical students.

“Dr. Babo inspires medical students to care for patients and to also serve those with limited access to care,” said Fancher, an associate professor of internal medicine.

The Babos moved to Sacramento in 2011 in order to live close to Doreen’s parents. That’s when Mark joined the Kaiser staff and began hosting rotations of UC Davis medical students. He now serves a teaching and mentoring role for a nurse practitioner, one regular medical student, and an ACE-PC student.

“I love clinical practice and direct patient care, and enjoy combining this with teaching,” Babo said. He takes leave three or four times per year to do volunteer work in clinics in Africa for one to two weeks at a time.

To date, Heal Our World has built three hospitals in Nigeria that now are self-supporting. Heal Our World also is engaged in procuring and shipping equipment, medicines and supplies to Third World hospitals, conducting training, hosting medical conferences, and recruiting volunteer teams to teach or conduct relief work overseas.

“Missionary medicine is the means of fulfilling my personal goal of serving the world’s needy through medicine. I volunteered for every possible opportunity and lived in Africa full-time for eight years before going to a model of sharing my time between clinical practice in the U.S. with time overseas,” Babo said. “It provides me greater opportunities to be current in my practice of medicine, greater resources to be able to support my mission’s work, and provides for my future retirement and ability to return full-time to practice in Africa when I retire.”

The Babos have adopted three Nigerian teenagers: Aisosa, Mercy and Grace.