



**Shriners International**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Shriners Set to Arrive in Daytona Beach for their Imperial Session**

### *Shriners Annual Convention Begins on July 9*

**June 21, 2017 (Tampa, Florida)** — Shriners are getting ready for their 143<sup>rd</sup> Imperial Session. This is the Shriners' annual convention and it is the first time Shriners International will hold their traditional event in Daytona Beach.

The City of Daytona Beach will host two Imperial Sessions back to back in 2017 and again in July 2018. The convention in 2017 is expected to draw more than 10,000 visitors from around the world.

Imperial Session is an annual business meeting and gathering of the international fraternity comprised of nearly 200 temples (chapters) in several countries. Imperial Session will run from July 9 to July 13, with events mainly taking place at the Ocean Center.

The week-long activities will begin with another first, the Walk, Ride or Drive for LOVE which will be held at the Daytona International Speedway. Shriners Hospitals for Children<sup>®</sup> patients, families, community members and Shriners will walk or drive the track to raise funds and awareness for the hospitals.

As part of Imperial Session, Gary Bergenske of Orlando, Florida is expected to be named the organization's newest Imperial Potentate, or executive leader, for the 2017 - 2018 term. His wife, Anne will become the First Lady of the organization and will announce her fundraising program benefiting Shriners Hospitals for Children, the official philanthropy of Shriners International.

"Imperial Sirs Chris Smith and Gary Bergenske and their ladies are excited to welcome you to the 'World's Most Famous Beach' Daytona Beach, Florida," said Director General, Stumpy Harris. "We look forward to welcoming our friends to a unique celebration in a wonderful family-friendly destination."

Considered a highlight of the weeklong event, Shriners Hospitals for Children will reveal two new national patient ambassadors for 2017 - 2018 with the premiere of a video documentary of their heartwarming and encouraging real life experiences. Imperial Session will begin with a Public Opening on Sunday, July 3. For more information and a full schedule of events, visit the [Imperial Session website](#) or follow us on social media [www.facebook.com/ShrinersInternational](http://www.facebook.com/ShrinersInternational).



## Shriners International

### About Shriners International

**Shriners International**, a fraternity based on fun, fellowship and the Masonic principles of brotherly love, relief and truth, founded Shriners Hospitals for Children as its official philanthropy in 1922. What began as one hospital, is now a world-renowned health care system with 22 locations in three countries. The fraternity, which has nearly 200 chapters in several countries and thousands of clubs around the world, continues to support this unique health care system. Please visit [shrinersinternational.org](http://shrinersinternational.org) to learn more.

### About Shriners Hospitals for Children

Shriners Hospitals for Children changes lives every day through innovative pediatric specialty care, world-class research and outstanding medical education. The 22 locations in the United States, Canada and Mexico provide advanced care for children with orthopedic conditions, burns, spinal cord injuries and cleft lip and palate.

Shriners Hospitals for Children is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and relies on the generosity of donors. All donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law. For more information, please visit [shrinershospitalsforchildren.org](http://shrinershospitalsforchildren.org).

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