

Rich History Spurs CAPI's Strong Development

The local chapter representing doctors and dentists of Indian origin surpasses the 600-member mark

By LYNNE JETER

It's an astonishing fact: physicians of Indian heritage care for approximately one of seven patients in the U.S. And their collective impact continues to rise.

Since its founding, the Central Florida Association of Physicians from the Indian Subcontinent (CAPI) has grown to more than 600 members representing India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Based in Orlando, the non-profit professional association serves the needs of medical professionals practicing in Orange, Osceola, Volusia, Seminole, Lake and Marion counties.

CAPI, which has grown into one of the largest ethnic healthcare organizations

in Florida, is a subchapter of the national organization American Association of Physicians of Indian origin (AAPI), which represents the interests of more than 80,000 physicians.

In the early 1980s, with the mission of uniting medical and dental professionals of Indian heritage in Central Florida, while also pooling resources to make a proactive difference, a local association was formed.

"Near about 70-plus doctors showed up for our very first meeting," said Mohan Saoji, MDS, a past president. These included Dinesh Das, MD, Ravi Jahagirdar, MD, Sunil Kakker, MD, Syed Malik, MD, Vikram Mehta, MD, Muni Padman, MD, Jai Prakash, DDS, Gopal Basiswht, MD, and Sardar Aziz, MD. "We agreed unanimously the need of an organized body, and named it Association of Physicians and Dentists from South Asia, or APDSA," which became Doctors of South Asia (DOSA) and finally CAPI in 2008.

Orlando has the distinction of being the only city in the U.S. to host the National AAPI Convention four times – in 1989, 2002, 2009 and 2015. Locally, CAPI has initiated extensive community programs from its early days, including multiple health camps and fairs each year and outreach programs to nursing homes and schools. Its COAC program to battle childhood obesity continues to be a runaway success.

The generous philanthropic alignment with the University of Central Florida, Florida Hospital, and Orlando Health is a matter of immense pride for CAPI.

CAPI has spawned a number of physician leaders in their professional and community organizations. Add to this: care given at each point of professional contact with patients seeking healthcare delivery, and the picture of service is wide and deep.

Recently, the 33rd AAPI national convention in Orlando attracted more than 1,800 attendees, with a budget of more than \$1.8 million, said Amish M. Parikh, MD, Chair of the AAPI Convention 2015 and a cardiologist with Premier Cardiol-

ogy & Vascular Association. Dr. Parikh also chairs India Day with the Orlando Magic, and serves as regional director for AAPI (South).

The AAPI national convention gave Orlando's economy an impressive boost in June 2015.

Keynote speakers included U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy and 2014 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Kailash Satyarthi. At 37, Murthy, an internal medicine doctor from Miami, made history as the youngest appointed U.S. Surgeon General and the first Indian. AAPI and CAPI strongly supported his candidacy. Satyarthi, an electrical engineer by training, and youth activist who founded Save the Childhood Movement and Global March against Child Labour, is the seventh Indian presented the prestigious international award. The galaxy of superstars included the icon of the Art of Living and Yoga and TM – Sri Sr Ravi Shankar, and the renowned Attorney General of Southern New York/Wall Street, Mr. Preet Bharara, Esq. Others included Chairman of the American Medical Association, President of the Florida Medical Association, and dignitaries from India.

"The AAPI Annual Convention was regarded as one of the best Conventions in recent memory by many attendees that traveled from all over the USA, Canada and India," said Dr. Parikh. "Along with my Convention Co-chair Dr. Nikita Shah, DOO Dr Beena Parikh, and over 100 physicians and volunteers we worked tirelessly to organize a great combination of state-of-the-art CME seminars, inspirational speakers and world-class Bollywood entertainment."

CAPI's regional outreach has expanded as troublesome health trends have emerged in Central Florida. For example, after noticing the alarming rise of obesity in children, CAPI organized several childhood obesity awareness programs for middle school students. CAPI has also collaborated on these special projects with the Boy Scouts of America, AGFT and the Orlando Magic. CAPI also organizes a Spring and Winter Gala, regularly

attended by more than 300 members to facilitate discussion and networking opportunities. The Winter Gala will be held Dec. 3 at the Rosen Center. Please visit www.capimed.com to participate.

Other landmark community outreach projects:

- In 2012, under the leadership of then-president Nikita Shah, MD, CAPI raised \$10,000 for both Florida Hospital and Orlando Health foundations.
- In 2013, CAPI raised \$25,000 for the University of Central Florida College of Medicine, under the leadership of then-president Uday Desai, MD.
- In 2014, CAPI donated \$70,000 to the Florida Hospital Foundation and \$20,000 to A Gift for Teaching (AGFT), under the leadership of then-president Ravi Akella, MD.
- In 2015, CAPI donated \$56,000 to the Orlando Health Foundation, under the guidance of then-president Sudhir Bhaskar, MD.
- Earlier this year, CAPI donated \$15,000 to the One Orlando Fund for Pulse nightclub victims, under the leadership of president Atul Madan, MD.

SAVE-THE-DATE:
CAPI Winter Gala 2016
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3
6:00PM - 11:45PM
Please visit capimed.com
for more details.

CAPI LEADERSHIP 2016

President:
Atul Madan, MD

Immediate Past President:
Sudhir Bhaskar, MD

President-elect:
Vijay Patange, MD

Vice President:
Priya Vishnubhotla, MD

Secretary:
Rohit Bhatheja, MD

Treasurer:
Sri Pottamsetty, MD