

# THE HEROES

We dedicate this issue to all health care professionals including physicians, nurses and other health care workers, as well as first responders including emergency personnel, and others who provide crucial services around the world and have faced the challenge of providing care for patients with Covid-19, while often unprepared and ill equipped, risking their own lives to save the lives of others. They and their families have sacrificed all year in the fight against COVID-19 and many lost their lives. APPNE sincerely thanks the heroes of this pandemic.



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# Surviving 2020

*Salman Malik, DMD, MD*

Most of us are glad that 2020 is over. It was a difficult year. Who would have imagined the hardships that we would be facing in the coming months? Social distancing became a household phrase and wearing masks in public became the “new norm.” But if there is one thing we all learned, it was that (maybe) nothing should ever be taken for granted.

Back in Spring, many of us saw family members and friends become victims of the virus. While our profession was still learning to effectively deal with the pandemic, daily TV reports showed the devastating effects of the virus and the vulnerabilities our healthcare system faced. There is no doubt that it took its toll.

For many of us, not only did we have to navigate through the closure of our practices for 2 months, we also had to manage employees who were nervous about losing their jobs. Hard choices had to be made. However, we learned to stay connected and work our way through those difficult times. I think, ultimately, we learned the meaning of loyalty.

When businesses started reopening, we all noticed the world had changed. The pace was a bit slower. Patients were more appreciative of the services we provided; they were happy to see us back. I think our patients understood the daily risks we faced by working on them---up close and personal. They saw how we donned our daily PPE and how we struggled to breathe under all that equipment. That understanding created an atmosphere of respect which may not have existed before.

So, what lies ahead? The lightning-fast development of Covid vaccines is nothing short of a miracle. A miracle created by science and mankind. It is a testament to what we can do and achieve...if we work collectively. I am happy to see 2020 become nothing but a memory. As we continue to fight this pandemic, that light at the end of the tunnel is beginning to shine a little brighter.

# Mental Health & Covid-19

*Qaiser Khan, MD*

Past year had been hard faced with many challenges and hardships impacting our activities of daily living. COVID-19 affected all spectrums of our lives of all ages, not discriminating between age, race, religion or ethnicity. Many of us lost relatives, family and friends or knew someone who was impacted by this devastating illness. This illness where it took a physical toll had an emotional consequence affecting mental illness.

The national statistics reflected increase in depression, anxiety, substance abuse and suicidal ideation in the past year with young adults, ethnic minorities, essential workers and unpaid adult caregiver reportedly having experienced disproportionately worse mental health.

APPNE stood strong to its commitment and continued to provide free mental health services throughout this pandemic helping the community and would continue to provide and assist with all the necessary resources to navigate through these challenges. The approval of vaccines seems to a light at the end of the tunnel, but it would be understatement to say that we are out of the woods. We as an organization are stronger than ever and ready to respond to any challenge that may come our way.

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## **Dr. Kimat Gul Khatak (February 19, 1937—January 7, 2021)**



On January 7, due to complications from Covid-19, Dr. Kimat Gul Khatak passed from this world. For the past 42 years, he practiced internal medicine and cardiology in Holyoke, MA, and continued to until the time of his death. During the course of his 47 years in the US, Dr. Khatak founded and led many Pakistani American and American Muslim organizations, all with the aim of empowering the next generation of Muslims and Pakistanis to succeed in their fields of work, and the civic life of this country. He was a founding member of APPNA and APPNE. This kind man, this thorough gentleman, this servant leader, this humble, warmhearted soul left an indelible mark on all those whose lives intersected, however briefly or enduringly, with his own. May his soul Rest In Peace.

Full memoriam dedicated by Nabeela Khatak is posted on our Facebook page.

# Black Lives Matter

Asimah Qayyum, MD

APPNE held a march in support of White Coat for Black Lives (WC4BL) on 6/14/2020 at the Boston Public Library.

Physicians in general, and we at APPNE in particular, feel that we have an obligation to use our platform and voice to empower, inspire and to speak for those who cannot. We stand for social justice and for an end to systemic racism. This is public health crisis, an economic, educational and a human rights crisis.

At this time in history, we are witnessing an intersection of two pandemics: COVID-19 and RACISM. Sadly, our communities of color are afflicted by both.

Everyone has a voice and role to play, so we would like to encourage you, our colleagues, to examine what platform they have, and think of ways to use it in order to help dismantle systemic racism. When it comes to trust, perhaps the greatest driver is visibly seeing clinicians and healthcare systems making heroic efforts to provide care to COVID-19 patients, regardless of personal gain. We owe this to our patients. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Salman Malik in taking the initiative and leadership role in organizing this rally with me.



#WhiteCoats4BlackLives rally  
Boston, Sunday 14 June 2020, 4 pm

*Standing in solidarity with allies around the country and the world to end systemic racism*

Police shootings claim an average of 1000 lives annually in the USA. Some killings involve no weapons at all. This year, police have already shot and killed the victims are disproportionately African American or Black. George Floyd's death was one among thousands in a continuous system of oppression. The perpetrators are rarely, if ever, punished, protected by the legal doctrine of qualified immunity.

We join physicians and health workers under the White Coats for Black Lives banner. This may be the first such demonstration in a public place, initiated by physicians from Pakistan and India, with allies from human rights and racial justice groups.

#### EVENT AGENDA 4-6 pm

- Land acknowledgment - Alicia Barrow, co-founder of Safe Spaces for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), Vermont
- Why this event - Dr Asimah Qayyum, infectious diseases specialist; Dr Salman Malik, oral surgeon
- Association of Pakistani Physicians of New England - Dr Yousuf Shaikh, President APPNE
- Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America - Dr Naheed Usmani, President APPNA
- Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (ANSWER) - Nino Brown
- Alliance for Secular and Democratic South Asia; The Boston Coalition - Dr Padma, physician
- The Journey of a Black woman physician - Dr Lachelle Weeks, oncologist
- Imamia Muslim Foundation Boston - Dr Zafar Naqvi, psychiatrist
- Massachusetts Peace Action - Rev. Vernon K. Walker
- CALL TO ACTION - Alicia Barrow
- View of a young American physician of Indian origin - Dr Raagini Jawa, physician
- Boston Youth Organizing Project - Phoenix
- Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) - Husayn / Parul
- Revolutionary United Front - Ryan Costello
- Families for Justice and Healing - Romilda
- A victim's mother speaks - Raheema Rahim; son Usamah, 26, killed by Boston police in 2015
- Say their names + 8min 46 sec - Alicia Barrow (RA MA da SA by Amanbir Singh)

The following organizations also endorse this rally but have not nominated speakers:  
\* Indian Medical Association of New England (IMANE) \* Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (ISBCC), Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) \* Aligarh Medical Alumni Association of North America (AMAANA) \* Boston Public Library Employees Union AFSCME (American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees) Local 1526 \* Hindus for Human Rights

Event moderator: Dr Khalil Khatri, past president Association of Pakistani Physicians of New England (APPNE)

# 2020 Year in Review

*Saud Javed, MD*

Past year had been quite different for APPNE as well as the entire world at large. The pandemic has been particularly taxing on our members who are working on the frontlines in the hospitals and other healthcare facilities. We could not be more prouder to be part of this incredible community. Unfortunately, we had to cancel our annual spring and fall meetings but we were able to arrange some events and programs using online platforms and socially distant gatherings.

- **Rutland State Park Picnic:** Past summer we held a picnic at Rutland State Park, MA. The picnic was incredibly successful and a great way to bring joy and fun during a trying time. Board also held a strategic meeting on the sidelines.
- **Webinar on “Implications for Telehealth in a Post-Pandemic Future”:** The webinar led by Carmel Shachar, JD, MPH from Harvard Law School and Adarsha Bajracharya, MD from UMass Memorial Medical Center. This interactive webinar helped Physicians understand the legal, regulatory and ethical considerations while implementing tele health in their daily workflow.
- **Free Flu Vaccination Clinics:** APPNE organized 7 flu vaccine clinics in RI, NH and MA where 104 people were vaccinated, out of which 29 people got the vaccine for the first time (27.8%). We are incredibly grateful to our Board Members who donated the vaccines and their time for this important cause.
- **Blood Donation Drive:** For the first time APPNE held a blood drive at the Islamic Center of Boston-Wayland in collaboration with American Red Cross where over 25 units of blood were collected. This will help 75 people who need different blood products. We plan on hosting more drives in the near future.
- **Covid-19 Relief Efforts:** We donated \$3500 to food pantries and shelters in NH, MA & RI to help our community members badly affected by the pandemic.
  - a. Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter, NH
  - b. Community Care Alliance, RI
  - c. Crossroads Homeless Shelter, RI
  - d. Natick Service Council, Inc, MA
  - e. Worcester Islamic Center, MA

# 2021 Activity Calendar

*Yousaf Shaikh, MD*

We are planning multiple social, educational and charitable activities in the year 2021 in accordance with our organization's goals and objectives and encourage everyone to join us. Dates of some of the programs may change and final schedule will be announced at a later date. More programs will be added.

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| 1. Webinar on Covid Vaccination        | Feb. 4th          | 2. Webinar on Sleep                     | March, 26th |
| 3. Blood Donation Drive                | May 29th          | 4. Outdoor Summer Meeting               | July 31st   |
| 5. Flu Vaccination Campaign            | Oct 1st-Nov. 30th | 6. Blood Donation Drive                 | Oct. 30th   |
| 7. High School Students Career Webinar | Dec. 16th         | 8. NICH ICU Equipment & HIV Fundraisers |             |

