APPNE ASSOCIATION OF PAKISTANI PHYSICIANS OF NEW ENGLAND

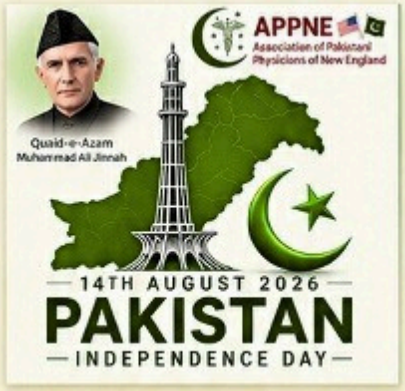
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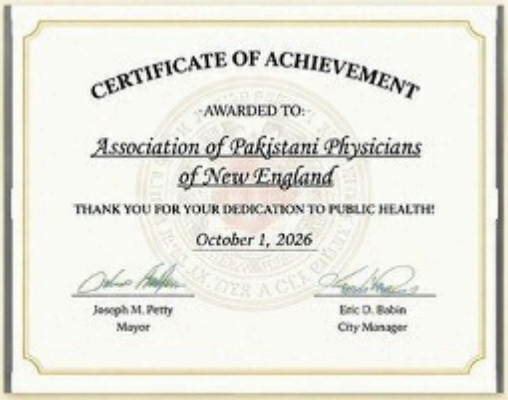
BOSTON MARRIOTT, BURLINGTON MA 10/31/26

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER OF APPNA



Causes Achievements Recognitions Celebrations



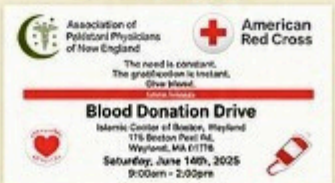


















APPNE BOARD 2024 - 2026

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Nida Arif Mirza MD
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A special thank you to all of our members for another great year!

Association of Pakistani Physicians of New England

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

RAFFIA QUTAB MD

LEADING WITH PURPOSE ADVOCATING WITH CONVICTION SERVING WITH COMPASSION

It is an immense honor and privilege to serve as President of the Association of Pakistani Physicians of New England (APPNE), an organization dedicated to public health, academic excellence, physician advocacy, and philanthropy.

Although our resources may be modest, our heart, vision, and commitment to serving humanity are boundless. I believe true leadership is measured not by the size of an organization, but by the lives it touches and the difference it makes.

Advocacy is especially close to my heart, particularly the work of empowering our younger generation through equitable policies, stronger support systems, and meaningful opportunities to excel. As a private practitioner and the current Vice Chair of the Private Practice Sustainability Section of the Massachusetts Medical Society, I witness firsthand the growing challenges facing physicians and patients—including Medicare reimbursement cuts, downcoding, prior authorization barriers, and administrative burdens that contribute to physician burnout and restrict access to care. We must advocate boldly for policies that protect patients, sustain independent medical practices, and empower the healthcare leaders of tomorrow.

New England is a hub of medical innovation and academic excellence. Massachusetts is home to the Massachusetts Medical Society, founded in 1781, reflecting our region's distinguished medical legacy. APPNE is committed to building on this tradition by strengthening our presence and expanding our impact across the community.

This year, we celebrated:
1- Pakistan's 80th Independence Day at Herter Park on the Charles River in Boston on August 1, 2026, with an enthusiastic response from the community.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CONTINUED

2- Annual Healthcare Day at the Worcester Islamic Center On September 27, 2026, in collaboration with APPNA and ICNA, demonstrated the power of partnership and service. Despite challenging weather, our volunteers served with remarkable dedication. We are grateful to ICNA New England for its continued support and to the Mayor of Worcester for joining us and subsequently issuing a Proclamation , recognizing APPNE's public health contributions.

3- Mental Health initiative, Recognizing the global mental health and suicide crisis, I was able to partnered with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), raising funds to support facilitator training for suicide-loss survivors. We will continue this collaboration and develop a suicide prevention resource toolkit to empower physicians and communities with essential knowledge and support.

Our work is far from over. We need more physicians, volunteers, and community partners to join our mission. We also invite generous contributions toward Deaf Reach, with a fundraising goal of $15,000, to advance this important cause.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our volunteers, donors, partners, and supporters. Your dedication fuels our progress. As President, I remain committed to leading with integrity, advocating with conviction, and serving with compassion.
Together, we can turn advocacy into action, compassion into change, and a shared vision into a lasting legacy.

With gratitude and determination,

President Raffia Qutab MD
Association of Pakistani Physicians of New England (APPNE)

Association of Pakistani Physicians of New England (APPNE)
Secretary's Annual Report

Syeda Maria Sayeed, MD, RhMSUS

Reporting Period: June 2025 – October 2026

The period from June 2025 through October 2026 marked continued growth, collaboration, and community engagement for the Association of Pakistani Physicians of New England (APPNE). Through educational programming, physician mentorship, professional development, charitable initiatives, public health outreach, and cultural celebrations, APPNE strengthened its commitment to serving physicians and the broader community.

1. Educational Webinars and Professional Development

APPNE continued to provide educational opportunities for physicians, medical trainees, and international medical graduates (IMGs). Key programs included:

• August 17, 2025: ERAS Application & Personal Statement 101.
• January 31, 2026: New Pathways to Practice Medicine in the U.S., in collaboration with the

APPNA Young Physicians Committee.

• May 23, 2026: AI in Healthcare and Medical Regulation, including credentialing and eligibility under the Massachusetts Physician Pathway Act.

• September 17, 2026: Healing the Healers, a multidisciplinary webinar addressing physician burnout, mental well-being, and suicide prevention, organized through the APPNA Liaison Committee in collaboration with other medical organizations.

• September 20, 2026: Adult Cyberbullying and Harassment: Its Mental Effects and What Are Your Rights? An interactive webinar addressing workplace harassment, psychological safety, moral injury, and legal protections. These programs reinforced APPNE's commitment to continuing education, physician advocacy, and professional well-being.

2. Physician Mentorship and IMG Support

APPNE continued its efforts to support international medical graduates through mentorship, observership opportunities, Mini-CEX evaluations, residency application guidance, and professional networking. These initiatives remained central to APPNE's mission of helping internationally trained physicians navigate pathways into the U.S. healthcare system.

3. 21st Annual APPNE Gala

On October 4, 2025, APPNE hosted its 21st Annual Gala at the Boston Marriott Burlington. The evening featured Dr. Fizza Gillani's presentation on HIV awareness and healthcare capacity building in Pakistan. APPNE recognized her contributions with its Public Health Leadership Award. The celebration concluded with a musical performance by renowned ghazal artist Ustad Hamid Ali Khan, bringing together members and families in an evening of professional recognition and cultural fellowship.

4. APPNE Board Meeting – January 2026

In January 2026, APPNE held a well-attended Board Meeting graciously hosted by Dr. Nida Rehan at her residence. Members engaged in productive discussions regarding upcoming projects, strategic priorities, and future initiatives, reaffirming their commitment to APPNE's mission of education, collaboration, and community service.

5. Community Blood Donation Drives

APPNE continued its longstanding partnership with the American Red Cross through its semiannual blood donation initiative at the Islamic Center of Boston in Wayland, Massachusetts. On July 19, 2026, APPNE organized another successful blood drive, continuing an initiative established in 2020. The event demonstrated APPNE's commitment to addressing blood shortages and promoting community participation in lifesaving public health initiatives. APPNE extends its appreciation to the donors, volunteers, and American Red Cross team.

6. Community Health Fairs and Medical Outreach

APPNE expanded its community health outreach through collaborative health fairs offering free medical screenings, physician consultations, and healthcare guidance.

July 12, 2026 – ICNA Relief Community Health Fair

APPNE participated in community health outreach organized in collaboration with ICNA Relief and the Islamic Center of New England, serving communities in Sharon and Quincy, Massachusetts.

September 27, 2026 – Annual Community Health Fair, Worcester

APPNE collaborated with APPNA, ICNA Relief, and the Worcester Islamic Center to provide free healthcare services and consultations. Despite severe weather conditions, the event attracted community members seeking medical guidance and access to healthcare resources. The event also welcomed Worcester Mayor Joe Petty, highlighting the importance of collaboration between healthcare professionals, community organizations, and civic leadership.

7. Pakistan Independence Day Celebration

On August 1, 2026, APPNE organized a Pakistan Independence Day celebration at Herter Park in Boston. The family-oriented gathering featured traditional food, live music, cultural performances, national songs, cricket, children's activities, and opportunities for community fellowship. The celebration brought together physicians, families, and friends to honor Pakistani heritage while strengthening cultural connections within the New England community.

8. Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention

APPNE expanded its commitment to physician wellness and community mental health through educational advocacy and active participation in suicide prevention initiatives.

September 17, 2026 – Healing the Healers

APPNE participated in a collaborative national educational webinar focusing on physician burnout, systemic challenges affecting healthcare professionals, and strategies to support mental well-being.
September 26, 2026 – American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Walk

Association of Pakistani Physicians of New England

2025 Income & Expense Reconciliation Report

records | January 1-December 31, 2025

This report consolidates the accounting export, Citizens Bank statements, Stripe summary, invoices, receipts, contracts, payment confirmations, and check images.

Executive summary

Measure	Amount	Comment
Known categorized income	$18,025.44	Conference income, donations, and membership fees
Conference sponsorship	$4,550.00	Separate accounting category; not included in the $18,025.44 subtotal.
Total income including sponsorship	$22,575.44	Useful bookkeeping subtotal, but not necessarily total 2025 gross revenue.
Citizens Bank deposits & credits for 2025	$42,137.82	Cash inflows to the bank. Includes payment-processor transfers and therefore must not be added to processor gross receipts again.
Stripe 2025 gross activity	$13,385.00	Processor activity before fees; Stripe payouts appear in Citizens Bank and are therefore part of the de-duplication issue.
Identified 2025 expenses	$44,313.17	expense categories plus reconciled conference/event expenses; excludes the $300 refundable deposit and avoids double-counting wire fees.

Income detail

Category	Amount	Source-based note
Conference income	$12,055.00	63 entries recorded to Conference Income, primarily September-October 2025.
Conference sponsorship	$4,550.00	Recorded separately from Conference Income in the accounting export.
Donations (see below)	$5,820.44	5 receipts from American Online Giving Foundation.
Membership fees	$150.00	3 annual membership receipts of $50 each.
UMass Scholarship income	Not available	
Uncategorized Income	Not available	

Known categorized income including sponsorship: $22,575.44.

Donation detail

Date	Amount	Description
01/02/2025	$1,939.00	American Online Giving Foundation
05/30/2025	$50.00	American Online Giving Foundation
09/30/2025	$580.35	American Online Giving Foundation
10/28/2025	$2,393.36	American Online Giving Foundation
11/28/2025	$857.73	American Online Giving Foundation

Citizens Bank cash-inflow reconciliation

Month	Citizens deposits & credits
January	$1,939.00
February	$5,174.88
March	$0.00
April	$173.82
May	$2,733.39

Month	Citizens deposits & credits
June	$0.00
July	$0.00
August	$0.00
September	$6,173.73
October	$24,304.90
November	$859.44
December	$778.66
TOTAL	$42,137.82

Important: The $42,137.82 total is the sum of deposits and credits appearing on the Citizens statements. It **includes transfers from Stripe and PayPal** and therefore is a cash-inflow total.

Expense categories

Category	Amount	Source-based note
Bank Fees	$60.00	Two $30 wire-transfer service charges.
Charitable Contributions - Victims of flood in Pakistan	No donations to flood relief	
Charitable Contributions - UMass Chan medical school scholarship	$10,000.00	Payment to UMass Chan Medical School Foundation; memo: APPNE Scholarship.
Charitable Contributions - Soup kitchen	Not done	
Dues & subscriptions	$329.88	GoDaddy: $239.88 website security renewal + $90.00 SSL renewal.
Insurance	$880.00	Davis & Towle Group Inc.
Legal & Professional Fees	$960.00	APPNE website maintenance.
PayPal Fees - primary fee account	$257.63	53 fee entries in the primary PayPal fee account.
PayPal Merchant Fees - possible overlap	$7.45	Five additional $1.49 entries; some appear to overlap the primary PayPal fee postings. Not included in the identified-expense total pending accountant review.

Requested-category subtotal used in this report: $12,487.51. This counts the UMass $10,000 payment and uses the primary PayPal fee account ($257.63). The separate $7.45 PayPal Merchant Fees balance is shown for review but not added because of the apparent overlap.

Conference and other 2025 event expenses

Date	Vendor / purpose	Amount	Reconciliation note
02/13 & 04/28	Grace Chapel - venue rental	$2,580.00	Citizens outflows total $2,580; invoice identifies $2,280 rental + $300 refundable security deposit.
05/17 / cleared 05/19	Grace Chapel - AV help, check 1098	$150.00	AV help Grace Chapel.
05/17 / cleared 05/19	Celia Macedo - event help, check 1099	$215.00	helper APPNE function
05/17 / cleared 05/19	Angelica Sousa - APPNE helper, check 1100	$175.00	helper APPNE function
05/17 / cleared 05/19	Natalia de Silva - APPNE helper, check 1101	$175.00	helper APPNE function
05/27	Irfan Asghar - registration reimbursement, check 1102	$1,000.00	Memo: Marriott Hilton Registration Reimbursement. Bank cleared $1,000
06/23	Manosalwas - APPNE Spring Event catering, check 1103	$1,675.00	
09/11 & 10/06	Be United / Ustad Hamid Ali Khan performance	$8,500.00	Contract calls for $4,000 + $4,500. Citizens wires to Qasim Wali. Two $30 wire fees are already in Bank Fees and are not re-added here.
09/25 receipt / 10/27 clearing	Engraveables - public health leadership award, check 5015	$143.44	
09/29 invoice / 10/15 clearing	Formatt Printing - annual program, check 1106	$1,450.92	
10/04 event / 10/16 payment	Boston Marriott Burlington - annual dinner	$13,611.30	Final amount paid $13,611.30; matches Citizens check 1105.
10/05	Live Sound Engineering - gala sound system, check 1104	$1,400.00	
10/04 / cleared 10/14	Khan Designs - audiovisual, check 1107	$500.00	Audiovisual APPNE 2025.
10/04 / cleared 10/07	Maheen Tariq - babysitting, check 1108	$200.00	Babysitting APPNE 2025.

Date	Vendor / purpose	Amount	Reconciliation note
10/10 payment	YaaR Events - annual event decor/backdrops, check 5014	$350.00	

Conference/other event expense subtotal: $32,125.66.

Check-image reconciliation

Check #	Written date	Payee	Memo / purpose	Bank amount	Cleared
1098	05/17/2025	Grace Chapel	AV help Grace Chapel	$150.00	05/19/2025
1099	05/17/2025	Celia Macedo	Help APPNE function	$215.00	05/19/2025
1100	05/17/2025	Angelica Sousa	APPNE helper	$175.00	05/19/2025
1101	05/17/2025	Natalia de Silva	APPNE helper	$175.00	05/19/2025
1102	05/27/2025	Irfan Asghar	Marriott Hilton Registration Reimbursement	$1,000.00	05/27/2025
1103	06/15/2025	Manosalwas	APPNE Spring Event	$1,675.00	06/23/2025
1104	10/04/2025	Live Sound Engineering / Jawed Wahid	Gala sound system	$1,400.00	10/10/2025
1105	10/19/2025	Irfan Asghar	APPNE Marriott payment - Acct. 32122	$13,611.30	10/20/2025
1106	10/04/2025	Formatt Printing	Magazine/program printing APPNE 2025	$1,451.00	10/15/2025
1107	10/04/2025	Khan Designs	Audiovisual APPNE 2025	$500.00	10/14/2025
1108	10/04/2025	Maheen Tariq	Babysitting APPNE 2025	$200.00	10/07/2025
5014	10/2025	YaaR Events	APPNE annual event decor	$350.00	10/14/2025
5015	10/2025	Engraveables	APPNE award	$143.44	10/27/2025

Reconciled expense total

Component	Amount
Originally requested expense categories (adjusted to avoid duplicate UMass and overlapping PayPal fees)	$12,487.51
Conference and other event expenses	$31,825.66
Total identified 2025 expenses	$44,313.17

APPNE THANKS MAYOR OF WORCESTER HONORABLE JOE PETTY FOR JOINING US

AT APPNE ANNUAL HEALTH CARE DAY

IN COLLABORATION WITH

APPNA , ICNA AND WIC







PROCLAMATION FROM HONORABLE MAYOR JOE PETTY FOR APPNE ANNUAL HEALTH CARE DAY 9/27/26







APPNE
Association of Pakistani Physicians of New England

APPNA
Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America



WIC WORCESTER ISLAMIC CENTER
المركز الإسلامي في وستر



MUSLIMS FOR HUMANITY
ICNARelief













Past, Present and Future of HIV in Pakistan: Are We Only Seeing the Tip of the Iceberg

Nida A. Mirza, MD

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a retrovirus that attacks CD4 T lymphocytes and progressively weakens the immune system without treatment. It is transmitted through certain body fluids, most commonly through unprotected sexual contact, shared injection equipment, unsafe blood or medical procedures, and from mother to child during pregnancy, delivery, or breastfeeding. HIV is not spread through ordinary social contact, food, water, or insect bites. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is the most advanced stage of untreated infection. Although there is no cure, effective antiretroviral therapy can suppress the virus, preserve immune function, and enable people with HIV to live long, healthy lives. A person with an undetectable viral load does not sexually transmit HIV—a principle known as Undetectable = Untransmittable, or U=U.

Globally, advances in testing, treatment, and prevention have reduced new HIV infections since their mid-1990s peak; Pakistan, however, is moving in the opposite direction. The country's first reported HIV case occurred in 1987. WHO and UNAIDS estimated that approximately 350,000 people were living with HIV in Pakistan in 2024, nearly 80% unaware of their status. Annual new infections rose from 16,000 in 2010 to 48,000 in 2024. This widening gap between infection, diagnosis, and treatment sustains transmission and obscures the epidemic's true scale.

Pakistan's epidemic first became visible among people who inject drugs, including an early outbreak in Larkana, Sindh, in 2004. Surveillance later documented infection among men who have sex with men, transgender people, and male and female sex workers. Over time, infections increasingly appeared among spouses, children, and people without recognized behavioral risk factors, suggesting transmission through sexual networks, unsafe injections, inadequately screened blood, poorly regulated medical care, and reused or contaminated instruments.

Repeated outbreaks demonstrate how unsafe healthcare can amplify transmission. In 2018, an outbreak near Kot Momin, Punjab, led to hundreds of diagnoses. In Ratodero, Larkana District, more than 30,000 people were screened between April and June 2019; 876 tested positive, approximately 82% of them children younger than 15. Investigators linked cases to repeated injections and infusions, blood transfusions, surgery, maternal HIV infection, and frequent healthcare visits.

More recent events show that these vulnerabilities remain unresolved. In June 2025, eight dialysis patients at Abbas Institute of Medical Sciences Hospital in Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, were confirmed HIV-positive. The attack rate was 6.7% across the dialysis unit and 27.6% in the section serving patients with hepatitis B or C. Investigators documented inadequate machine disinfection, glove reuse or omission, inconsistent hand hygiene, and unsafe medical-waste practices.

Past, Present and Future of HIV in Pakistan: Are We Only Seeing the Tip of the Iceberg

Continued

A pediatric cluster subsequently emerged at Kulsum Bai Valika Hospital in Karachi. The first six infections were reported to provincial authorities in October 2025. By July 2026, screening of more than 10,500 people at and around the hospital had identified at least 120 HIV-positive individuals, with 10 additional cases at another Sindh Employees' Social Security Institution facility; most affected were children. Internal inquiries cited weak infection-prevention protocols, improper handling of single-use syringes, inadequate supervision, and poor biomedical-waste management. One inquiry confirmed 78 infections and six deaths before continued screening raised the reported total.

In Taunsa, Punjab, more than 330 pediatric HIV infections were reported between late 2024 and early 2025; approximately three quarters involved children younger than five. Because few mothers of affected children were living with HIV, mother-to-child transmission was considered unlikely to explain most cases. Investigators instead pointed to unsafe injections, blood transfusions, reused infusion or injection equipment, and broader failures in infection prevention. These outbreaks raise an urgent question: are they isolated clusters, or visible portions of a much larger network of undiagnosed transmission?

Pakistan's enormous hepatitis B and C burden provides a warning. HIV and viral hepatitis share bloodborne routes, including unsafe injections, inadequately screened blood, dialysis exposure, and contaminated instruments. HIV may be following a similar path where infection-control systems are weak and surveillance incomplete.

Pakistan therefore needs a coordinated strategy combining prevention, screening, treatment, and health-system accountability. Testing should remain focused on key populations while also being offered during prenatal care, dialysis, hepatitis evaluation, frequent transfusion care, and other blood-exposure encounters. Every positive result requires prompt antiretroviral therapy, retention in care, viral-load monitoring, and testing of partners and exposed family members.

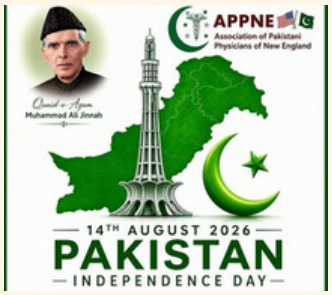
Screening alone will not stop healthcare-associated transmission. Pakistan must enforce safe-injection standards, regulate blood banks and informal providers, ensure sterilization and safe medical-waste management, and require infection-control audits. Surveillance should rapidly identify pediatric or facility-based clusters and trigger coordinated investigation. Public education must reduce stigma, emphasize that HIV is treatable, explain how it is—and is not—transmitted, and reinforce that sustained viral suppression prevents sexual transmission.

Pakistan's HIV epidemic is no longer a distant threat limited to a few populations. Widespread testing, immediate treatment, rigorous infection prevention, safe blood and injection practices, integrated HIV-hepatitis services, and sustained efforts to reduce stigma are necessary. Without decisive action, detected outbreaks may represent only the tip of the iceberg.

APPNE PAKISTAN INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION BRIDGING WITH THE COMMUNITY OF NEW ENGLAND



Dil Dil Pakistan









08/01/2026 , 12-4 pm
APPNE Celebrated Together Pakistan Independence Day with families and friends Wearing Green and White Dresses, Halwa puri brunch , Holding Pakistan's Flags , Singing Milli Taranaas ,
At The Riverstage at Herter Park Charles River Boston mA







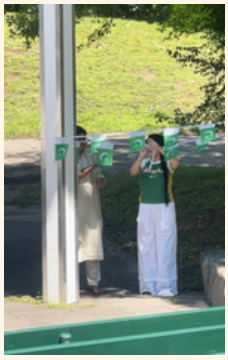


DIL DIL PAKISTAN































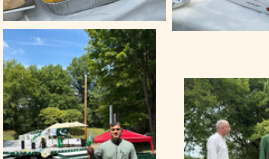










HIV Awareness, Prevention, and Education in Pakistan

Addressing the Need: Past Accomplishments, Current Initiatives, and Future Directions

Dr. Fiza Gillani

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the APPNA-MERIT HIV Committee's work since its inception, covering all past projects, current activities, and future projects. It also introduces the HIV Education project, developed by a dedicated team of healthcare professionals in response to rising HIV transmission in Pakistan. The project urges healthcare professionals, educators, and policymakers to reverse the epidemic's trajectory and presents a distinctive capacity-building approach in its 2025 book.

Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA)-the Medical Education and Research Investment Task Force (MERIT) HIV Committee Report

History of the HIV Awareness, Prevention, and Education project in Pakistan: Dr. Gillani, an HIV researcher at Brown University, began exploring the HIV situation in Pakistan in the early 2010s. On April 20, 2019, at APPNE's annual conference, she proposed an HIV education project in northern Pakistan to involve young Pakistani physicians in volunteer research.

A week later, she was flooded with messages about an HIV outbreak in Larkana, where dozens of children were being diagnosed. A local physician asked her directly for help educating local area doctors, and APPNA colleagues urged her to support them. The situation was grim: a pediatrician had been jailed on suspicion of infecting hundreds of children, families were abandoning newly diagnosed babies, and a newly diagnosed woman was murdered by her HIV-negative husband.

In response, Dr. Gillani launched weekly virtual HIV education sessions for healthcare professionals in Larkana. After six well-attended sessions, the project paused, but a later visit to Larkana with a World Health Organization team renewed her commitment. What began as a small response grew into a multi-phase initiative with partners in Pakistan and the United States.

Phase 1: HIV/AIDS Communication Project – Sindh (2019–2020). Six sessions for healthcare providers in Sindh, delivered in collaboration with colleagues from Providence-Boston Center for AIDS Research (Prov-Bos CFAR), Brown University's Infectious Disease Division, APPNE physicians, and the Sindh Medical College Alumni group. **Phase 2: APPNA-MERIT HIV Committee (January 2021).**Founded with Dr. Gillani as chair, under APPNA's Medical Education, Research, Training, and Transfer of Technology (MERIT) program, to strengthen HIV care, reduce stigma, and prevent new transmissions.

Phase 3: HIV Awareness, Prevention, and Education Project (May 2021–January 2023). The Common Management Unit in Islamabad requested another HIV education course for the healthcare providers in Pakistan; in response, the committee delivered 18 intensive sessions, in collaboration with APPNE, Prov-Bos CFAR, MMIDSP, and PSIM.

Phase 4: APPNA-MERIT HIV Certification Course (December 2024–May 2025). Pakistan's first HIV certification course for healthcare providers: 12 sessions, more than 100 certified participants, and still available on the MERIT Academy platform.

Together, the three courses offered 36 sessions (over 72 hours) to more than 700 providers from over 40 institutions in Pakistan, the US, and other countries. They also produced three journal editorials, two World AIDS Day reports, a full research paper, a short report in JPSIM, a few magazine articles, and several student projects. educators, researchers, and development partners.

Phase 5: Book (September 2025). Dr. Gillani published Building HIV Care Capacity in Pakistan: Leveraging Insights from a Joint US-Pakistani Project. Its thirteen chapters combine US expert insights with Pakistani field experience, cover topics from testing to program implementation, include participant survey data, and close with a Build Capacity Framework for Pakistan. It is written for clinicians, public health professionals, book has been well received in Pakistan and was launched at eight educational institutions during World AIDS Day activities in December 2025

Phase 6: Present and future (January 2026 onwards): The APPNA-MERIT HIV Committee, now led by Dr. Saima Abbasfollowing Dr. Gillani's tenure as chairperson through December 2025, is entering a new phase. Several projects are being designed around a few urgent priorities:

1. Raising HIV awareness among primary care doctors in Pakistan: Led by Dr. Aisha Khan, this initiative held a highly appreciated first session, with more to follow.

2. Strengthening the HIV care cascade: from confidential diagnosis through viral suppression, to ensure that people living with HIV receive timely, continuous, high-quality carein safe, nondiscriminatory settings.

3. Eliminating iatrogenic HIV transmission: by driving measurable improvements in infection control practices across healthcare settings in Pakistan.

4. Build capacity in the US. In July, our committee held a session for all APPNA physicians at the APPNA conference in Orlando. Dr. Abbas also gave a CME lecture to the APPNA dental group to engage the dental community in Pakistan.

5. During her visit to Pakistan in October 2026, Dr. Abbas conducted 5 sessions at local medical and dental colleges in Lahore to educate about occupational safety and to decrease stigma and fear in health care workers regarding HIV transmission.

The main goal is to build connections with academia and facilitate the proposed capacity-building model, which links ART centers with medical colleges in Pakistan. We welcome healthcare professionals, educators, and supporters to join our team, either by leading a project or participating in our ongoing initiatives.

Report By:

1) Fizza S. Gillani, PhD, Founder of APPNA MERIT HIV Committee & Former Chairperson, Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Rhode Island, USA
2) Saima Abbas, MD: Chairperson, APPNA MERIT HIV Committee, Infectious Disease Physician, Florida, USA
3) Aisha Khan, DO: Co-Chairperson, Infectious Disease Physician, Florida, USA
4) Nida Arif, MD: Co-Chairperson, Infectious Disease Physician, New Hampshire, USA

Finding Gratification in Gardening



I used to do some gardening back in Pakistan when I was a high school student, and I always thought about it after I moved to the U.S. However, between my profession and family (I'm a mom of three kids and a wife), it was hard for me to continue my hobby with my busy schedule.

I moved to the beautiful state of Massachusetts a few years back and looked around my lovely neighborhood in Lexington, where everyone had beautiful yards. Last summer, my lawn needed some well-deserved TLC. The grass was almost five feet tall, my lawn mower cancelled on me multiple times, and I got tired of it. Suddenly, I decided I would take care of it on my own.





I asked my colleagues who had some experience in this area and got tips on basic lawn care equipment to buy. I purchased an electric lawn mower, an edge trimmer, and a few other tools, put on my gardening gloves, safety goggles, and rain boots, and never looked back since then.



Lawn care became my daily routine since May 2022. Every evening I spend 30 minutes to an hour in my yard. That's one of the best times of my day when I feel fully relaxed, calm, and close to nature. I am not going to lie, gardening is a lot of work. It's like a workout each day! Weeding, seeding, fertilizing, mowing, clipping, raking — the list goes on and on. However, I divided my work, accomplished small goals each day, and in a very short period of time, I was able to maintain a beautiful green lawn.



I enjoy staying close to nature and watching blooming flowers, butterflies, and bees helping to pollinate in my absence, like a little army working for me. In addition to that, my neighbors come out at the same time to work in their yards. We gardeners talk with each other and share tips, plants, and vegetables. This activity nurtures my soul, teaches me simplicity, humbleness, love, and care for others! It's the "me" time that I was always looking for.



Enjoying my hobby each day is like meditation for me. My gardening keeps me motivated and happy all day, no matter how tough my day is. This summer I learned so much about soil and grass types, fertilizers, varieties of plants and shrubs, and pest and critter control. It was interesting to know how much science is involved in this field.





Now, I enjoy my garden with my beautiful family every single day, and everyone in my family helps me in the garden. I highly encourage every caregiver to have a hobby in their schedule to avoid burnout and stress. Don't wait for the perfect day or moment to come — just get up and start working on it like I did. I am sure you will enjoy it the same way as I do!

Tayyaba

APPNE WALKED ON 09/26/26 TO BRING AWARENESSAND TO PRVENT SUICIDE

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Starting this yearas President of APPNE (Associationof Pakistani Physicians of New England) one of my initiative is to support Mental Well-being and Suicide Prevention. Mental health touches every single one of us.

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On 09/26/2026 I Invited APPNE to join me and AFSP to walk with us as an advocacy group to support this mission. We wanted to ensure no one faces their struggle alone.

WE WALKED TO RAISE

awareness andsupportforthisverycloseto my heart AmericanFoundationfor SuicidePrevention(AFSP),fundingresearch, education, advocacy, and support for those affected by suicide.

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Raffia Qutab MD







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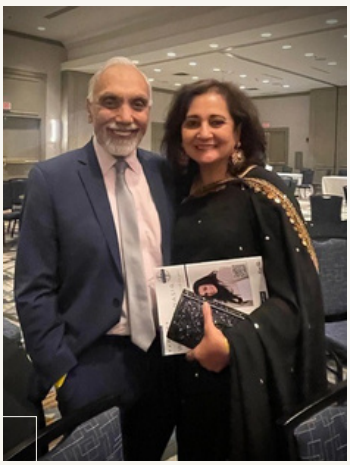


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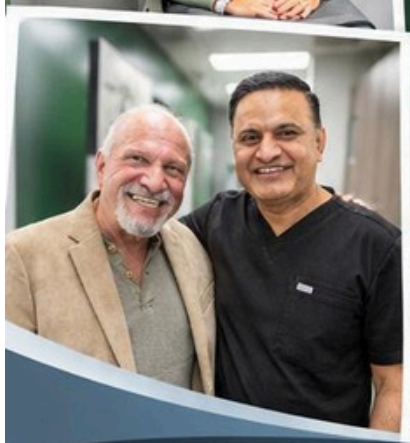


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