

Dear APPNA Members,

The 2017 started with fresh ideas, motivation to give back to the community and strengthen APPNA's foundation and potential. As president I tried my best to gather a team of volunteers who are foot soldiers and team leaders. I also wanted to choose the venue of the spring and Fall meetings to places which have not hosted an APPNA meeting in past so that Local APPNA members can become involved in Central APPNA activities as well. Dr. Haroon Durrani is not just a dear friend but also the perfect man for the post of Chair of Spring meeting. He has chosen his team very well and I am endlessly grateful to the Spring Host Committee for their hard work, and labor of love in putting this event together. I couldn't have asked for a better group of volunteers.

This is the Era of collaboration, building bridges and creating alliances. APPNA needs a stronger foundation in order to expand its work in the communities and make a positive impact. We are exploring liaison with Medtronic which is the world's leading medical technology company, and it offers technologies, solutions and therapies to treat a wide range of medical conditions, including cardiac and vascular diseases, respiratory, neurological and spinal conditions, diabetes, and various other disease conditions. A Delegate comprising of Chair of Resource & Development Committee, Dr. Atique Mirza and other APPNA/APCNA members traveled to Minnesota for a meeting with CEO, Vice president and senior staff at Medtronic's head office on Feb 16--17. The members of the delegation discussed various important opportunities and possibility of working together with emphasis on promoting scientific training and education in the field of medicine, for physicians and paramedical professionals. There are options to further explore and support professional development and to promote altruistic work in the healthcare sector for communities in USA and Pakistan. The discussion will continue and I will keep you apprised.

We are also building bridges in USA through our projects with APPNA Free Clinics, Healthcare day and Civic Engagement endeavors which reflect the spirit of Community Service by APPNA members and can dissipate any negative impression related to our Ethnic or Religious background. We need to be more visible and be recognized as people of peace and compassion. We need to build a legacy in our adopted homeland which will enable us and our children to live with pride and confidence. Thus the theme of this year is "*Civic engagement through Community service*". This theme was created to send the message that APPNA is ready to broaden its horizon and get actively involved in community projects throughout USA and engage local communities through provision of healthcare services, a friendly dialogue and foster a sense of brotherhood among fellow citizens.

These are taxing times for immigrants in general and Muslim immigrants in particular. There is a lot of uncertainty as people are reluctant to travel and visit their families in Pakistan in the light of recent events and changes to immigration policies. There is a serious concern that naturalized citizens of Pakistani origin may face hardship during travel and it will be more difficult to acquire a J-1 or H1-B visa by IMG from Pakistan or obtaining visit visas for families.

APPNA has been proactive in taking constructive steps to address the current issue at hand. Chair of Advocacy committee, Dr. Rashid Piracha and his team have had several teleconferences to discuss and formulate a comprehensive plan of action. A multi-prong approach was devised to deal with the challenge at hand but the plan is only successful if the APPNA members will pitch in with financial and logistic support. Members will need to reach out to their local legislators and discuss their concerns. A letter was drafted by the Advocacy committee which contains some talking points and can be emailed or mailed to the legislators as well as discussed in person. The letter has been uploaded on the **Advocacy page** on the **APPNA website** (WWW.APPNA.ORG) at "Sample Legislative Letter" and can be downloaded and used to contact your local representatives. If there was ever a time to for Physicians of Pakistani Descent to come together in unity and join hands together in an effort to safeguard our civil rights, then this is it!

Last but not the least; APPNA can do better in engaging our younger generation of Physicians to become more involved infuse new ideas and lead our organization into a brighter future. NAMA Graduates and our youth are the future leaders of APPNA, our communities and our Country. I call upon members who are parents of NAMA Graduates to encourage their children to participate in APPNA. There are many programs to choose from such as Free Clinics, Medical Missions and Healthcare Day and Health Awareness programs or they can initiate one on their own if they want. All they need to do is to write to us and tell us what they want to do from APPNA's platform and they will be accommodated.

In past many years I have heard people ask the popular question, "What does APPNA do" or "why doesn't APPNA do this or that?" Friends! APPNA is all of us: APPNA is its members, the selfless volunteers, foot soldiers and trailblazers. Please feel free to visit APPNA's website to get more information about endeavors and projects, attend the Council and General body meetings and give your feedback and participate in local ventures. You can only change course of things if you are an active participant. Finally a humble request, if you are not a lifetime member kindly renew your annual membership and encourage others who are not yet a member.

Sincerely,

Sajid Chaudhary, MD

President APPNA 2017

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