

November 19-25, 2011

TheSouthAsianTimes.info

## New Jersey to address healthcare disparities among South Asians

By Ashok Ojha/SATimes

**New Brunswick, NJ:** Robert Wood Johnson Medical School's Department of Pediatrics is spearheading a program called 'The South Asian Total Healthcare Initiative (SATHI)' to reach out to South Asian communities to address their unique health issues. At a recent SATHI event here, leading healthcare professionals discussed health issues faced by the community. The discussion was led by six-time Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula, prime mover behind SATHI.

"Our goal is to improve delivery of culturally competent healthcare and information about total health for our people," said Chivukula emphasizing the need to engage, educate and empower the community about precautionary measures and treatment for diseases more common in the community.



*NJ Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula (second from right) with SATHI team. Also seen (from right) Dr. Naveen Mehrotra, Dr. Aparna Kalbag, Dr. Sunanda Gaur, Dr. Robert Like. (Photo by Ashok Ojha).*

Stephen Jones, President & CEO of RWJ University Hospital, said that his institution was fully aware of the 'changing needs of families whom we serve.' "RWJ hospital encourages wellness to everyone

and makes sure that multicultural population received information and healthcare services to meet their needs."

Expressing his confidence in SATHI's projects, Dr. Peter

Amenta, Dean of UMDNJ-RWJ Medical School said that he was hopeful that its findings will help shape healthcare policies in the state. Sudha Sharma, who represented the Office of Minority and Multicultural Health in NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, said that cancer and diabetes were top health challenges for the South Asians. "NJ Department of Health will favorably consider SATHI's recommendations."

Speakers at the event agreed on the need to increase healthcare providers' understanding of medical pluralism and the use of integrative healing modalities in the South Asian community. They also agreed that health providers should improve professional and consumer knowledge about the risks, benefits, effectiveness, and outcomes of complementary and alternative medicine and negotiating acceptable treatment plans,

SATHI insists that health care providers should provide training for medical and nursing staff about cultural competency, health disparities and health literacy. Dr. Sunanda Gaur, Director of SATHI and Dr. Naveen Mehrotra, its former co-director provided an overview of community outreach activities led by the organization.

Dr. Aparna Kalbag, Office of Global Health, RWJ Medical School, stressed three pronged strategy to address health issues among the community. "We need to work with policymakers, researchers and the families to create momentum for fighting common diseases in the community." She said adding that health professionals should find ways to integrate complementary and alternative medicine with modern medicine to facilitate culturally competent health services to the South Asians.

## SEC wants to quiz Rajaratnam in Gupta case

**New York:** US regulator Securities and Exchange Commission wants to question convicted hedge fund founder Raj Rajaratnam, his brothers as well as Goldman Sachs board members in the insider trading lawsuit it has filed against former Indian-American McKinsey head Rajat Gupta.

SEC lawyer Kevin McGrath has told US District Judge Jed Rakoff the regulator wants to call as witnesses Rajaratnam, "one or both" of his brothers as well as "current and former employees" of Goldman Sachs and Procter and Gamble at Gupta's civil trial, which is scheduled to begin on October 1, 2012. "We have a long list of witnesses including the defendant and one or both of Rajaratnam's brothers," McGrath said.

Rajaratnam's brother Rengan was listed by federal prosecutors as an unindicted co-conspirator during Rajaratnam's criminal trial.

His other brother has been identified as Ragakanthan Rajaratnam. Neither of the brothers

has been charged with criminal wrongdoing.

McGrath told the Manhattan district court last week that the SEC would also seek to call as witnesses and question under oath Goldman Sachs and Procter & Gamble board members.

Rakoff has asked Gupta's lawyers and SEC attorneys to submit a list of their "top 10" witnesses whom they would want to question under oath. The judge said he would take a decision by the end of the year on whether to allow the interviews to be conducted before Gupta's criminal trial in the insider trading case slated to begin in April next year.

McGrath has argued in court that depositions in the civil case should be delayed until after Gupta's criminal trial as there may not be a need to conduct depositions of some individuals if they testify at Gupta's criminal trial.

Gupta's lawyer Gary Naftalis has said that depositions should proceed now, saying the SEC had made prior "tactical" decisions about when and where to bring a case against Gupta.

## Singer Saavritri Ramanand honored

**New York:** The Indian Center inducted renowned singer Guru Saavritri Ramanand into its hall of fame at its Fifth Annual Saraswati Classical Arts Festival on November 12 at the Baruch Performing Arts Center.

Chief Guest Ashok Vyas spoke of Saavritri's immense contribution to Indian culture and her continuing efforts to promote Indian classical dance and music.

A child prodigy Saavritri started learning Carnatic music and the tender age of three and went on to win the All India Radio Light Music Competition and was given an award by the late President



*The highlight of the evening was an hour long ballet 'Om Krishnay Namah' choreographed by Guru Mala Desai and performed by her youngest students.*

Radhakrishnan.

A singer and dance choreographer Saavritri has performed in India, UAE, UK and the US.

Students from various schools in the tri state area presented Carnatic music, instrumental music,

Kathak, Odissi and Bharat Natyam items at the day-long festival.

The highlight of the evening was a one hour ballet on Krishna choreographed by Guru Mala Desai and performed by her youngest students.

## New reality TV show to focus on Muslim Americans

**Washington:** "All-American Muslim," which premieres Sunday on the TLC cable channel, lifts the veil on five Arab American families in a suburb of Detroit, Michigan and finds their lives are, in many ways, not so un-American at all.

In the Amen family, there is this outspoken tattooed daughter Shadia is engaged to an Irish American from Chicago who accepts her family's request to convert to Islam on the eve of their wedding – and upsets his Catholic mother.

Newlywed Nader and Nawal Aoude embrace teamwork like a new-age couple as they prepare for the birth of their first child, even as



*The entire cast of All-American Muslim*

they adhere to a devout Islamic lifestyle.

Nina Bazy is a glamorous blond party planner on a collision course

with both her traditional-minded parents and the wider community over her bold plan to open her own trendy nightclub.

Mike Jaafar upholds the law as Dearborn's deputy chief sheriff, while his wife Angela tries to keep their four high-strung children in line in one of those big suburban houses that signifies the American dream.

And the patriarch of the Zaban family, Fouad "Haj Walker" Zaban, is as passionate about his religious obligations as he is about leading the high school football team he coaches to the Michigan state championship.

All five families live in Dearborn, an industrial city of 100,000 that may be better known for North America's biggest mosque than for being the home of the Ford Motor Company.

Earlier this year, a Public Religion Research Institute survey indicated that nearly one in two Americans felt uncomfortable at the sight of women in burqas or a group of men praying to Allah in an airport.

Sixty-eight per cent said they seldom or never interacted with Muslims, and 47 per cent thought Islamic values don't jibe with American ones.

On the other hand, a concurrent Pew Research Center poll revealed that 48 percent of Muslim Americans think other Americans are generally friendly to them.

Muslims were also more satisfied with the way the United States is going.