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Indian Americans in Houston Fight Cancer

By ANU RAO &
GAYATHRI KONGOVI

HOUSTON: Cancer is a major health concern among Indian Americans as it has touched the life of almost everyone either through a relative, friend or an acquaintance. Cancer diagnosis can be frightening and devastating. Though there is help from relatives and friends, there is no central support system or a resource network in the community that addresses the unique social, ethnic and cultural needs of Indian Americans living in the Houston Metropolitan Area.

The Indian community is the fastest growing Asian group in the United States. Indian Americans represent the second largest group in Houston and continue to grow.

A new and disturbing trend in the data provided by the Texas Cancer Registry shows that Asian Indians have the highest incidence of cancer amongst Asians in Harris, Fort Bend and Montgomery counties.

The Indian American Cancer Network, also known as IACAN, was conceptualized about a year and a

half ago. With support and encouragement from the American Cancer Society, Asian Cancer Council and the Indian American community and the dedicated efforts of several visionaries, it has grown into a full-fledged non-profit 501(c) (3) organization, registered in the state of Texas. IACAN was formally inaugurated in the community on August 16, 2009 by the Consul General of India, Honorable Sanjiv Arora.

IACAN is a network of health professionals, community volunteers, survivors

diagnosis, treatment options and coping with side effects.

- Volunteers will assist the patients and their families in finding suitable lodging, arranging transportation to doctor's appointments and meals to suit the Indian palate.

- An active Indian cancer survivor network which meets once a month provides a platform for the survivors to come together and share their experiences. Survivors are encouraged to come forward and join the network to help and comfort those who are going through similar experiences.

By bringing together survivors, caregivers, health-care providers and mainstream resources, IACAN hopes to facilitate the journey to healing for patients, caregivers and survivors.

IACAN's leadership comprises of a volunteer Board:

President: Gayathri Kongovi, M.S., Vice-President: Sunil Krishnan, M.D., Secretary: Anu Rao, Ph.D., Joint-Secretary: Parameswaran PG, M.D., Treasurer: Alpa Shah, M.S., Members: Sewa Legha, M.D., Mitali Paul, M.H.A./M.B.A, FACHE, Pal-lavi Bharat Mehta, B.S.

For more information about IACAN, visit www.iacannetwork.org or call 713-370-3489



INDIAN AMERICAN CANCER NETWORK

Coping, Caring, Connecting

and caregivers bound by the mission to provide a diverse network of resources that will address the psycho-social and cultural needs of the community.

One of the major goals is to bring awareness about cancer and prevention through public seminars and educational activities. The organization also offers many support programs and services. To highlight a few:

- Cancer patients and care givers can get help in understanding the