

The Indian American Cancer Network is a 501(c) nonprofit cancer resource organization whose mission is to serve the South Asian community through education, resources, and support of those affected by cancer. The vision of IACAN is that every Indian American reduces their cancer risk by maintaining a healthy lifestyle and that no Indian American travels the cancer journey alone.

## A Message from the President

As we close out a year unlike any other, we put our hope and possibilities into another new year. I hope you enjoy reading about the events that IACAN has hosted over the last six months and I hope you and your families continue to stay safe and healthy and join us in the year to come. May the holidays bring you moments of peace and connection as we look forward to the opportunities that the New Year will bring. Please do keep in touch with us; we are here to help you.

*Arlene A. Thomas, President IACAN*

## Annual Music Concert for Survivors



The therapeutic effect of music on mental and physical health is a well-established fact in human history. Maintaining the yearly musical evening tradition for our cancer survivors and caregivers, IACAN presented an online music program on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, this year has been particularly challenging for everybody on many levels. So Mrs. Mani Sastry (the founder of Naada Vinoda Music academy), the special guest singer, Mr. Ravi Mukkamala, and the students of Naada Vinoda Music Academy melodiously rejuvenated the pandemic-worn souls of the community. Mrs. Sastry is an advocate of IACAN and every year she supports our survivor activities with her lovely music. We are deeply thankful for her continued support for IACAN.

*Monalisa Chandra, Board Member, IACAN*

## Cancer and Sugar Presentation

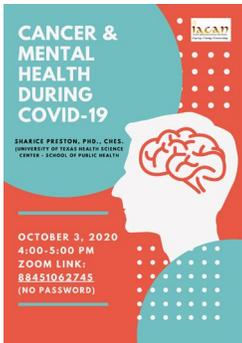
On Saturday, August 29, 2020 IACAN was fortunate to host Dr. Peiyang Yang and Angela Sue Thompson from MD Anderson Cancer Center to discuss the topic of Cancer and Sugar. There is evidence from numerous human studies worldwide that high sugar consumption has a significant impact on the development of some cancers. Although the exact role that sugar plays is not fully clear, what is clear is that most people living in the US consume much more sugar than the recommended 6 teaspoons (25 grams) per day for women and 9 teaspoons (36 grams) for men. Further study to examine the impact of reduced sugar intake on cancer would be necessary to gain comprehensive understanding of role of sugar and cancer.



To reduce your sugar intake, try these tips: choose more unprocessed foods, read food labels and avoid “added sugar”, gradually reduce the amount of sugar you use, choose fruit for dessert, and reserve sugary food for the occasional treat. Also important is maintaining an overall healthy diet. The American Institute of Cancer Research recommends a diet rich in whole grains, vegetables, fruit and beans with limited intake of red and processed meat, fast food, and alcohol.

*Peiyang Yang, PhD, MD Anderson Cancer Center*

## Cancer and Mental Health during COVID-19



As pandemic dawned upon us since early 2020, managing mental health has been one of the key challenges, becoming even more complicated for cancer patients and their caregivers. IACAN's third outreach program this year was aimed to address mental health during COVID-19. On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Dr. Sharice Preston, a cancer health scholar at the University of Texas School of Public Health and a cancer survivor, gave an online seminar titled, **CANCER AND MENTAL HEALTH: Giving Yourself Space to Feel**. Starting with the epidemiological aspect of mental health and cancer in the context of COVID, Dr. Preston covered topics such as identifying symptoms of depression and anxiety under the pandemic generated stressors and coping strategies to handle such stressors. Her discussion also included understanding the hierarchy of mental health needs, identifying depression, and the benefits of maintaining positivity in managing mental health. During the Q & A session, Dr. Preston shared her journey of cancer treatment during the pandemic. At the end of the session, the audience reported increased mental health knowledge and increased self-efficacy in maintaining mental health.

*Monalisa Chandra, Board Member, IACAN*

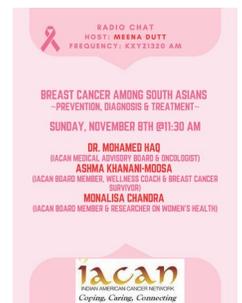
## AAPI Health Summit

IACAN was proud to participate in the Asian American Pacific Islander Health Summit 2020 that was held online on 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> October. Dr. V.K. Dorai and Ms. Gaytri Kapoor from IACAN presented **Be the Match- Bone Marrow Donation Program** in the panel titled, Innovative Health Outreach and Education in the AAPI Community. The speakers discussed IACAN's role and leadership as a community organization in the Bone marrow drive, especially among the South Asian community. In the same conference, IACAN was mentioned by Dr. Lorna McNeil (Chair and Department of Health Disparities Research, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center) in her presentation of the findings of a PCORI funded project, "Engaging Asian Stakeholders to Create a Shared Understanding of Cancer Risk." In this project, IACAN was a community collaborator, participated in the Community Advisory Board, and recruited participants for the study.

*Monalisa Chandra, Board Member, IACAN*

## Breast Cancer in the South Asian Community- A Radio Chat

IACAN's fourth outreach event of the year was titled, **Breast cancer awareness among the south Asian population in Houston**. It was aired on Meena Datt's radio show on KXYZ 1320 AM on Sunday, November 8th, 2020. Dr. Mohamed Haq (a medical oncologist and member of IACAN's medical advisory board), Ashma Khanani-Moosa (a registered nurse, health coach, breast cancer survivor, and IACAN board member) and Monalisa Chandra (women's health researcher and member of IACAN Board) participated in the radio show discussing prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of breast cancer. Dr. Haq talked about breast cancer preventative strategies, latest treatments, and post-cancer risks and care. Ashma shared her journey as a cancer patient and survivor. She shared specific coping mechanisms that patients could implement in their lives during treatment and recovery stages. As a women's health researcher, Monalisa corroborated Dr. Haq on the importance of an annual mammogram to prevent and enable early detection of breast cancer, especially for women 40 years and older. She discussed IACAN's current program on low cost/free mammograms for uninsured patients and other support services for cancer patients and their caregivers.



*Monalisa Chandra, Board Member, IACAN*

## Mark your Calendars for 2021!

IACAN is planning to bring back by popular demand Yoga sessions via Zoom every Thursday evening from 6:30pm to 7:30pm beginning February 4, 2021 through March 25, 2021, please plan to join us!

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