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SOMALI MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

QUARTERLY

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NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2019



Supporting SMAA

Somali Medical Association of America (SMAA) is both a community based organization and a professional assembly that unites over 80 physicians from the Somali community in United States. More than 90% of our members reside in Minnesota's metro-area and almost 80% of our members are International Medical Graduates from 20 different countries around the globe. We are dedicated working along with minorities and underserved communities.



SMAA Press Release

Making the community safer

Minneapolis, Minnesota – 05/15/2019 – Somali Medical Association of America (SMAA) shared with the public a serious concern regarding an event titled “Recent Advancement in Management of Autism” that took place on Saturday, May 11th 2019 in the Twin cities’ metro area in Minnesota

The event was massively advertised through social media and the aim was merely to recruit autistic children and their parents to

receive stem cell therapy in India. SMAA condemned with strongest terms on the exploitation and deception against autistic children and their parents who often faced extreme social, psychological and financial challenges to incur significant financial burdens in the expectation of benefiting from unproven treatment. We are genuinely advising the Somali parents to take caution on the fraudulent claims on autism cure. Unproven stem cell therapy can be particularly unsafe and it can cause spinal cord injury, neurological disorder such as migraine and epilepsy, failure of cells to work as expected and the growth of tumor.

Event organizer: it is been organized by a notorious Indian neurosurgeon named Dr. Alok Sharma.



In 2018, he received a similar outburst condemnation in Sri Lanka after he delivered a talk on stem cell therapy on autism. The Sri Lanka College of Pediatricians alleged that Dr. Sharma screened patients in a hotel room and they put out a public notice warning people

from falling pray “unproven and exploitative therapy”. Most of his publications were published on a black listed and predatory journals as listed by Beall’s List of Predatory Journals. In 2013, he published an article on OMICS publishing groups which lost suit case against US Federal Trade Commission on March 2019.

CAREER GUIDANCE

April 17th, 2019:

Somali Medical Association of America organized a two-part Facebook-live series program for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) and local USA graduates that are interested in pursuing residency program in United States. The program was presented by Dr. Mohamed Faluk and Dr. Yasmin Kusow on April 13th, 2019 through SMAA Facebook page. The live-event was viewed by 2.9k and reached over 10,000 people.

June 2019:

SMAA organize USMLE preparation group study with room provided at 3055 Old Highway 8 in Minneapolis. The building is open every day with free coffee, snacks, prayer room, and bathrooms. This is a place where IMGs can meet and discuss cases as well as to study individually. In the near future, we plan to provide medical books to serve as a mini library for IMGs.

SMAA Career Guidance key objectives:

1. Establish a place of exchange and meeting for IMGs preparing USMLE.
2. Funding support for USMLE exams.
3. CME for IMGs
4. Provide training on Electronic Medical Record System e.g. EPIC
5. Help getting observership, letters of recommendations and filling application for residency.
6. Organize mentorship for medical students.
7. Lecture prospective high-school students who are interested studying medicine



SMAA established collaboration with the Office of MN Governor



ADVOCACY

June 19th, 2019 |

- 1- SMAA met with the Governor Policy Advisor for Health and Human Services to support the Somali Health Professional to overcome health inequity in Somali community and barriers to medical career development.
- 2- SMAA and Kayd Foundation met with Assistant Health Commissioner and staff from Autism unit to improve the communication with the Somali autistic community and ways to integrate more Somali physicians in Minnesota workforce.

April 17th, 2019 |

SMAA met with the director Office of Rural Health and Primary Care of the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) with the objective of establishing collaboration. Several points were discussed including IMG assistance program, the BRIDGE program and the legislative work needed to increase the number of spots and articulated the need for lobbying through state legislators.

February-April 2019 |

SMAA and USA Ready Physicians met with several Minnesota Senators and Representatives, and the Minnesota Board of Medical Practice to support IMGs bills.

Community Health Education

SMAA conducted health fair dubbed “guide to healthy Ramadan” in Masjid Shafici Cedar Ave Minneapolis on May 3rd, 2019.



The event was conducted in Shafici Mosque located at the heart of the populated Somali neighborhood. A total of sixty-eight individuals were offered free health education in chronic diseases and explained the importance of getting screened. SMAA provided blood pressure check, diabetic screening, as well educating the importance of follow up with one primary care provider. Even though a great majority already had a primary care physician and access to healthcare, many of them came for education and information season.

Educational efforts aimed at enhancing patient awareness and improving chronic disease management. SMAA volunteers encourage members of the community to follow up with their primary care provider for future specific disease management.

The event fulfilled its goal to educate the community in healthy life style before the start of the fasten month of Ramadan.

The feedback has been phenomenally positive, and the community were pleased with the program and appreciated the effort made by the Somali Medical Doctors. The community requested from SMAA to host more events like this one in the future.

It is through continued partnerships and collaboration that SMAA continues to lead in making a true Healthy Community.



SMAA is dedicated to bring a positive behavior change through community education and by building partnerships with other organizations. The community engagement program is designed to:

1. Provide community health education
2. Improve health screening
3. Build the trust of the community in healthcare system.



Please donate to Somali Medical Association of America

Radio show

June 30th 2019 |

SMAA started to educate the community through radio channel. The first show went to air on June 30th 2019 through KALY radio, a Somali American radio in Minneapolis. A variety of topics of public health concern were discussed during one hour. Such topics were elderly health and chronic diseases, maternal health and pregnancy, child health, immunization and autism. This was live broadcasting session with open phone line for questions.

2nd Annual IFTAR DINER..

In celebration of the holy month of Ramadan, Somali Medical Association of America (SMAA) was pleased to organize Iftar Dinner that was hold on Friday, May 17th 2019 in Minneapolis.



For the second consecutive year, SMAA organized an Iftar Dinner that gathered a large public audience, among them doctors, stakeholders, community leaders, imams, and partners representatives such as Kayd Foundation. Our distinguished guest for this event were Assistant Health Commissioner, Assistant General Attorney, staffs from different MDH division (Immunization, Autism, Preventable Disease), faculty from University of Minnesota, and Parent Autism Network.

It was an honor to have such great people in one place and learn more about the East African community health issues and challenges that international medical graduates are facing. People were able to express their feeling about burning topic such as Autism. At the end of the event, a press conference took place to denounce the fraudulent claim on Autism cure by an Indian doctor who targeted the Somali community in Minnesota.



(L) Program Coordinator (R) Treasurer of SMAA

Future Events >>>

Minnesota Immigrant ... Health Conference



The immigrant population in Minnesota has been steadily growing over the past several years. This growing immigrant population brings to Minnesota diverse lifestyles and rich cultures. In collaboration with other immigrants health community, SMAA is organizing first Minnesota Immigrant Health Conference in December 2019 to discuss how the immigrant population is impacted by various topics such as mental health and chronic diseases, and how the health professionals and practitioners can partner with immigrant community members and provide culturally appropriate care.



(R) Minnesota Assistant Health Commissioner



(L) Associate Professor Dr. Rebekah Pratt of UMN, SMAA Board member
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