

Newsletter

SOMALI MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA (SMAA)

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Director's message

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**"Our strength is in our unity
and hard working."**



It is an immense pleasure to serve the Somali Medical Association of America during my first year as the head for this great organization. I would like to thank and congratulate all of you on a such successful year 2019. We accomplished fantastic achievements and plan ahead for next year 2020 for a more successful year. We are committed and actively engaged to strengthen Somali public health and address health inequity through multiple policies approaches. We still have huge challenges ahead of us. However, we are fortunate to have our community on our side. I am hoping next year will bring more valuable change to our community who deserve better health. We are thankful to the growing Somali health professionals although many of them are still struggling to get licensed. We will continue to fight for social justice and advocate for more Somali medical professional in order to better serve the increasing Somali community. Our strength is in our unity and hard working. Partnering with other professional and academic organizations plays a crucial role in our outreach and integration. As a professional community, we need to collaborate and positively impact the public health. From preventive services such as immunizations and health screenings to chronic diseases and mental health management, we all have a huge responsibility to address those issues. We look forward to merge our health professionals to fully integrate into Minnesota health workforce. Wish you *Happy New year 2020!*

Key achievements in 2019

1. SMAA conducted more than 20 community health education and screening sessions and reached out to more than a thousand Somalis at community centers and mosques. In addition, SMAA started to educate the community through radio channels.
2. In celebration of the holy month of Ramadan, SMAA organized Iftar Dinner that gathered doctors, stakeholders, community leaders, imams, and partners representatives.
3. SMAA denounced the fraudulent claim of autism cure by an India doctor who infiltrated the Somali community in Minnesota, Ohio, Washington, and Texas.
4. SMAA met with several State Senators and Representatives, Governor Policy Advisor for Health and Human Services, and Minnesota Department of Health to support the Somali Health Professionals to overcome barriers in medical career development and health disparity facing the Somali community.
5. SMAA established a place of exchange and meeting for IMGs preparing USMLE.
6. SMAA facilitated several CMEs/trainings for its members, including immunization seminar by MDH and another seminar concerning Hepatitis by HBI-MN program.
7. SMAA organized the first Somali Health Summit to address the health challenges that impact the Somali community in Minnesota and the event mobilized an outstanding group of highly respected experts and leaders.



1. Medical career coach with Dr Hodon



2. Somali Health Summit



3. Health Screening by SMAA volunteers



4. SMAA GALA



5. Iftar Press Conference



6. SMAA president meeting with Governor

This summit was designed to bring prominent healthcare professional, researchers, advocates, clinicians, and policymakers to share best practices, challenges and collaborative solutions to improve the health of Somali Community in Minnesota. The summit was a one-day conference and culminated over 200 attendees and livestream followers of more than a thousand from around the world. In Minnesota, major news outlets including the premiers, Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) and the Fox News TV disseminated the news of the summit and promoted as a promising opportunity to tackle the growing health disparity. We had received an enormous support and congratulations from federal and state-level officials including Senator Tina Smith, one of the only two Senators that represent Minnesota at the federal level. Among the guests was the Deputy Ministry of Health of the Federal Republic of Somalia who flew all the way from the Capitol Mogadishu to support Somali Diaspora in Minnesota recognizing the great asset that this community represent for the reconstruction of Somalia

The theme of this year summit was “Optimizing Healthcare Workforce and Building Collaborative Platform” focusing on identifying key health issues affecting Somali community in Minnesota and identifying key partnerships between healthcare professionals and the community. Somali community is affected by psychological trauma and mental illnesses, autistic spectrum disorders, and other chronic conditions such as chronic viral hepatitis. Moreover, the community has low prevalence of preventive services such as the low immunization rate and cancer screening.

The summit was opened by SMAA executive director, Dr Aden who underlined the importance of collaboration between Somali and local physicians, followed by speech of Representative Mohamud Noor and Deputy Ministry Mohamed Abdullahi. Academics and clinicians presented researches conducted in the Somali community. Two panel discussion were organized:

- Colorectal, Breast and Cervical cancer in Somali community moderated by Matt Flory from American Cancer Society
- Trauma and Mental Health in Somali Community moderated by Dr Hoda Hassan from HCMC.

Awards were given to the most deserving individuals for their valuable contribution to our community:

- ✚ A lifetime achievement was awarded to Dr Osman Harare, the most senior Somali doctor that is still active in Minnesota community with over 50 years since his graduation from medical school.
- ✚ A Community Appreciation was awarded to Dr Douglas Pryce for his commitment and support to the community. He established two-days Somali clinic at HCMC since 1997 whereby he only sees Somali patients.
- ✚ A leadership appreciation was awarded to Hon. Mohamed Said Abdullahi, the Somali deputy minister of health for his outstanding legislative work and vision in healthcare.



SMAA members



Award to Dr Osman Harare



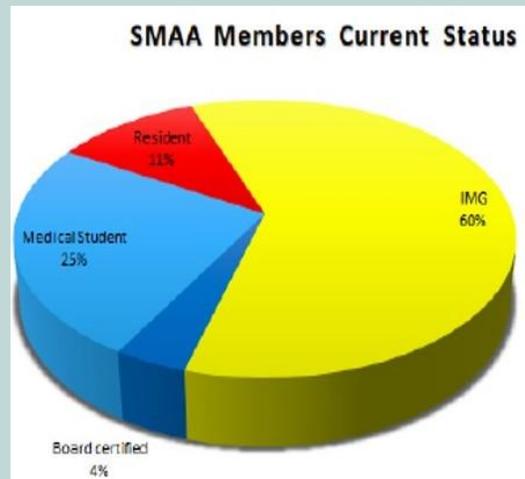
Health Summit attendees



Award to Dr Douglas Pryce

SMAA main objectives for 2020:

- Continue to advocate for Somali IMGs to the academic and state stakeholders
 - Organize meeting with State Representatives and Senators
 - Prepare Somali IMGs bill with Somali elected representatives
 - Organize meeting with residency program directors and medical school deans
- Continue community health education and screening in collaboration with partners
- Obtain 501c
- Apply for grants
- Organize events for 2020:
 - Ramadan dinner with fundraising in May 2020
 - Somali Health Summit in September 2020
 - Gala in December 2020
- Vision of Somali Heritage Hospital in Minnesota and Somali Autism Center
- Prepare general election in coordination with the Board in December 2020



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Together We Are Stronger

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