



Indian Doctors Association

Greater Houston

January 2021 Edition

President's Message

As the national distribution of the COVID-19 Vaccine continues, let us all support and trust the vaccine developed by the brilliant minds. There will be skepticism, for there to be impact in fighting this pandemic; we all need to continue to assist in public awareness of the vaccine's efficacy and safety.

Our decisions will have an influence on the decisions made by the people around you and your families. You can help beat this virus by helping others get vaccinated when they can.

Lastly, I simply want to say thank you. I am grateful to all our members, health care providers, and partners, who have invested in this community with their commitment to end this pandemic. I am humbled by the sacrifices and inspired by endless dedication of our health care providers and their families. Let us all unite to see the end of the pandemic.

Physician Resources:

[Texas Department of State Health Services Immunization Program Portal](#)

IDA Board

Leading by Example

Nineteen IDA Board Members expanded their impact by sharing their COVID-19 vaccination experience. Their decision to get vaccinated shows their trust in medical science and will build confidence throughout our community.

*Jignesh Shah, MD
President*



In memory of the loved ones lost during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Let us continue to remind people to wear face coverings, maintain social distancing, and advocate vaccination.



Janak A. Patel, MD
Director of the Division of
Infectious Disease,
Immunology & Healthcare
Epidemiology
Chair, COVID-19
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Task Force,
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Clinicians: 'heal thy self'. Vaccine hesitancy among healthcare workers

'We have extra vaccine doses today, do you want a shot?' shouted Sarah, my infection control practitioner, as she made a frantic run of the floors at our hospital to find workers to vaccinate at the end day in order not to waste any doses of the precious COVID-19 vaccine. She was making the

pitch to the staff on nursing units, pharmacy, laboratory, security station, housekeeping, and maintenance department. I was walking closely with her and watching the effort as part of my assignment as chair of the COVID-19 Vaccination Preparedness Task Force. No one who had yet not been immunized stated in the affirmative their interest in being vaccinated.

I was numb. The next group of employees I encountered in the hallway who seemed nonchalant to the pitch, I stopped them. I stated in clear terms and stern voice that they had to provide the answer after careful thought. We had spent over 2 months preparing for this day to protect our healthcare workers, a protected group of first responders, who have been working tirelessly for several months to battle COVID-19 infection in the hospitals and clinics. And, here, a group that is supposed to be most at danger at contracting infection, seemed to take the decision for vaccination very casually.

One would think that unlike the folks in the community, healthcare workers would be most likely to ignore the unreasonable fear and place confidence in the vaccine. But no, surveys have clearly shown, including at my institution, that healthcare workers are no more likely than the general population to want the vaccine- up to 40% of them are unsure or definitely not interested in the vaccine. This is not just in large hospitals. An internist friend of mine in private practice told me that among six of his office support staff and nurses, only one was willing to take the vaccine. This story is repeated everywhere.

What gives? Our healthcare workers are not routinely vaccine refusers; the rate of flu vaccine at my institution exceeds 95%. So

why so much bruhaha about the COVID-19 vaccine? These vaccines have been studied for over 9 months in clinical trials, and now, over 4 million healthcare workers have been immunized. The side effects are easily manageable in over 99% of them. Clearly, it is not just the fear of the unknown, there is also fear of the purported dangerous vaccine effects perpetuated in social media.

Regardless of the reasons, we have to do better. We must approach our healthcare workers with a clear mandate. While the vaccine is not mandatory, we must require a higher expectation. We must not just offer the vaccine as 'do you want it?' choice, rather it must be offered as 'We are going to vaccinate you today. Let us do it. It is our job to protect ourselves and our patients and the community.' Then pause after this statement and see if there is any reluctance expressed. The declination must be an active process, that means, as persons offering vaccination, we are going to express our commitment, and the person being offered the vaccine has to decline with an active reasoning. Research has shown this approach leads to much lower rate of declination.

Refusing healthcare workers should be approached for a one-to-one discussion to review their concern and provide quick feedback with a scientifically accurate statement. Clearly state that our expectation for healthcare workers is to follow the science and not the rumors.

So, going back to my employee encounter in the hallway of our hospital, after I gave a stern reminder of their duty as healthcare workers and expectation of respect for our effort, these employees turned around and followed me to the vaccination station.

We will not succeed in vaccinating a large number of persons in the community that are required for herd immunity in order to halt the COVID-19 pandemic if we as healthcare workers do not set a good example.

“Friends of IDA”



“I would like to recognize the IDA Houston for truly living out their mission, vision and values. Over the past decade, I’ve witnessed the organization develop a great networking platform, provide mentoring opportunities, scholarships, participate in community service and offer continued support to the charity clinic. I’m proud of all the good deeds performed by the IDA and glad to call them my friends.”

Eric Merchant
Medical Relationship Manager, Private
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MEMBERS CORNER



Annual Member
Mohit Bansal, MD, MPH

It is a pleasure and honor to be a member of IDA Houston. I thank you for the opportunity to introduce myself!

I am Dr. Mohit Bansal, Board certified family medicine physician in practice for the

last 12 years. I practice primary care at Lifeline Urgent Care located in the Energy Corridor. I have experience in pain management, Emergency Room and Urgent care set up with special interest in preventive medicine. I have been fortunate to be part of IDA for the last few years.

I was born and brought up in small town Kotkapura, Punjab. Completed my medical school from Government Medical College, Chandigarh. Came to the USA in 2004 and finished my Masters in Public Health from University of Illinois, Springfield, IL. Finished my residency at Southern Illinois University, Springfield, IL.

I got married and moved to Texas close to my wife’s family. After practicing in rural West Texas for 4 years, moved to Houston. I fell in love with Houston’s diverse culture, Indian roots and feeling home away from home. I am married with 2 beautiful children. My free time activities are outdoors with kids, biking, real estate investments, and social networking.

I am grateful to be a part of IDA, its mission of serving the community and bringing together like-minded professionals. I look forward to meeting you all at upcoming IDA events and Gala.

Mohit Bansal, MD, MPH
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IDA Speakers Bureau

Please update your membership profile on idahouston.org if you would be interested in becoming a motivational speaker for IDA at our future events.

Meet Dr. Janak A. Patel



IDA Member

Dr. Janak A. Patel was appointed Director of Infection Control & Healthcare Epidemiology in January 2017. He joined UTMB in 1989 as Assistant Professor in the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases of the Department of Pediatrics, and is currently a tenured Professor. Since 1995, he has been Director of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases. He has participated extensively in patient care, teaching, research and administration, including many in leadership roles. Dr. Patel has been the principal investigator or co-investigator in more than 50 clinical and bench research projects funded by the National Institutes of Health, pharmaceutical corporations and other agencies. Dr. Patel has authored more than 100 articles which have been published in peer-reviewed journals and textbooks.

Dr. Patel earned his medical degree at the School of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He finished a pediatric residency at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey—Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Brunswick, New Jersey. He completed his fellowship in pediatric infectious diseases at the Children's Hospital of Buffalo, State University of New York at Buffalo.

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IDA Social Media



Members and events are highlighted on our social media channels.

IDA Physician Specialty Awareness Videos



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