

Message from the President

Assalaamu alaykum

Dear IMANA Members:

It is indeed an honor and pleasure to serve as president of the IMANA, an organization founded with the unique concept of uniting Muslim physicians. In addition to being a life member, I have had a head start on many members by actually growing up in the IMANA organization, which has given me the benefit of appreciating IMANA through the different stages of my life. As a youngster, I had the excitement of traveling to different areas of the world for medical conferences with my parents. As a medical student and later as a resident, I listened to lectures and then gave talks to an appreciative audience, which included the same members who served as mentors in my youth. Now, I am continuing that cycle and tradition and am introducing my own family to my IMANA family.

I am before you today not because of my own efforts, but because of the support and education founded by family strength and Islamic values and principles. All of our IMANA members have had motivating experiences, and that is what makes us strong as Muslims and as physicians. IMANA can be stronger only with adaptation and continued support from our board and senior members who have given their precious time and undaunted effort over many decades. I am grateful to them. However, now is the time for change. While many organizations are withering and falling to the wayside, IMANA is forging forward under the guidance of Allah ﷻ. This will happen only with some element of “change”. As President Obama has mentioned, change comes from within; therefore, we must look at the attributes we have individually and as a group that can make this change possible.

Change can start with our individual members. Membership in IMANA has increased over the years. With this growth, we want our members to be united as an active force. All members bring varying strengths to our organization: student education, legislative activity, international relief, local community work and, most important, membership building. The most simple and effective way to build

on the foundation of our organization is to encourage our families and friends not just to become members but to contribute in ways that will help the local *ummah* as well as the IMANA community.

I cannot preach what I do not practice. All my family members and close friends are IMANA members and always contribute to the strength of our IMANA organization. Many members ask where are the youth in our organization? Well, look to see if your own children and extended family members are a part of IMANA and, if not, encourage them to become members so that they can reap the benefits of our collective community.

Dr. Farouque Khan at the recent banquet dinner held in Washington DC, was kind to recognize my father, Dr. Syed Zahir, a past president of IMANA, for his work and for “passing the torch” of IMANA to the next generation. It is a privilege to serve IMANA to the best of my capacity, but this can happen only with the support of the hardworking Executive Council, Board of Regents and, most important, you, the IMANA membership.

During the last convention, I identified many young leaders who actively want to be part of the changes heading our way as Muslim physicians. We all know that the most important way to succeed in the practice of medicine is through adaptation. IMANA’s future will incorporate the conventional wisdom of the senior leadership and the vision of change ahead, under the guidance of Allah ﷻ.

During this coming year, we will address the needs of the medical students and residents so that they may reap the benefits of being IMANA members. Inshallah, we will have two dedicated student/resident meetings this year, led by Dr. Tarranum Lateef and Dr. Naveed Akthar, to assist students and residents in their future medical decisions for residencies, practice, and networking.

Changes are also happening at a national level. During the 42nd IMANA meeting held in Washington, DC, many of the members had the opportunity to take part in the first dialogue on health care reform on Capitol Hill. The well-attended program entitled “Perspectives from the Frontline”, showcased IMANA to the current administration. The membership can watch this on the IMANA web

site at www.imana.org. During my term as president of IMANA, I hope to develop an active Legislative Committee to address many of the challenges we as physicians face: health care reform, delivery of international relief, and disaster aid.

Recently, I was given the opportunity to represent IMANA on a Citizen's Hearing on Universal Health Care, sponsored by the American Muslim Taskforce (AMT, americanmuslimvoter.net). I spoke about the key factors needed to bring change to the health care "status quo" that has plagued many of our IMANA members' ability to deliver care to our patients. Also speaking with me were Congressmen Keith Ellison, Andre Carson, Pete Starks, and Dennis Kucinich. This was the second opportunity for IMANA to be represented on Capitol Hill.

One of my goals is to work with many of our strong Muslim medical organizations to create a unified platform representing all aspects as a Muslim medical network. I want to bring the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU, ispu.org), American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP, amph.us), American Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA, appna.org), Muslim Community Center Medical Clinic (MCC, mccclinic.org), Inner City Muslim Action Network (IMAN, imacentral.org), Compassionate Care Network (CCN, ccnchicago.com) and the Houston Shifa Clinic (shifaclinic-houston.org) together. We need to get involved in legislative activities to promote a better appreciation of the large Muslim medical presence and our recognition as representatives of our constituencies. Although these organizations serve different groups, we are all working for the good of mankind and our fellow Americans under the guidance of Allah ﷻ.

I have recently returned from Uzbekistan after our Convention Committee research trip with Dr. Abida Haque. The trip to this phenomenal central Asian country was both historically and spiritually enlightening. The way its people have faced their economic and religious challenges is something that all who travel and appreciate their heritage and culture will admire. Inshallah, the Continuing Medical Examination (CME) meeting will be in Tashkent on July 5-8, 2010. The delegates will be divided into two tour groups, one departing before and the other after the meeting. The details will be outlined short-

ly. Inshallah I will see you there.

Our Relief Committee, lead by Drs. Parvaiz Malik and Hafizur Rehman, cannot be thanked enough for orchestrating the transfer of medical equipment to Muzaffarabad, Kashmir and for building homes for the displaced families and the Tameer-e-Millat School in the IMANA village at Khakoo Battal, Mansehra, Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), Pakistan. In addition, they coordinated the IMANA Housing Project in Kohistan, NWFP, Pakistan.

IMANA Relief cooperated with the Munshi Atar Ali Welfare Society (MAAWS, maaws.org) in Bangladesh, which builds deep-water tube wells for the community and promotes human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) awareness and prophylaxis. In addition, the collaboration includes the construction of a medical health complex in Senbagh, Noakhali, Bangladesh.

Most recently, the Gaza Relief Team (ammgaza.blogspot.com), a team of young physicians led by Dr. Ismail Mehr, embarked on a harrowing journey to deliver aid to the stricken people of Gaza. The compassion and care delivered are the true representation of what the future of IMANA should be, which is to fulfill medical needs nationally and internationally.

In addition, I would like to recognize the hard work of Rasheed Ahmed, our new executive director and his team, Mr. Usman Durrani and Ms. Syeda Quadri at the main office, and Ms. Helen Allen monitoring the CME activities with Dr. Ayaz Samadani.

I also want to thank the current leaders for their hard work over the past and the endeavors they will undertake in the coming year. I pray that Allah gives us the guidance and wisdom to be successful in our endeavors and to make our organization strong and efficient. I pray for the stability and continued progress of IMANA.

Wassalam.

Respectfully,

Khalique Zahir MD, FACS

IMANA President

Aesthetique Cosmetic & Plastic Surgery, LLC

Annandale, Virginia