

2021 SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

CELEBRATING COVID-19 HEROES



FAIRUZ KARIM

Fairuz Karim is a student advocate who has been amplifying the voices of youth and those that have been historically excluded in mainstream discourse. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic she has worked on creating Project Youth Voices - a platform to help youth, just like herself, cope through the stresses of the pandemic through creative expression. Fairuz has been involved in designing HamOntWashroom, a social media advocacy campaign creating dialogue about the inequities in public washroom access. Fairuz has actively brought light to how this is a pressing issue that must be addressed to build sustainable, inclusive, and healthy communities



SUKHMEET SINGH SACHAL

Sukhmeet Singh Sachal is a medical student and public health professional with a vision to bridge the gaps in healthcare. In June 2020, Sukhmeet founded the Sikh Health Foundation to provide culturally-effective public health interventions to South Asians at Gurdwaras in Surrey, BC. With over 150 youth volunteers, his team helped develop masks that can tie around turbans, and helped educate over 10,000 individuals about COVID-19 in Punjabi and Hindi. Since then, the project has expanded across Canada and internationally. For these efforts, Sukhmeet was recognized by the Commonwealth as one of ten COVID-19 Youth Heroes from around the world.



DR. SUPRIYA SHARMA

As the Chief Medical Advisor, Dr. Supriya Sharma provides medical and scientific advice on many aspects of Health Canada's COVID-19 response and is the Department's representative on the Special Advisory Committee with the Public Health Agency of Canada and Chief Medical Officers from across the country. She's one of the key spokespersons in the government's efforts to inspire public trust in immunization efforts and has been tasked with demystifying the regulatory processes for the approval and monitoring of vaccines.



DOLY BEGUM

Elected in 2018, Doly Begum is the MPP for Scarborough Southwest and the first Canadian of Bangladeshi origin to hold elected office in Canada. At Queen's Park, Doly is the Official Opposition Critic for Citizenship, Foreign Credentials, and Immigration Services and has been tirelessly advocating for equity in Scarborough as a hotspot for COVID-19. Prior to this, she was the chief coordinator of the province-wide Keep Hydro Public campaign that successfully stopped the privatization of Toronto Hydro and Wasaga Distribution and the former Co-Chair of the Scarborough Health Coalition and Vice-Chair of Warden Woods Community Centre.



DR. NAHEED DOSANI

As a palliative care physician and health justice activist, Dr. Naheed Dosani is dedicated to advancing equitable access to health care for people experiencing homelessness and marginalization. These efforts include founding Palliative Education and Care for the Homeless (PEACH) and serving as Medical Director for a regional COVID-19 Isolation/Housing Program in the Toronto area. Dr. Dosani shares his passion for health equity through education and advocacy efforts that include media, public speaking, social media and faculty appointments at the University of Toronto and McMaster University.



DR. SAMIR SINHA

Dr. Samir Sinha, Director of Geriatrics at Sinai Health and UHN, became a go-to expert during the COVID-19 pandemic, advocating for needs of older persons and those living in long-term care (LTC) homes. As the Director of Health Policy Research at the National Institute on Ageing at Ryerson, he has led research on ageing and how to better support older Canadians throughout this pandemic. Media outlets regularly call him to speak about the pandemic and he uses social media to advocate for older Canadians in policy-making. As a person who advises hospitals and health authorities in Canada on innovative models of geriatric care, he is now supporting the development of new National Long-Term Care Standards for Canada.

Official South Asian Heritage Month 2021 Poster by Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)

This initiative is part of CASSA's ongoing work to mobilize the South Asian communities' voice and action towards Canadian and global justice by creating spaces for conversations, learning/unlearning, and bridging gaps within and between communities.



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