



Gbenga Ogedegbe, MD, MPH

Dr. Adolph & Margaret Berger Professor of Population Health
Director, Institute for Excellence in Health Equity (IEHE)

May 11, 2022

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington DC, 20515

Re: Support for H.R.3771, South Asian Heart Health Awareness and Research Act of 2021

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers:

On behalf of NYU Langone Health, please accept our support for H.R.3771, the South Asian Heart Health Awareness and Research Act of 2021, sponsored by Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA). This legislation would provide funding for grants to promote cardiovascular health and heart health research among the South Asian populations of the United States.

The NYU Langone's Institute for Excellence in Health Equity supports the South Asian Heart Health Awareness and Research Act of 2021. This legislation would provide critical funding to address a significant health disparity affecting millions of South Asian Americans (SAAs, predominantly people who immigrated from or whose families immigrated from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh). The Institute for Excellence in Health Equity oversees several health projects focused on SAAs, including efforts to prevent and reduce cardiovascular disease.

Through our research we have identified alarming cardiovascular health disparities among SAAs, such as poor diet, low physical activity, high tobacco use, and high rates of obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. To address these disparities, we have partnered with community- and faith-based organizations to educate SAA communities in the New York City region about cardiovascular disease, including ways to mitigate the risk of cardiovascular disease and providing referrals to clinical and other supportive services. Our work has been cited as part of the evidence base for the latest guidelines in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Community Preventive Guide and the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research Innovations Exchange recommending culturally tailored community-clinical linkage strategies to improve cardiovascular and related risk factors in South Asian populations.

Our community-engaged efforts have been integral to promoting healthy habits and linking community members to critical health services, but we know there is much work to be done, which is why we are grateful for this proposed legislation to raise public health awareness in SAA communities and provide funding for further research. We are appreciative of the following key provisions:



- To develop culturally appropriate materials on evidence-based topics such as nutrition education, optimal diet plans, and programs for regular exercise.
- To support heart health promotion activities of community organizations that work with or serve communities disproportionately affected by heart disease, such as South Asian communities in the United States.
- To support conferences or workshops on research practices, methodology, and design to include more members of communities disproportionately affected by heart disease, such as South Asian communities in the United States, in scientific studies.
- Conduct or support research and related activities regarding cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and other heart health-related ailments among at-risk populations, including South Asian communities in the United States.

We are pleased that the House Energy and Commerce Committee is considering this important legislation that would greatly benefit the communities we serve. Thank you for your leadership on this issue, and please let us know if we can be a resource to you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gbenga Ogedegbe".

Gbenga Ogedegbe, MD, MPH, FACP
Dr. Adolph & Margaret Berger Professor of Medicine
Director, Institute for Excellence in Health Equity

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nadia Islam".

Nadia Islam, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Population Health
Associate Director, Institute for Excellence in Health Equity

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Naheed Ahmed".

Naheed Ahmed, PhD, MA, MPH
Research Scientist, Department of Population Health
Institute for Excellence in Health Equity