

May 6, 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: Statement for the Support of the South Asian Heart Health Awareness Act

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers,

My name is Dr. Latha Palaniappan and I am an internist, clinical researcher, and the co-founder of the Center for Asian Health Research and Education (CARE) at Stanford University School of Medicine. My research focuses on addressing the gap in knowledge in Asian subgroups and other understudied racial/ethnic minorities particularly within cardiovascular health.

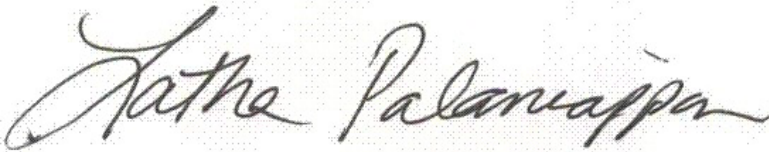
The South Asian community has grown by nearly 40% between 2010 and 2017, with nearly 5.4 million South Asians, people who immigrated from or whose families immigrated from countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, currently residing in the United States. Current studies highlight that South Asian Americans are four times more at risk of developing heart disease than the general population and have a much greater chance of having a heart attack before age 50. Additionally, South Asian Americans have emerged as the ethnic group with the highest prevalence of Type 2 diabetes, which is a leading cause of heart disease.

Despite these alarming trends, our current healthcare systems lack culturally appropriate education for South Asians about the risk factors for heart disease as well as proper care, resources, and treatment. The South Asian Heart Health Awareness and Research act aims to raise awareness about the alarming rate of heart disease in South Asian communities in the United States while also funding research to understand and reverse this trend. This act will also award grants for awareness initiatives, education materials and research catalogs that discuss the prevalence of heart disease and type 2 diabetes within the South Asian community. This can include screening for all young patients of South Asian origin for diabetes and creating region specific nutritional guides.

Through the Center for Asian Health Research and Education at Stanford University, a main emphasis of our work has been highlighting and working to reduce health disparities experiences by ethnic and racial minorities in the United States. This bill is particularly important in this mission and will decrease the disparities seen in cardiovascular health across the South Asian community while transforming healthcare for patients within the United States along with globally.

I would like to thank the Committee for its thoughtful consideration of these key public health priorities and for its support of this bill.

Sincerely,



Latha Palaniappan, MD, MS, FAHA, FACC, FACP  
Professor of Medicine  
Stanford University School of Medicine