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**Volunteer Health Champions Honored for Supporting Uninsured Patients in San Diego**

*Champions for Health recognizes physicians and health partners for providing pro bono service to patients in the Project Access San Diego Program*

**SAN DIEGO, CA – June 29, 2021 – [Champions for Health](#)** (CFH), a local health nonprofit, will honor area Health Champions for their volunteer service to the CFH [Project Access San Diego](#) (PASD) program at the CFH Waves of Wellness Soirée on July 10th.

“The Soirée is a celebration of the synergy between the physician volunteers and partners who support Champions for Health’s flagship program, Project Access San Diego, and our Project Access staff,” said Adama Dyoniziak, Executive Director for Champions for Health. “We will honor these heroes who transformed the lives of patients from pain and dire medical diagnoses to health, renewed family involvement and productive work and community life.”

Honorees are recognized for their individual service or partner commitment to the program.

Honorees include:

- President’s Award: Northgate Gonzalez Market
- Civic Health Leader of the Year: Kristin Gaspar
- Project Access Volunteer Physician of the Year: Varuna Raizada, MD
- Project Access Facility of the Year: Core Orthopaedic
- Project Access Partner of the Year: TrueCare
- Project Access Medical Interpreter of the Year: Holly Araya
- Champion of the Year: Dhruvil Gandhi, M.D.



Northgate Gonzalez Market is a major community partner for CFH Immunizations and Health Screening program by serving as a community hub in San Diego's health equity zones.

Kristin Gaspar is a long-time supporter of PASD and CFH Community Health programs as the former District 3 San Diego County Board Supervisor through the Neighborhood Reinvestment Program and Community Enhancement Program.

Dr. Varuna Raizada is an Uro-Gynecologist and has been a volunteer of the PASD program since 2017, helping eleven patients. She helped women reclaim their lives from the devastating effects of their health conditions.

Core Orthopaedic, a PASD partner since 2012, has a trio of physicians, Luke Bremner, MD, Christopher Hajnik, MD, and Nathan Hammel, MD, who volunteer their talents in reconstructive surgery of the knee, hip, and other surgeries. These physicians have helped multiple PASD patients by getting them back up and running, walking, working, and moving, something that many of the patients have not been able to do for years.

TrueCare, located in North County, is a longstanding partner of CFH for more than ten years. They are the federally qualified health center and refer patients to the PASD program. They know how vital it is for patients to receive specialty care and, together, ensure that patients with the greatest need are referred to PASD.

Holly Araya has volunteered as a medical interpreter for PASD since 2017. Araya is bilingual in English and Spanish. Outside of helping CFH patients, Holly does volunteer interpreting for asylum seekers. Araya cares about every volunteer opportunity because she wants to make sure that the interaction between the provider and patient goes smoothly - the physician can be assured that the patient understands their condition & treatment options and the patient's concerns have been given a voice.



Dr. Ghandi has been a volunteer for PASD since 2016. He has helped twenty-four PASD patients with colonoscopies and hernia repairs at both Tri-City Medical Center and Carlsbad Surgery Center.

Since 2008, PASD has facilitated over \$24 million in pro bono specialty care, procedures, and surgeries in collaboration with a network of physicians, hospitals, and clinics across San Diego County. These life-saving services have been provided to more than 6,500 patients who have been able to regain their health, return to work, care for their families, and remain productive members of their community.

The CFH Soirée - Waves of Wellness will take place Saturday, July 10th, from 6 pm – 9 pm at the Birch Aquarium in La Jolla. The vision for the event is an evening that awakens wellness, raises money for a life-saving program, and showcases outstanding individuals and organizations that have supported Champions for Health throughout the past year.

### **About Champions for Health**

Champions for Health was formed in 2004 by the San Diego County Medical Society to address the unmet healthcare needs of low-income and uninsured San Diego County residents. A community health nonprofit focusing on access to care for all and community wellness, this foundation was instrumental in amplifying physician engagement and volunteerism, positively impacting the lives of more than 100,000 San Diegans since its inception.

Champions for Health's flagship program is Project Access San Diego, which provides access to uninsured individuals in need of specialty medical care in order to restore health. Champions for Health also facilitates a Community Wellness Program that continues the path to health with free vaccination programs, speakers for community groups, and support geared toward improving San Diego health for all. For more information, visit <https://championsforhealth.org>.

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