

# IASA NEWSLETTER

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## A Vision Whose Time Has Come

Over the last several years, Dr. Kern Singh of Rush University Medical Center and Dr. Alpesh Patel of Loyola University Medical Center in Chicago, along with other spine surgeons, have hosted informal gatherings in the hopes of increasing partnership and awareness with like-minded surgeons of Indian origin from around the world in pursuit of ventures in India, including travelling fellowships, training, research, and mission trips. In 2011, they became familiar with other groups who shared their vision and interest in supporting these objectives. It made sense to unite their efforts.

In October 2011 a small reception was held by both groups at the NASS Annual Meeting in Chicago to propose the formation of Indo-American Spine Alliance (IASA). The response was overwhelmingly positive. Outreach to prominent spine surgeons in India to corroborate the mission and purpose of the organization had similar results.

In January 2012, IASA was registered in the state of Pennsylvania as a non-profit organization with the following mission: "To facilitate and promote collaborative interaction between spine professionals of Indian origin and other interested surgeons from India, America, and abroad; to improve surgical education, to further spine research, and to advance care for patients afflicted with spine ailments in India." Our vision is to be the preeminent source for open and transparent collaboration in research, education,

IASA is governed by a board of directors representing prominent spine surgeons from both India and the U.S.

The first group comprises of the following:

1. Dr. Sajan Hegde, Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, India
2. Dr. Alpesh Patel, Loyola University Health System, Chicago, IL
3. Prof. S. Rajasekaran, Ganga Hospital, Coimbatore, India
4. Dr. Dilip Sengupta, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Lebanon, NH
5. Dr. Kern Singh, Rush University Medical Center, Chicago, IL
6. M. Kevin Carouge, Chair, West Chester, PA

Supporting the boards efforts is Nazie Dana, Program Director, in Audubon, PA. ■

## First Fellowship to be Awarded

This spring, the first candidate for an IASA fellowship will be chosen among the Indian surgeons currently participating in one of three ASSI fellowships. The recipient of the IASA fellowship will attend a two-week long program at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, under the tutelage of Dr. Kern Singh, a founding member of IASA. ■

# First Board of Directors Meeting in New Delhi

In February 2012, the first formal gathering of the IASA Board of Directors was held in New Delhi, in conjunction with the Association of Spine Surgeons of India Conference (ASSICON). The Board members discussed the organization's programs and its short term objectives, and provided staff with clear directives to create all necessary components supporting each of the activities.

The Board has directed the staff to initiate and support the following programs:

1. Visiting Surgeon Program – Skilled surgeons to visit clinics to share and exchange scientific and clinical information.
2. Surgeon Fellowships – Bi-lateral fellowship opportunities for surgeons to enhance their knowledge of the treatment of various spinal pathologies.
3. Humanitarian Programs – Mission trips with an educational component to help patients in need of treatment.
4. Research support – Grants in support of directed research as well as data compilation, interpretation, and publication for both long and short term studies.
5. Educational Programs – Programs of varying type, both bioskills and didactic, directed toward Indian surgeons interested in furthering their knowledge in the treatment of various spinal pathologies.

The next meeting of the Board will be held in May in Amsterdam, in conjunction with SpineWeek 2012. ■

**| IASA Board of Directors and Staff (from left):** Dr. Dilip Sengupta, Kevin Carouge (Chair), Dr. Arvind Jayaswal (guest), Prof. S. Rajasekaran, Dr. Sajan Hegde, Nazie Dana (Program Director), and Dr. Kern Singh (Not shown: Dr. Alpesh Patel)







## Reception at ASSICON

Similar to the NASS reception, IASA invited attending surgeons to a reception where board members presented their proposed programs in support of the organization's mission and vision. Over 75 spine surgeons attended and voiced their support for IASA's initiatives.

As part of the outreach to the community of spine professionals and to report on its progress, IASA will continue holding receptions at two meetings a year; the Association of Spine Surgeons of India Conference (ASSICON) in India, and the North American Spine Society (NASS) Annual Meeting in the U.S. The next reception will be held in October in Dallas, TX, during the NASS Annual Meeting. Invitations will follow. ■



## IASA Receives Support

IASA is pleased to announce that Globus Medical has pledged full support of IASA and its initiatives through a continuous, major annual gift. ■

(1) Surgeons overwhelmingly voiced their support for IASA programs; (2) Dr. Singh (middle) speaking with colleagues; (3) Dr. Hegde (left), IASA Board Member, speaking to Dr. Berven; (4) Dr. Sengupta (middle), IASA Board Member, speaking with Dr. Rupinder Chahal (left) and Dr. Rushma Tandon (right)



If you are interested in becoming involved with the group and its activities, please log on to our website ([indo-americanspine.org](http://indo-americanspine.org)) and join, or contact Nazie Dana, IASA Program Director at 866.835.5306, or via email at [ndana@indo-americanspine.com](mailto:ndana@indo-americanspine.com)