



Biden Reaches Out



Chhaya Sharma's Courage



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TIMES



Fighting Diabetes

Family of physicians makes road trip around India and U.S. to raise awareness about rising threat of this disease



The Gujarat Chief Minister, Vijay Rupani, endorsed the drive to combat and curb diabetes, in India.



In the US, Dr. Sudhir Parikh, a recipient of the Padma Shri, endorsed the drive initiated by Dr. Smita Joshi, to fight the epidemic of diabetes.

PHOTOS COURTESY: JOSHI FAMILY

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Fighting Diabetes

Family of physicians makes road trip around India and U.S. to raise awareness about the rising threat of this disease

By Staff Writer

A group of physicians from a family in Gujarat, India, led by Dr. Smita Joshi, have been on a remarkable diabetes awareness drive in India and the United States, this year. The initiative included traversing across the country over 3500 Km. covering 14 states, via road from Jammu to Kanyakumari, and a car flag-off in California during a meet of the American Diabetes Association.

During their road trip in India, the family of physicians sensitized local doctors along the way about sparing a few minutes to counsel patients on diet and life style modifications required to check the spread of diabetes, reported the Deccan Chronicle, which caught up with the physicians when they were on their last leg of the drive, in Thiruvananthapuram, in Kerala.

With one diabetes linked death being reported every six seconds across the world, the situation is extremely alarming, the report noted. Diabetes today is a major cause of blindness, heart attacks and kidney-related problems.

"In such a situation it is very important to have disease prevention and awareness programs starting from the grassroots level to top. We are trying to contribute in our own way in spreading awareness about diabetes," Dr. Smita Joshi was quoted as saying by the Chronicle.

Dr. Joshi's initiative has received a boost with the endorsement and support of Padma Shri Dr. Sudhir Parikh, a renowned philanthropist himself. The New Jersey-based Dr. Parikh has through his multi-resource foundation, the Parikh Foundation for India's Global Development, based in New York, vowed to support the goal of raising awareness of diabetes in India, including in children and juveniles, by raising funds and help NRI physicians to guest visit target states in India to combat the disease.

"We would like to promote awareness of diabetes in the US and rest of the world, and especially children in India, by raising

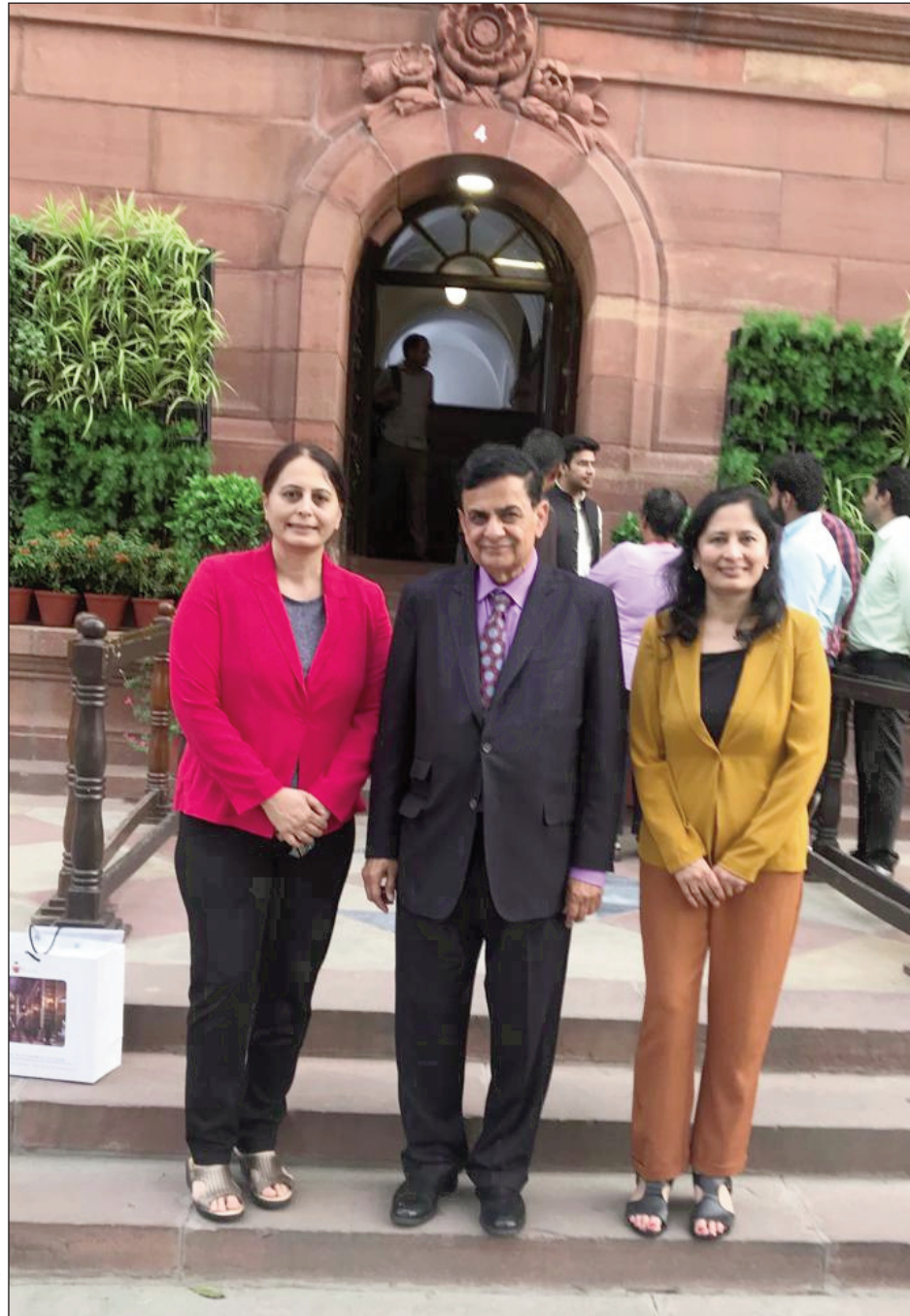


PHOTO: JOSHI FAMILY

Dr. Sudhir Parikh, a recipient of Padma Shri 2010, the Founder and Chairman of Parikh Worldwide Media, with Dr. Smita Joshi (right) and Dr. Shuklaben Raval (left), at the Indian parliament, in New Delhi, India. Dr. Parikh has been lobbying the Indian government for more resources to combat and curb the menace of diabetes in India.

funds," said Dr. Parikh, also the Founder and Chairman of Parikh Worldwide Media,

and Chairman, ITV Gold.

Dr. Parikh, a senior stalwart with several

Diaspora medical-oriented organizations like AAPI and GAPIO, explained that during this past AAPI convention in Atlanta, Georgia, held in June, he helped sign a MoU to bring NRI physicians to India to help raise awareness about the diabetes epidemic there.

"We want to help in not just funds, but also to help in getting drugs (to patients) to curb the disease," said Dr. Parikh, who is also lobbying with the government of India to make available more resources to help combat and curb diabetes.

Dr. Parikh commended Dr. Joshi's remarkable and dedicated initiative.

"Education for training to combat juvenile diabetics is very important, very critical for the overall health of population of India," said Dr. Parikh, adding: "We'll do whatever we can from the western world through our media and foundation to help Dr. Joshi to succeed in this venture."

Dr. Joshi, who explained in a phone interview to News India Times that her family now comprised of 4th generation physicians who are part of the initiative to combat diabetes, has said that creating awareness early on among people about lifestyle, encouraging people with diabetes to modify diet and daily routine can be of great help in reducing the cost that is involved in treating the disease at a later stage.

Dr. Joshi's sister Dr. Shuklaben Raval is also part of the drive by the family to combat the disease.

"Where ever we go we appeal to doctors to spend a few minutes with the patients, create awareness about physical activity and healthy diet which should be practiced cutting across all age groups. For instance one should take increase in waist circumference or abdominal obesity as an alarming sign and take immediate measures to prevent the onset of diabetes," Dr. Shuklaben Raval was quoted by the Chronicle, in March of this year.

The Chronicle reported that the theme finalized by International Diabetes Federation for 2019 is "family and diabetes". The campaign of the family from

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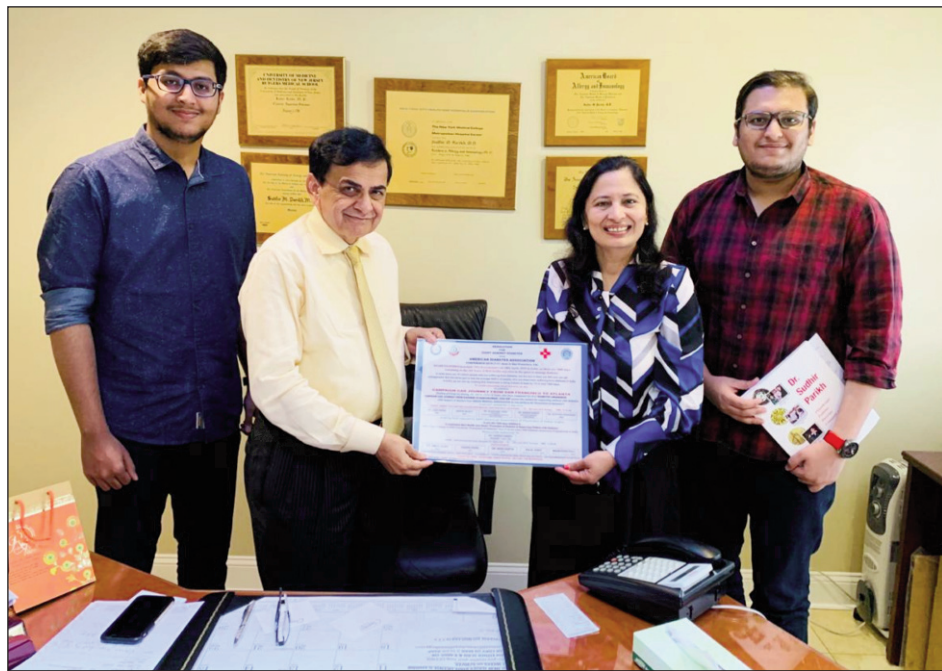
Dr. Smita Joshi and her son Dr. Raja Joshi (on right), and Dr. Shuklaben Raval and her son Mann Pancholi (left).



Dr. Smita Joshi (right) and Dr. Shuklaben Raval have been on a campaign to raise awareness of the epidemic of diabetes in India, especially amongst children and juveniles in the country.

Fighting Diabetes

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Dr. Sudhir Parikh (2nd from left), a recipient of Padma Shri 2010, the Founder and Chairman of Parikh Worldwide Media, with Dr. Smita Joshi (2nd from right), and Dr. Raja Joshi (right), and Mann Pancholi. Dr. Parikh gave an MoU to Dr. Joshi from his foundation, the Parikh Foundation for India's Global Development, with a commitment to curb and combat diabetes in India.



The Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani with Dr. Smita Joshi (left), Dr. Shuklaben Raval (right) and Dr. Ketan Joshi (at back).

Gujarat was flagged off from the venue of Diabetes India 2019 national conference at Jaipur, Rajasthan, on February 28 and it concluded in Kanyakumari on March 13. They were also felicitated by diabetologist Dr. Jothydev Kesavadev, at his center in Thiruvananthapuram.

Throughout the journey the doctor family called for comprehensive strategy involving treatment modalities, education, awareness and research to counter the growing incidence of diabetes in the country.

"Our grandfather late Dr. Vasdevbhai Raval taught us to give back to society in whatever way we can. He used to treat patients free. With patients waiting in queues running up to two km without food, he, too, avoided eating food and just had milk. My father Dr Anil Bhai Raval followed his message and now we all are committed to carry it forward," said Dr Joshi.

In their native place Unjha in Mehsana district of Gujarat, the family has been carrying forward the tradition of providing treatment to the poor sections of society, Chronicle reported.

The family is also supporting people with Type-1 diabetes, a form of diabetes mainly affecting kids and teenagers.

"Our mother Bharatiben Raval helped the children with glucometers and she is constantly creating awareness among parents and caretakers about monitoring sugar levels at regular intervals," said Dr. Joshi.

The latest to join the family's crusade against database were Smita Joshi and Shuklaben's sons, Raja Joshi and Mann Pancholi, both budding doctors, respectively. They accompanied their parents through the journey, leaving their classes. Raja Joshi is now a physician himself, while Pancholi is still a student, revealed Dr. Joshi.



Dr. Smita Joshi (3rd from right), Bhartiben Raval (2nd from right), Dr. Shuklaben Raval, Dr. Raja Joshi (left) and Mann Pancholi greeting the former Governor of Gujarat Om Prakash Kohli, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

During the tour, the family met the representatives of local NGOs working in the field of diabetes prevention and addressed students in medical colleges across many states. At every place they appealed to educate parent and teachers and spread awareness about the disease.

"One of the major focuses should be on diabetes management. There must be constant monitoring of glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure. It is a joint effort of dietitians and diabetes educators. Drugs, diet and exercise should go together," said Dr. Smita Joshi, to the Chronicle.

The family decided to document the entire trip, create booklets, video and audio clips to reach out to maximum number of people, the report said.

In the US, a Diabetes Awareness Car Drive, helmed by Dr. Joshi was flagged off by officials of the Indian Consulate, in San Francisco, in June.

Prominent doctors from both US and India attended the flagging off ceremony from the iconic Golden Gate Bridge.

The team of doctors, led by Dr. Joshi, also saw Dr. Raja Joshi, Mann Pancholi and Dr. Dhara Patel accompanying her.

The drive in the US also saw a handover of a 'Resolution' by Dr. Joshi to President of AAPI, Dr. Naresh Parikh, in Atlanta, Georgia, after completing the 'USA Car Drive'.

Speaking at the flag-off, in California, Dr. Jaswant Patel, a prominent physician, said today's extreme need is prevention of diabetes because 74 million people are affected by the disease in India, and it kills one person every second in India.

Other community leaders who spoke on the occasion included Ashokbhai Bhatt, former Water Commissioner of California and Bhiguraj Singh.

