

## Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities (ARCC) Honors Second Annual Community-Engaged Research Partnership Award Recipient: South Asian Healthy Lifestyle Initiative (SAHELI)



ARCC, the community-based participatory research (CBPR) program of the Center for Community Health (CCH) part of the Northwestern University's Institute for Public Health and Medicine, developed the Community Engaged Research Partnership Award to recognize community-engaged research partnerships that exemplify strong collaborative community research principles and have made an impact on the health of their community.

The award acknowledges the efforts of **The South Asian Healthy Lifestyle Initiative (SAHELI)** which focused on engaging South Asian (SA) immigrants in research to understand multiple determinants of health through use of custom lifestyle interventions. This project is led by Santosh Kumar and Promila Mehta, Metropolitan Asian Family Services (MAFS), and Namratha Kandula and Swapna Dave, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine Division of General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics in the Department of Medicine.

The recipients of this award formed a partnership in 2006 around data collection for a National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Heart Lung and Blood Institute study on developing multimedia heart disease prevention education for South Asian immigrants. Though the heart disease study was initiated and led by Dr. Kandula, it was the first opportunity for MAFS and NU to develop trust, begin building a relationship, and develop health education materials for the South Asian community.

As the partners increased their understanding of each other and the community's needs and interest, they began to use a CBPR approach and an ecological model, to develop research questions and design a focus group study on understanding physical activity in the South Asian community. After receiving a seed grant from ARCC in 2010, MAFS and the NU team conducted the focus group project on physical activity in South Asian women, disseminated the research findings through community newsletters, a community exercise event, at scientific meetings, and are preparing a scientific manuscript.



This seed grant was the spring board for the partnership to successfully apply to NIH for a 2-year R21 grant, "Translating a heart disease lifestyle intervention into the community." This is one of the first, community-based heart disease prevention interventions systematically targeted to underserved South Asian immigrants.

Further information about the partnership, the award and photos/videos are available on the ARCC website at [www.ARCCOnline.net](http://www.ARCCOnline.net)