



## Association of Indian Pathologists in North America

*A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization*

[www.aipna.net](http://www.aipna.net)



DECEMBER 2025

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hope all of you had a wonderful Christmas with family and friends. As we approach the end of the year, I wish you, my AIPNA family a successful and healthy 2026!.

I quote here Aishwarya Rai's powerful message "there is only one caste—humanity; one religion—love; one language—the heart" Let, Our Caste be Humanity, Our religion Love!

My cousin aptly, Saira remarked "AIPNA is a bridge between our past in India and our future in America". Let's cross that bridge together!

Warm Regards,

*Megha Joshi, MD*  
President, AIPNA

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### STRONG AIPNA PRESENCE AT APCON 25:

#### DR NIRAG JHALA, DR. DARSHANA JHALA, DR. MEGHA JOSHI

The **73rd Annual Conference of IAPM & IAP-ID (APCON 2025)**, was successfully held in **Jammu** from **December 3rd to 7th, 2025**.

**Theme:** Emerging Trends in Pathology: From Morphology to Molecular Insights

**Venue:** GMC

This year's conference, with the theme "**Emerging Trends in Pathology: From Morphology to Molecular Insights,**" was carefully designed to showcase the latest advancements and innovations shaping the field of pathology.

The event featured an exciting blend of **plenary lectures** by distinguished experts, valuable **hands-on pre-conference workshops**, and **interactive panel discussions**.

APCON 2025 truly proved to be an **academic feast** for all participants.

The conference served not only as an academic extravaganza but also as a crucial platform for fostering collaboration, networking, and camaraderie among pathologists and microbiologists from across the nation and beyond. The **Organizing Committee** was dedicated to ensuring that every aspect of the conference exceeded expectations, from the scientific program to the hospitality.

APCON was held in the enchanting city of **Jammu**. Known as the "**City of Temples,**" Jammu offered a unique blend of spiritual and natural beauty to all attendees.

## INTERNATIONAL US FACULTY



Dr. Darshana Jhala (USA)



Dr. Megha Joshi (USA)



Dr. Nirag Jhala (USA)

## GLIMPSE OF THE 73RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF IAPM & IAP-ID (APCON 2025)



A vibrant collection of moments from APCON 2025, the 73rd Annual Conference of IAPM & IAP-ID in Jammu, highlighting distinguished speakers, award presentations, and engaged attendees.



## MEET AIPNA OFFICE BEARERS



**VIKAS MEHTA, MD**

**Dr. Mehta, could you share a bit about your journey from India to becoming a prominent pathologist in the U.S.? What inspired you to pursue pathology, and what were some of the key milestones and challenges you faced along the way?**

My journey to become a pathologist ( I am not sure about being prominent) can be summarized as having great mentors and being there at the right time. As Shahrukh Khan said in the movie Om Shanti Om "Kehte hain agar kisi cheez ko dil se chaho toh puri kainat use tumse milane ki koshish mein lag jaati hai." I was a second year medical student at Karnataka institute of medical science, Hubli, I was somewhat drawn to pathology because of my fascination to understand the mechanisms of the disease and how microscopic changes translate into clinical illness. A few months into second year MBBS, Dr. Sadashivayya Jambayya Nagalotimath, joined the hospital as Director. Dr

Nagalotimath was a gifted teacher, a proficient medical researcher and a visionary, organizer. His teachings and his vision had a great impact and I chose pathology as a career. He along with Dr V Joshi was instrumental in setting up annual International CME Course in Surgical Pathology and Cytology which is going strong till date. Anyways a few years down the road, I had started my pathology career as a senior resident after completing my residency in anatomic pathology from Dayanand Medical College and Hospital. The annual AIPNA CME was held in my hospital and that was my first brush with AIPNA. I was then hired by charismatic Dr. Bhus during the CME, to work as assistant professor of pathology at St George's University, Grenada. Moving to USA felt like a natural step after that and I landed in Chicago to complete my anatomic and clinical pathology residency from Loyola University, followed by fellowships in oncologic surgical pathology and genitourinary pathology from Memorial Sloan Kettering cancer

center. All along my career, I was extremely lucky to get mentors like Drs SJ Nagalotimath, Vineeta Malhotra (DMCH), Eva Wojcik and Maria Picken (Loyola) and Satish Tickoo and Victor Reuter (MSKCC). All credit goes to these great people for shaping what I am today. Most of the challenges were either food related (no Indian groceries in Grenada) or visa related in USA!

**When did you first become aware of AIPNA, and what drew you to become an active member?**

I first became aware of AIPNA in 2005 when the annual CME was organized at Dayanand Medical College and Hospital, Ludhiana. Drs Joshi, Dalal, Khan and Jhala(s) dazzled us with all the new advances going on in pathology in USA. I became member of AIPNA once I was a started my residency at Loyola. I first attended the AIPNA meeting at USCAP and I saw a great opportunity for myself to learn and get acquainted to doyens of pathology. I met many of fellow Indian residents at that first meeting and the friendship continues till date. I continue to interact and learn from many of them till today.

**As you prepare to take on the role of AIPNA President, what is your overarching vision for the organization's future? What key priorities do you plan to focus on during your tenure?**

I would say the main goal is to stay on track. AIPNA has achieved great success in academic representation not only in USA and India but all over the world. We have a treasure trove of great "gurus" in AIPNA who have shaped this organization over the years. That being said, I feel it is our responsibility to take it further now. I envision AIPNA as a leading pathology society not only in academics but social interactions also. Dr. Dhanpat Jain has great plan to have state and city chapters where AIPNA members will meet socially to celebrate our heritage besides academic offerings. Dr Sanjay Kakkar has initiated a mentorship program which has become popular. USCAP dinner is a megahit. Increasing the membership base and making this organization financially stable are some of the goals. One of my personal Wishlist is to have a board preparation course run under the aegis of AIPNA to help all residents in pathology.

**For recent pathology graduates and new entrants from India, what specific resources or initiatives does AIPNA plan to offer to help them acclimate to the U.S. workforce and professional landscape?**

The name of the game in pathology is networking. AIPNA is and will be a great resource in future for pathology candidates as well as residents, fellows and early pathologists. Many of us have helped pathology candidates in getting USA pathology rotations (Dr Megha Joshi is the champion). We have collaborated with them to submit abstracts to various pathology meetings. Our esteemed sutradhars (Drs Saxena, Mandavilli, Jhala(s) make sure that we give chance to young pathologists to present in annual meetings (CAP, USCAP, AIPNA-ICP). The Whatsapp group aptly named "Bright Pathologists" is offshoot of AIPNA and is a great resource for everyone to network, ask questions or post a funny meme!

**How can established AIPNA members and the broader community of pathologists in organizations like CAP and USCAP best mentor and support these newcomers? Are there specific strategies you recommend for newer pathologists to effectively network and accelerate their professional growth?**

The mission statement of AIPNA is to enhance the education and practice of pathology in India, North America, and across the globe, and provide a forum for advocacy and networking for pathologists. Our sutradhars make sure that faculty that we choose for presenting at various meetings throughout the world has established names alongside upcoming bright stars of pathology in our community. AIPNA has instituted a mentorship program recently and my advice for residents, fellows and especially early career pathologists to take advantage of this opportunity to learn and make lifelong connections. I want more participation from younger/newer members of the AIPNA so that we can have new ideas and take AIPNA to even greater heights.

**What new programs or initiatives are you most excited to institute during your presidency to better serve the AIPNA community and advance the field of pathology?**

As our membership is growing, I am most excited about establishing state chapters for AIPNA and increasing the mentorship pool for the new members. Getting sponsors for our companion society social programs (USCAP dance and dinner, ASC) and hopefully similar programs at CAP meeting also. We will also try to establish a Board Preparation course for pathology residents taking exam.

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## WELLNESS CORNER



Dear AIPNA members,

It is our pleasure to introduce a wellness corner in every newsletter starting this month. Burnout is real and can happen to anyone! Pathology is a demanding field that often requires intense focus and long hours, making burnout a significant concern. Dedicating space to wellbeing not only validates these challenges but also builds a more supportive professional community.

In our ever-changing world, it is vital that we prioritize caring for ourselves and one another, both in our professional endeavors and our personal lives. By fostering a culture of mutual support and self-compassion, we ensure that we remain resilient and capable of providing the best care for our patients and our

families. Readers are encouraged to contribute a wellness quote or a column about their life- in and outside of pathology that focuses on the efforts they undertake to make sure that they are cognizant of their own wellbeing.

Occasionally, we also plan to suggest activities that improve wellness and are interesting to the readers. The editors have no conflict of interest in suggesting these books/activities. Please feel free to contribute your favorite book/hobby suggestions to be included in the wellness corner.

Kick starting the wellness column is AIPNA president, Dr. Megha Joshi's take on 'life outside of pathology'.

### WELLNESS COLUMN- DR. MEGHA JOSHI



We often speak of the "art" of pathology—the visual patterns, the morphology, the vibrant hues of H&E. But for me, the true art of living lies in the balance we strike when we step away from the microscope.

As pathologists, our days are defined by stillness and intense cerebral focus. To agilely navigate the demands of our profession, I have found my sanctuary in motion: **Classical Indian Dance**.

For me, dance is not just a hobby; it is a moving meditation. When I strap on my *ghungroos* (ankle bells), the stress of complex diagnoses and administrative duties fades away, replaced by the rhythm of the *Tala*. The discipline required to perfect a *Mudra* or maintain a posture demands a different kind of focus than looking at a slide—it connects the mind to the body in a way that is profoundly healing.

In the newsletter introduction to this column, I quoted the old adage: **"Health is Wealth"**. We all know this from our school days, but as physicians, we are often the last to practice it. Dance is my concrete effort to achieve this goal. It ensures that while I dedicate my mind to my patients, I do not neglect the spirit and vitality that sustain me.

I encourage all of you to find your own "dance" - whether it is hiking, painting, or simply sitting in silence. Let us cross the bridge between our professional excellence and our personal well-being together.

**WELLNESS QUOTE OF THE MONTH: "HEALTH IS WEALTH"**

The wellness quote for this month is one that we all know from our school days. But how many of us believe in this and take concrete efforts to achieve this goal? I invite you to reflect deeply on this subject.

Let us embark on this journey of wellness together!

Warm regards,  
Lakshmi Harinath MD MPH

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## TRAINEE CORNER



Dear trainee members of AIPNA,

I hope you are all doing well as we close in on the end of the year. I wanted to share some important updates, spotlight a few developments in advocacy, and

celebrate our community's accomplishments.

### **H-1B Visa & National Interest Exemption for Physicians**

One of the top issues on many of our minds is the recent H-1B visa policy change and its implications for international medical graduates (IMGs) in pathology. Medical associations, including the American Medical Association (AMA) have strongly urged the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to issue guidance that categorically exempts physicians, especially those working in Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs) and Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), from the newly announced \$100,000 H-1B visa application fee.

As of November 2025, however, exemptions are being granted on a case-by-case basis, rather than via a blanket policy. This has understandably created

uncertainty for healthcare employers, especially in rural and underserved regions, that rely heavily on IMGs to fill critical roles.

These advocacy efforts are active right now. The AMA, along with more than 50 specialty societies (including Pathology societies), is pushing for clear, categorical guidance to streamline this process and protect both physician access and patient care in vulnerable communities

### **USCAP 2026 – Congratulations to Our Abstract Presenters!**

Congratulations to our AIPNA junior members that have accepted abstracts for USCAP 2026! This is a tremendous achievement.

If you're attending, please take the time to support your colleagues during their presentations.

### **AIPNA: A Supportive Community**

Remember, AIPNA is more than just an association, it's a network of colleagues who understand the unique challenges IMGs and international pathologists face. Whether you're navigating visa issues, seeking mentorship, or exploring research opportunities, please feel free to reach out to colleagues at AIPNA.

Warm regards,

Swati Bhardwaj, MBBS, MD

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**THE ASCP 2025 ANNUAL MEETING IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

The meeting was well attended. Some of the notable moments from the conference are captured in the pictures below.

Memorable Sessions by the AIPNA members:

Dr. Nirag Jhala: Papanicolaou Society of Cytopathology (PSC) Companion Society Session: Update on Biopsy Techniques for Lesions of the Lung, Pancreas and Thyroid

Dr. Dhanpat Jain: Commonly Used Immunohistochemistry in Hepatopathology: Their Intended and Unintended Utility





## MANIMALA ROY MD, FCAP: CAP HOUSE OF DELEGATES STEERING COMMITTEE



Dr. Roy is currently a practicing pathologist in Jersey Shore University Medical Center, New Jersey, where she is the Medical Director of Transfusion Services and is actively involved in surgical pathology. She is Board certified in anatomic and clinical pathology. Dr. Roy is the past President of New Jersey Association of Blood Bank Professionals. She is a current Professor in the Seton Hall School of Medicine N.J. Dr. Roy received her medical degree in AFMC, Armed Forces Medical College, India and served in the Indian army as a medical doctor. She completed her Anatomic and Clinical Pathology residency in Lenox Hill Hospital, New York, where she was Chief resident. Dr. Roy practiced pathology in Mountainside Hospital, Montclair, NJ, where she was Associate Director, Dept of Pathology, Associate Director Blood Bank, Chairman of Blood Utilization committee and served in several hospital committees for over 20 years. Dr. Roy joined Jersey Shore University Medical Center 14 years ago where she currently practices. In the CAP, Dr. Roy has been an International CAP Laboratory Inspector for many years and is currently on the HOD steering committee, member at large. She is also a member of the COA. Dr. Roy is the current Delegate Chair of New Jersey for the CAP.

**VOTE FOR MANIMALA ROY!!**

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## IMG STORIES



I moved to the United States in the summer of 2015 after matching into Internal Medicine residency at Lahey Hospital and Medical Center in Burlington, Massachusetts. At the time, I was completely new to the country and knew only a handful of people. My very first week of residency began with ICU nights—an intimidating start. I was scared and overwhelmed, but my seniors and the nurses were incredibly

supportive, helping me find my footing during those first few weeks.

Life outside the hospital was no less challenging. I struggled to settle into housing, moving four times in the first two months—first leaving an uncomfortable apartment complex, then staying temporarily with a host, then moving again to be closer to work because I was new to driving, and finally leaving yet another place after discovering it was infested with rodents.

Those early months were a blur of exhaustion, adaptation, and constant change.

In my second year of residency, while traveling to present a poster at the ACP conference, I had a frightening accident. My car hydroplaned on a rainy road and crashed into a railing. Miraculously, I was uninjured, still able to deliver my presentation – even got an award for it and made it in time for my flight to India that night. However, the car was totaled and my insurance skyrocketed. It was yet another unexpected hurdle to overcome.

By my final year of residency, I was applying for a fellowship in Hematology-Oncology. Despite securing eight interviews, I didn't match, due to circumstances I had no control over. It was a difficult disappointment. But I turned to Infectious Diseases—a field I had loved since medical school—and matched at Tufts, where I went on to complete my fellowship.

During this time, I married my wife, who left behind a well-established dental practice in India to join me. Her journey was no less arduous. Earning a dental license in the U.S. proved to be an uphill battle. Though she cleared her boards, she was waitlisted multiple times for dental school without success. She pivoted and pursued an MPH at Harvard, demonstrating the same resilience that has defined our shared journey.

I later pursued a second fellowship in Medical Microbiology at Brigham and became triple board-certified. But when it came time to find a J-1 waiver job, the path forward grew uncertain. After six years in Boston, where we had built a life there and hoped to stay. But waiver-eligible jobs were scarce, and time was running out. I signed a contract with a private practice in Arizona, only for the offer to be rescinded at the last minute because the group was unwilling to navigate the visa process. Other promising opportunities slipped away for the same reason—employers preferred candidates without visa needs.

Those six months of job hunting were some of the most stressful of my life. Conrad-30 slots across states filled quickly, and I was nearing my deadline. Just when it seemed like doors were closing, an opportunity in Mississippi opened. I interviewed virtually—it was the middle of COVID—and accepted the job immediately. It took courage to leave Boston for a town we knew nothing about and never got a chance to visit, but we adapted, slowly building a new life in Mississippi.

After completing my three-year waiver, I secured a green card through the EB1A route. This milestone changed everything. It gave us security, and it opened the door for my wife to pursue her dream again. She matched into a dental residency at the same university where I work—no longer hindered by visa restrictions.

Looking back, I realize how much these struggles shaped me. Every setback—whether housing challenges, car accidents, fellowship disappointments, or visa hurdles—taught me resilience. I learned patience and persistence, and above all, not to give up. I am deeply grateful to God, to my family, and to the mentors and colleagues who stood by me.

These experiences have also made me more compassionate toward other international medical graduates who walk a similar path. I know the weight they carry, and I want to support them just as others supported me.

The greatest lesson I've carried with me is simple: when you face difficulties, keep moving forward. Each step, no matter how small, brings you closer to your goal.

- ANONYMOUS

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

1. Int CME, AIPNA ICP meeting in Amritsar, India; Feb 20-22, 2026
  2. MPAI, Kolkata, India; Feb 27-29, 2026
  3. IAP in Japan, Oct 2026
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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



As the calendar turns to the final page of 2025, I find myself reflecting not just on the year behind us, but on the vibrant "colors" that define our community. Reading through the recap of **APCON 2025** in the City of Temples, I was struck by their unique daily themes—from the elegance of off-white and beige to the passion of magenta and rust. It reminded me that pathology, much like life, is rarely black and white; it is a spectrum of morphology, molecular insights, and human experiences.

This month, our newsletter reflects that full spectrum. We celebrate the "bridge" our organization builds between our heritage in India and our future in America, a sentiment beautifully captured by our President, Dr. Megha Joshi. We also look toward that future with Dr. Vikas Mehta, whose journey from a second-year medical student in Karnataka to AIPNA leadership reminds us that when you desire something from the heart, the universe conspires to make it happen.

However, we also recognize that to care for others, we must first care for ourselves. I am thrilled to introduce our new **Wellness Corner**. As pathologists, we are often the invisible backbone of healthcare, and burnout is a reality we cannot ignore. Let Dr. Joshi's simple yet profound reminder, "Health is Wealth," be our mantra for 2026.

Finally, I urge you to read the **IMG Story** featured in this issue. It is a raw, anonymous account of hydroplaned cars, housing nightmares, and visa anxieties—but ultimately, it is a story of triumph and the "EB1A" finish line. It is a testament to the grit that defines Indian Pathologists in North America.

As we cross the bridge into 2026 together, may your new year be as vibrant as the turquoise dreams of Jammu and as resilient as the spirit of this community.

Warmly,

**Akanksha Gupta, MBBS, MD, FCAP**

Founder & CEO, Ace My Path

Lead editor, AIPNA Newsletter

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