



APPNA BC
Association of Physicians of
Pakistani Descent of North America

APPNA BC Inaugural Conference 2025

Saturday August 2, 2025 07:30 – 15:30 PD

SHERATON VANCOUVER GUILDFORD HOTEL
15269 104th Avenue, Surrey, BC Canada V3R 1N5

APPNA BC Board of Directors and Planning Committee.

- Dr. M Jamil Akhtar- President
- Dr Natasha Afzal , Vice President
- Dr. Muhammad Nadeem- General Secretary
- Dr. Salman Subzwari - Treasurer
- Dr. Khalid Javed - Director

Welcomes you to the APPNA British Columbia Chapter Inaugural Conference! We are excited to host medical professionals, scholars, and community leaders for discussions on healthcare advancements. Participants can network, gain insights from expert speakers, and engage in workshops. We hope you find the experience rewarding as we collaborate for a brighter healthcare future.

Host Committee, APPNA BC Inauguration meeting 2025, Vancouver, Canada.

- Dr Nadia Khan - Chair APPNA BC meeting
- Dr. Uzma Mashood- Chair Host Committee
- Dr. M Jamil Akhtar
- Dr Natasha Afzal.
- Dr Muhammad Nadeem
- Dr Nadia Shoukat.

Organizing Committee

CME, Registration, Media and Promotion

- Dr Shazia Masud , Dr Tehreem Irfan , Dr Atiya Waheed ,Dr Amna Israr

Gala & Entertainment

- Dr Ahmad Rasheed, Dr Naeem Arham, Dr Tayaba

Whistler & Transportation Subcommittee

- Dr Naeem Arham

Volunteers Subcommittee

- Manal, Areesha, Anna, Hamnah, Maheen

Catering & Guest Hospitality Subcommittee

- Dr Ahmad, Dr Hira



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Conference Program

Registration and Breakfast - 0730-0800

UBC CPD
Medicine
CONTINUING
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

"UBC, CFPC, RCPSC ACCREDITED
5HRS Certified credits."

Opening Session

0800-0835 | Moderator - Dr Uzma Mashood

0800-0805 | Recitation of Quran

0805-0810 | National Anthems

0810-0815 | Territorial Acknowledgment & Welcome by APPNA BC President

0815-0820 | APPNA President, Dr. Humeraa Qamar - Opening Remarks

0820-0825 | APPNA President-Elect, Dr Babar Rao Remarks

0825-0830 | Guest of Honor (1) Remarks

0830-0835 | Guest of Honor (2) Remarks



APPNA BC



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CME Sessions

August 2nd, 2025

0835-1005

I: Moderator – Dr. Muhammad Nadeem

0835-0915
Keynote &
Welcome

“Cardio-metabolic Overview among South Asians – The next decade”
–Keynote lecture by Prof. Nadia Khan– Chair APPNA BC meeting

0915-0940
Surgical
Advances

“Laparoscopic and Robotic surgery for colorectal cancer” : Being
Minimalist is better” –Prof.Amjad Parvaiz, International Speaker, UK

0940-1005
Dermatology
Advances

“Practical dermatology for Primary care”
– Prof. Babar Rao, International Speaker , New York

1005-1020

Coffee Break

1020-1135

II: Moderator: Dr.Tehreem Irfan

1020-1045

Family Medicine
& Anesthesia

“Role of Family Physicians in Surgical Patient optimization” – A review
of studies
–Dr. M. Jamil Akhtar ,Clinical Assistant Professor, UBC

1045-1110
Respiratory
Medicine

Snoring, the not so silent threat: Understanding, diagnosing and
managing obstructive sleep apnea
– Dr Rita Wittmann , UBC , Program Director

1110-1135
Endocrinology

Aldosterone and Primary care
–Prof Nadia Khan, Head GIM , UBC

1135-1230

Lunch Break



CME Sessions *Contd...*

August 2nd, 2025

1230-1320 | **III: Moderator: Dr. Natasha Afzal**

1230-1255
*Nephrology
Update* | CKD and Diabetes , evolving strategies - *Dr Syed Amin, UBC*

1255-1320
*Gastroenterology
& Liver Diseases* | Approach to Abnormal Liver function test - *Dr Rasoul, UBC*

1320-1335 | ***Coffee Break***

1335-1400 | **IV: Moderator - Dr. Shazia Masud**

1335-1400
*Mental Health
Update* | "High Risk, High Stakes: Psychosis in the Era of Cannabis and
Stimulant Use"
- *Dr. Natasha Afzal, Clinical Faculty UBC*

1400-1425
*Neurology
Advances* | "Migrane Updates"
-*Dr. Mohammad Salem Alhalabi, UBC*

1425-1500 | ***Networking***



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Gala Dinner & Entertainment

August 2nd, 2025

1830-2300 | III: Moderator: Dr. Jamil Akhtar



Guest of Honour:
MLA Amna Shah
BC NDP



Enjoy a special LIVE performance by renowned physician and singer Dr. Zafar Iqbal, accompanied by talented musicians Sarbjeet and Nadeem.

Whistler Day Trip

0730-1600 |

August 3rd, 2025



Transportation to and from Whistler will be provided. Boxed breakfast (departure from Surrey 0730 am).

Stop over at Stanley Park 30 Min and lunch in Whistler are included. Arrival back Hotel 4-5 pm



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Our Speakers



Prof. Nadia Khan

Prof Nadia Khan is a Professor and Head of General Internal Medicine at the University of British Columbia. She completed her medical school at the University of Alberta, followed by a General Internal Medicine Fellowship and a Master's in Community Health Sciences at the University of Calgary. A clinician-scientist at the Center for Advancing Health Outcomes in Vancouver, her research focuses on the impact of ethnic and gender disparities in cardiovascular disease risk, health services utilization, and disease management. With over 180 peer-reviewed publications, she has also held the Michael Smith Foundation Career Scientist award in Ethnicity and Chronic Disease Management. Dr. Khan is a general internist at St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, and the Director of the SPH Hypertension Clinic.

She serves as Vice President of the Canadian Hypertension Specialist Society and is an American Hypertension Society Clinical Specialist in Hypertension. Dr. Khan was the President of Hypertension Canada (2016-2020) and leads Research and Education at the International Society of Hypertension (2016-2024)

Professor Amjad Parvaiz is a globally recognized colorectal surgeon specializing in laparoscopic and robotic surgery. He earned his MBBS from King Edward Medical University in Lahore and received multiple Fellowships from the Royal College of Surgeons in Glasgow and England. Currently, he heads Laparoscopic & Robotic Colorectal Surgery at the Champalimaud Foundation in Lisbon, Portugal, and serves as a Visiting Consultant and Head of Robotic Surgery at Hamad General Hospital in Qatar. He is also a professor at the University of Portsmouth and an honorary professor at the University of Belgrade.

A pioneer in minimally invasive surgery, Professor Parvaiz has performed over 5,000 laparoscopic and robotic procedures and played a key role in the UK's National Training Programme (Lapco). He founded the European Academy of Robotic Colorectal Surgery (EARCS) and has authored over 200 peer-reviewed publications. His innovations in robotic rectal surgery have made him a leading figure in the field.

He has received numerous awards, including a National Medal for Excellence in Cancer Care, and has trained surgeons worldwide. In addition to his professional achievements, he enjoys sports, mountaineering, and Urdu literature.



Prof Amjad Parvaiz

Dr. Rao is board certified in both dermatology and dermatopathology and is a leading authority on pigmented lesions, as well as a pioneer in dermoscopy and confocal microscopy. He completed residency training and fellowships at the University of London, University of Texas Southwestern, New York University and Cornell University. Dr. Rao currently serves as the acting chair and a clinical professor of dermatology and dermatopathology in the department of dermatology at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Dr. Rao is also an associate clinical professor of dermatology at Weill Cornell Medical College at Cornell University.



Prof. Babar Rao



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Dr. M Jamil Akhtar

Dr. M. Jamil Akhtar is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and an experienced Anesthesiologist at the University Hospital of Northern British Columbia. He earned his medical degree from Rawalpindi Medical College and completed his residency in Anesthesiology at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa. With over 15 years of teaching experience at UBC/UNBC, Dr. Akhtar has held leadership roles, including Discipline-Specific Site Lead and Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee at UBC, and is a Physician Quality Improvement (PQI) Champion.

Dr. Akhtar is dedicated to enhancing patient care and healthcare systems, with expertise in quality improvement and strategic leadership. He has contributed to provincial healthcare initiatives as a member of the QI Steering Committee of Doctors of BC and as PQI Adviser for Northern Health. His commitment extends globally through his work with APPNA, where he is an active member and leader, contributing to healthcare advocacy and development.

In addition to his medical work, Dr. Akhtar is passionate about improving healthcare access in underserved communities, particularly through APPNA's philanthropic initiatives. Outside of his professional life, he enjoys golfing in British Columbia, balancing his work with a relaxed and active lifestyle

Dr. Rita Wittmann is a community respirologist and general internist who works at Langley Memorial Hospital. She attended medical school at UBC, a subsequent rotating internship at St. Paul's Hospital, with residency in internal medicine and subsequent fellowship in Respirology at UBC. She is the medical director for the home oxygen program for the Fraser Health Authority. Prior to her medical career, she worked as a registered nurse in the north of BC. She has worked for 25 years in the Langley community. She dedicates her time away from medicine to cycling, gardening, and cooking with her friends.



Dr Rita Wittmann



Dr. Syed O Amin

Dr. Amin grew up in Toronto and completed his Internal Medicine residency at Yale University School of Medicine. He then went on to do Adult Nephrology residency and subsequent fellowships in Home Dialysis and Hypertension at the University of Ottawa. Following which, he was a Staff Nephrologist at the Saskatchewan Health Authority and was the Division Lead of Nephrology in Regina before joining the UBC Division in August of 2023. He has a passion for home dialysis, hypertension, medical education and leadership. He enjoys the great outdoors and spending time with his young family



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Dr Natasha Afzal

Dr. Afzal completed her psychiatric training in Ireland and has been practicing as an adult and rehabilitation psychiatrist in British Columbia for over 15 years. She has served in a range of consulting roles across Fraser Health and the First Nations Health Authority, where she continues to support complex patient populations and interdisciplinary teams. In addition to her clinical work, she holds a faculty appointment with the Department of Psychiatry at the University of British Columbia.

Dr. Afzal has been involved in initiatives aimed at improving physician health and wellness. She is a strong proponent of collaborative care models and advocates for the active involvement of service users and families in shaping mental health services. Her clinical and academic interests include rehabilitation and recovery in severe and persistent mental illness, treatment-resistant psychosis, early intervention in psychotic disorders, as well as physician health and wellness.

Dr. Rasoul Sotoudehmanesh is a distinguished gastroenterologist with over two decades of clinical, academic, and research experience in Iran and Canada. He currently serves as a gastroenterologist and Assistant Professor at the University Hospital of Northern British Columbia (UHNBC), affiliated with the University of British Columbia.

Dr. Sotoudehmanesh previously held a professorship at Tehran University of Medical Sciences, where he led clinical research and education in gastroenterology. He was the Director of the Advanced Therapeutic GI Fellowship Program at TUMS for nearly a decade, mentoring numerous fellows and contributing to capacity-building in digestive health. His areas of expertise include endoscopic ultrasound (EUS), pancreatobiliary disorders, and inflammatory bowel disease. He has authored more than 45 peer-reviewed publications, including studies in The Lancet, Endoscopy, Pancreas, and American Journal of Gastroenterology



Dr Rasoul Sotoudehmanesh



Dr. Salem Alhalabi

Dr. Salem Alhalabi is a board-certified neurologist currently practicing at the University Hospital of Northern British Columbia. He earned his medical degree from Damascus University Faculty of Medicine and later completed his residency in Neurology and a fellowship in Neurophysiology at Wayne State University in Michigan, USA.

Dr. Alhalabi began his academic and clinical career at Damascus University, where he served for several years as a faculty member. He later assumed a leadership role as the Head of Neuroscience at King Abdullah Medical City, contributing significantly to the development of neurology services in the region.

With a broad background in clinical neurology and neurophysiology, Dr. Alhalabi brings a wealth of international experience and expertise to his current role at UHNBC



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Dr Natasha Afzal,
Vice President



Dr Muhammad Nadeem,
General Secretary



Dr Salman Subzwari,
Treasurer



Dr Khalid Javed,
Director

Host Committee, APPNA BC Inauguration meeting 2025, Vancouver, Canada.



Dr Nadia Khan,
Chair APPNA BC Meeting



Dr Uzma Mashood,
Chair Host Committee



Dr M Jamil Akhtar



Dr Natasha Afzal



Dr Muhammad Nadeem



Dr Nadia Shoukat



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Dr Atiya Waheed



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Manal



Areesha



Anna



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Dr Hira



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