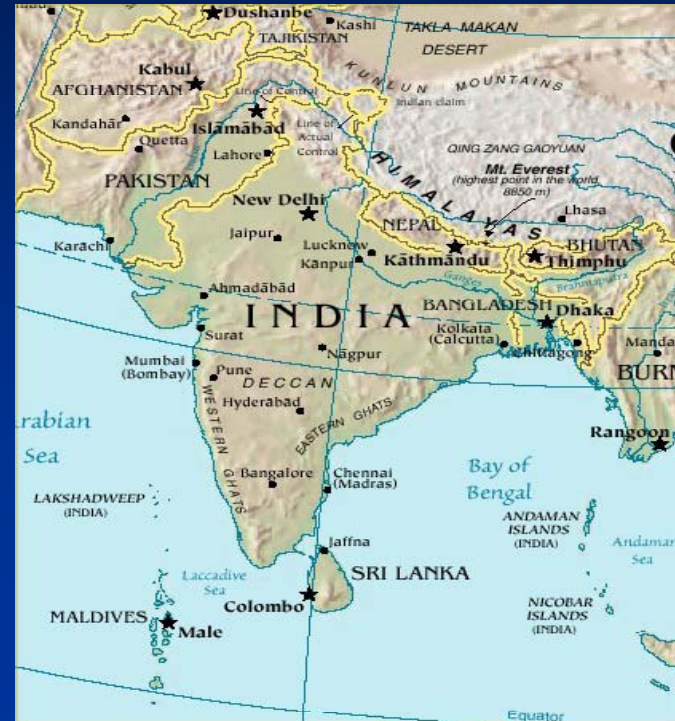


**South Asian
Total Health Initiative (SATHI)**
**A Program of UMDNJ
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School**
**IMPROVING THE HEALTH, WELL BEING,
AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE SOUTH
ASIAN COMMUNITY**

**NJ Statewide Network for Cultural Competence
February 19, 2010
NAVEEN MEHROTRA, MD, MPH
Co-Director SATHI**

What is South Asia?

Bangladesh
Bhutan
India
The Maldives
Nepal
Pakistan
Sri Lanka
Afghanistan?



SAARC

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

- **SAARC** is an economic and political organization of eight countries in Southern Asia established on December 8, 1985 by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka.
- In April 2007, at the Association's 14th summit, Afghanistan became its newest eighth member.
- Until recently, these countries were known as the Indian subcontinent but are now referred to as South Asia

South Asian Population

US Population Estimates¹ (N = 296 million)

South Asians - (n = 2.5 million or 0.8%)

NJ Population Estimates² (N = 8.7 million)

South Asians -(n = 196,000 or 2.3%)

Middlesex County³ (N = 787,000)

South Asians - (n = 46,000 or 5.8%)

1. U.S. Census 2005; 2. U.S. Census 2000; 3. U.S. Census 2006

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South Asian Demographics

Education: 60% of immigrants from India over the age of 25 years hold a bachelor's degree

Religion: Predominance of Hindus in India, Muslims in both Bangladesh and Pakistan, and Buddhists in Sri Lanka

Income: Asian Indians have the highest median income of any ethnic group in the US

1. U.S. Census 2005; 2. U.S. Census 2000; 3. U.S. Census 2006

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Languages of South Asia

Bangladesh	Bangla
Bhutan	Dzongkha
India	Hindi
Maldives	Dhevehi
Nepal	Nepalese
Pakistan	Urdu
Sri Lanka	Sinhalese

Language Barriers can be tremendous in the health care encounter

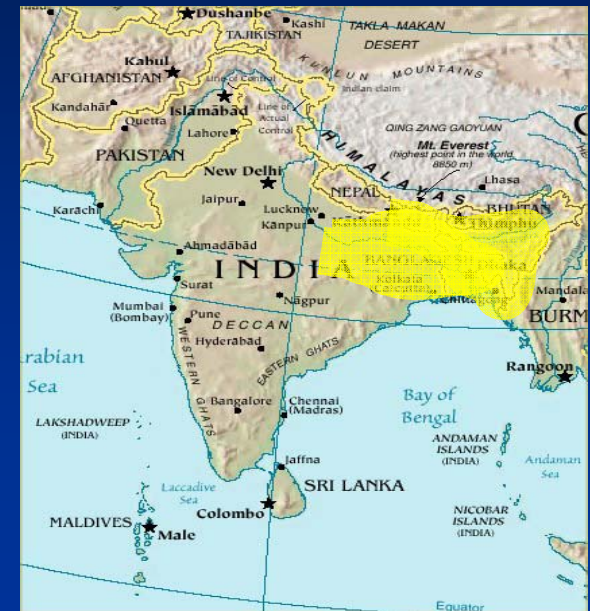
Religions of South Asia

Bangladesh	Islam
Bhutan	Buddhism
India	Hinduism
Maldives	Islam
Nepal	Hinduism
Pakistan	Islam
Sri Lanka	Buddhism

Religious beliefs and practices can often influence the medical management

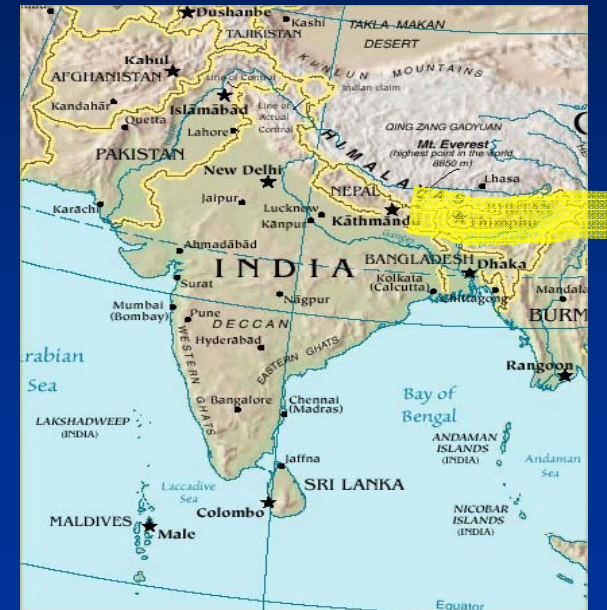
Bangladesh

- Formed in 1947 by the partition of India and Bengal with a capital in Dhaka
- 7th most populous country with a high poverty rate bordered by India on all sides except for a small area which borders Burma
- The Bangla language has a rich literature heritage which is shared with the Bengal state of India



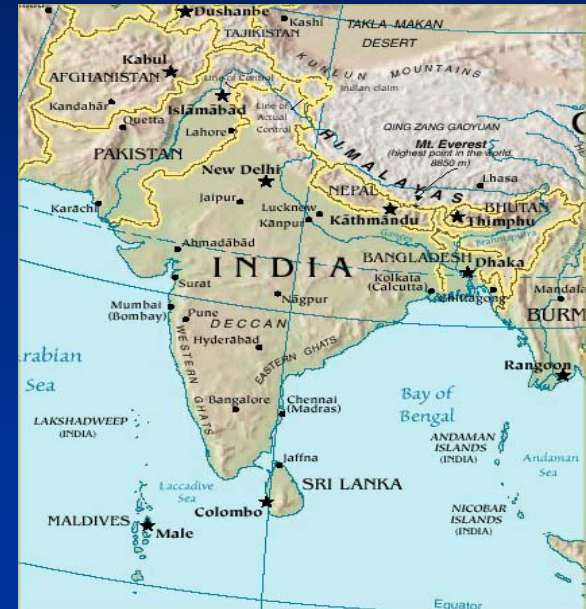
Bhutan

- Land-locked country bordered on the south, east, and west by India and in the north by China
- Bhutanese call their country Druk Yul which means “Land of the Thunder Dragon”
- Bhutanese culture deeply steeped in the Buddhist religion
- National language is Dzongkha, one of the Tibetan languages



India

- 7th largest country by geographical area, second most populous country, and the largest democracy in the world
- Indian culture marked by cultural pluralism
- Traditional familial values are highly respected and joint family structure still exists



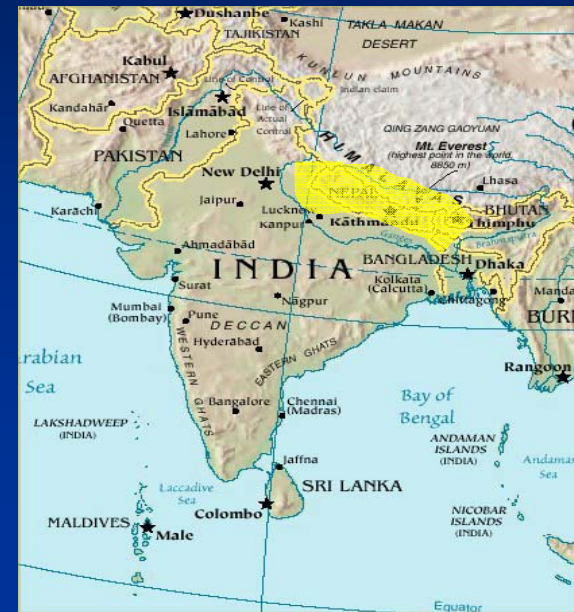
The Maldives

- Smallest Asian island country by population and area
- Predominant language, Dhevehi has Sanskritic origins
- Bhuddism was the main religion until the mid 1200s when Islamic influences overtook the country
- Islam is currently the official religion



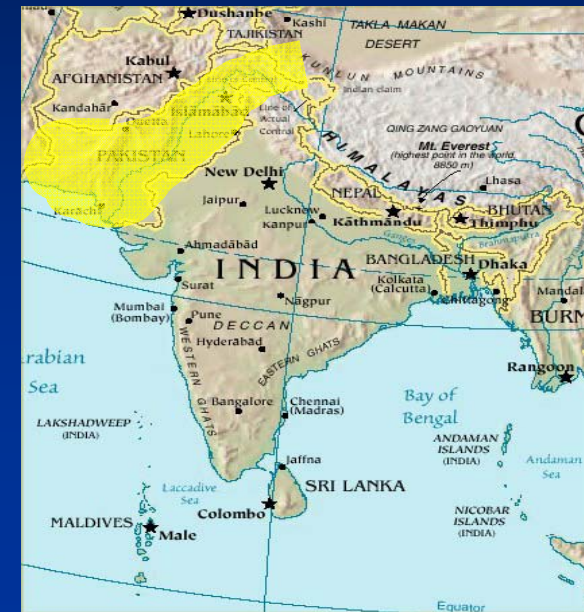
Nepal

- Landlocked country on the north by China and the south, east, and west by India
- Hinduism is the predominant religion even though this was the birthplace of Buddhism
- Nepali language has its root in Sanskrit
- Many folktales are the daily part of life and are enacted via music and dance



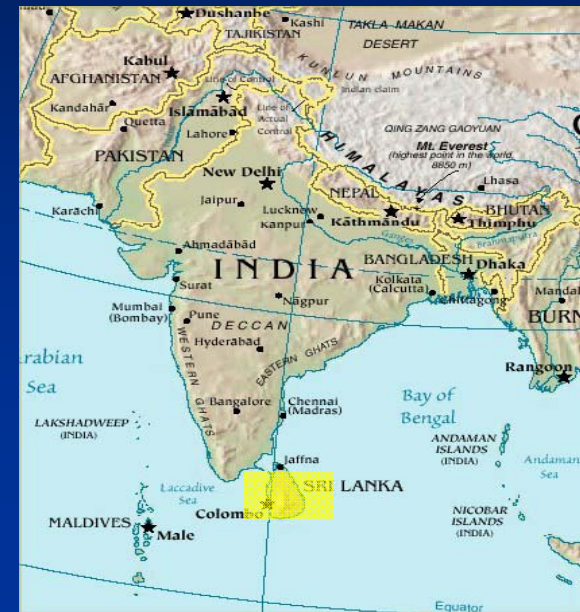
Pakistan

- Bordered by Afghanistan and Iran in the west, China in the north, India in the east and the Gulf of Oman in the South
- History is characterized by military rule and political instability
- Islamic culture, religion, and influence predominate



Sri Lanka

- Island country off the Southern coast of India
- Sinhalese and the Sri Lankan Tamils are the two main groups of people
- Sinhalese and Tamil are the two main spoken languages
- Theravada Buddhism is the predominant religion



South Asian Immigration-1st wave

- Early South Asian immigrants to the United States in the 1900's were mainly of Sikh ancestry who settled on the West Coast and worked in agriculture and railroad industries
- South Asians were prohibited entry into the United States as a result of the Immigration Act of 1917
- Family members of recent immigrants were prohibited from entering into the USA as a result of the Immigration Law of 1924 leading to interracial marriage between the Mexicans and the Hindu Indians

"The Brown Paper". Socio-demographic Profile. Neelam Gupta

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South Asian Immigration-2nd wave

- In 1946 the Luce-Cellar bill lifted the ban on immigration (annual quota of 100 immigrants) and allowed citizenship for South Asians
- Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 led to the influx of a large number of skilled, highly educated workers, with professions in areas of science, engineering, and medicine.
- Between 1966 and 1977, 20,000 doctorate level scientists and 25,000 doctors came from India alone.

“The Brown Paper”. Socio-demographic Profile. Neelam Gupta

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South Asian Immigration- 3rd wave

- Family reunification provisions of the 1965 Immigration act allowed immigration of the extended families of settled professionals
- These immigrants were less educated, economically disadvantaged lower skill workers who were employed in service sector jobs such as cab drivers, motels, convenience stores, and gas stations

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South Asian Classification in the US Census

- Until 1970 South Asian data was collected sporadically- Asian Indians were classified as whites
- 1980- 2000: Census added six response categories for Asians including Asian Indians
- In 2000, a separate “other Asian” category was introduced where people from Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka could write in their country of origin

Model Minority- Healthy and Wealthy?

- The 1990 US census reported the highest median income for the South Asians as compared to any of the other foreign born immigrant groups
- A perception that South Asians are viewed as an exceptionally successful immigrant group with no health and social problems
- The lower income subgroup of South Asians are often ignored because of this misperception

The Medical Disease Burden

(Limited Research Data)

- Asian Indians have a much higher prevalence of CAD
(Viswanathan et.al. *J Amer Col Cardiol*, vol 38, 3, 682-687)
- Asian Indians have twice the incidence of metabolic syndrome and diabetes (Isomaa et.al. *Diabetes Care* 2001;24:683-689; PATEL et.al. *Lancet* 345(1995),pp.405-409)
- Cancer is one of the leading cause of death for Asian American women. (Abbasi, M Rashid, Morristown Memorial Hospital, NJ)
- Dental disease is highly prevalent and oral preventive knowledge is minimal. (Ahluwalia, Kavita. Columbia Univ, NY)

The Population Health Burden (Disparities in Health Literacy)

- Poor understanding of disease prevention and health promotion in the South Asians
- Cultural and gender differences in health seeking and illness behavior including misunderstanding of western medicine
- Stigma of mental illness, lack of information on resources, and its impact on seeking help

South Asian Cultural Beliefs- Family Values

Strong family structure and extended family support may be the norm for many of the South Asians- multiple generations often live in the same household

Respect and honor for parents- elders hold a high place in the family structure and often live with their children

Responsibility for family before the self- decisions are based on the welfare of the family- As such, personal and mental problems are often not discussed outside of the family to prevent the shame and guilt associated with these problems

South Asian Cultural Beliefs- Health Care

- Use of traditional medicine like Ayurveda, Homeopathy, home remedies, and traditional healers is common
- Superstitious beliefs such as the evil eye and rituals to ward off this and other perceived dangers are common
- Types of foods and its relationship to illness and treatment can influence disease management
- Types of foods that a new mother eats during pregnancy and in the post partum period is controlled by the women elders in the family

South Asian Cultural Beliefs- Health Care

- Emotional problems are felt to bring shame and guilt to the family and are not discussed outside of the family
- Maintaining hope is of utmost importance for the survival of a seriously ill patient- disclosure of a diagnosis should be with great care to the patient in agreement with the family
- Family members are usually involved in treatment decisions

Vision of SATHI

To create a
comprehensive resource
to address issues in healthcare
of the South Asian population

Mission Statement

The mission of the
South Asian Total Health Initiative
is to help improve the delivery of
culturally competent healthcare
and the total health of
the South Asian community.

OBJECTIVES OF SATHI

(For Health Care Providers and Organizations)

- Serve as a multicultural education resource for South Asian health
- Assist health care institutions, organizations, and providers in the delivery of culturally competent health care to South Asians
- Conduct research to define disease and health literacy patterns to reduce disparities in health & health care of the South Asian community.

OBJECTIVES OF SATHI

(For the Health Care Consumer)

- Collaborate with local communities and organizations to assess the health care needs of the South Asians
- Engage, educate, and empower the health care consumer about health literacy
- Advise legislators regarding issues surrounding culturally competent health care

SATHI PROJECT FOCUS

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graph TD; A[SATHI PROJECT FOCUS] --> B[OUTREACH]; A --> C[RESEARCH]; A --> D[EDUCATION]; B --> B1[1) Media Programs]; B --> B2[2) Health Fairs]; B --> B3[3) SATHI website]; C --> C1[1) Mental Health Clinical Vignette Study]; C --> C2[2) South Asian Community Health Assessment]; D --> D1[1) SAMADHAN Exchange]; D --> D2[2) Health Disparities Training & Faculty Development];
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OUTREACH

- 1) Media Programs
- 2) Health Fairs
- 3) SATHI website

RESEARCH

- 1) Mental Health Clinical Vignette Study
- 2) South Asian Community Health Assessment

EDUCATION

- 1) SAMADHAN Exchange
- 2) Health Disparities Training & Faculty Development

Community Outreach at Health Fairs



Education and Health Screenings

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Health Survey Research

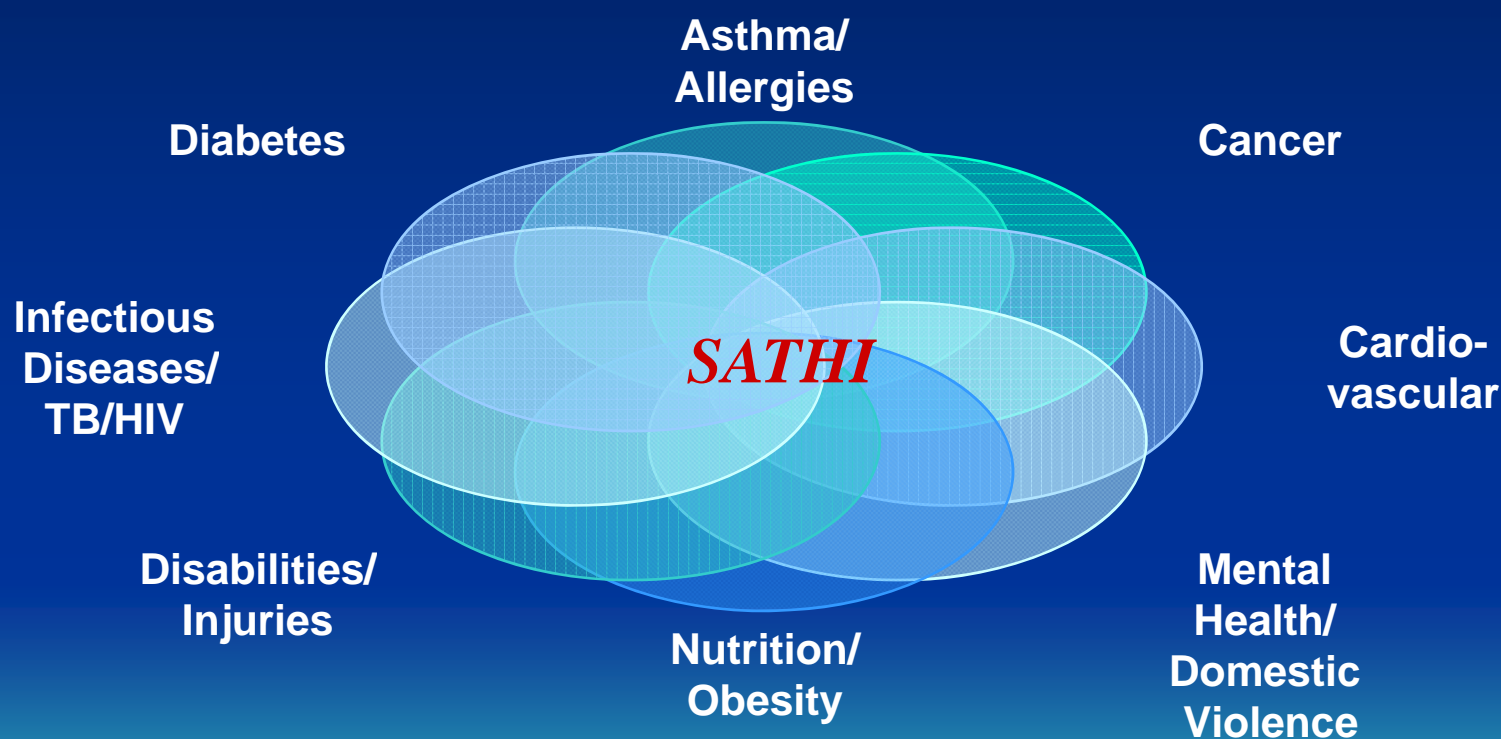
- General Health Assessment of the South Asian community (950 surveys completed)
- Breast Cancer Awareness Module- Current health practices in women in relation to breast cancer
- Oral Health Practices- Current oral care and preventive practices in South Asians
- Mental Health Clinical Vignette Study- Mental illness awareness and recognition patterns in Asian Indians

SAMADHAN student elective

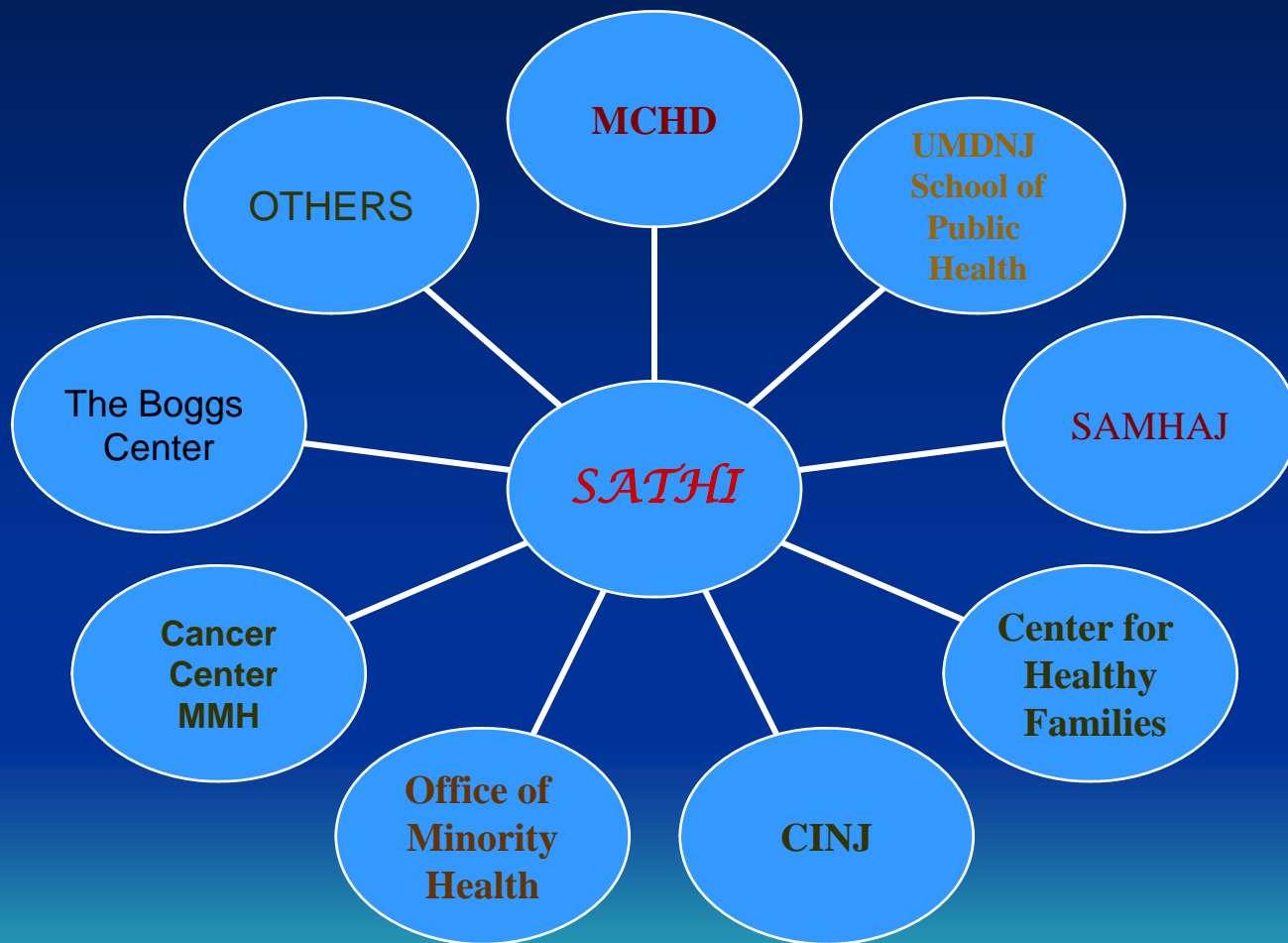


8 Key Disease Topics to be addressed by SATHI

Inspired by Healthy NJ 2010



Collaborations



Contact Us

www.rwjms.umdnc.edu/sathi

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Culture is the widening of the mind and the spirit

“Jawaharlal Nehru”

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