

BIMDA's DYNAMIC DUO



LEADING THE GROUP WITH STRATEGIC VISION

Dr. N. Rao Kopuri and Dr. Ravi Shankar



FORMED IN 1996 by Dr. Mahesh Soni, Glad Kurian and several physician and dental leaders, the Brevard Indo-American Medical and Dental Association is a leading medical nonprofit organization in Florida driven completely by volunteers.

Dr. Rao Kopuri and Dr. Ravi Shankar serve as BIMDA's current president and president-elect, respectively. They invite hospitals, pharmaceuticals and device makers as well as medical professionals from all specialties to support the group's next big conference on Nov. 23, to be held at The Hilton Melbourne Rialto Place.



DR. N. RAO KOPURI, BIMDA'S FIRST DENTIST PRESIDENT

N. Rao Kopuri, B.D.S., M.S., an orthodontist and president at Central Florida Orthodontic Specialists, has lived in Brevard as long as he's been practicing orthodontics — since 1986.

When he moved here 27 years ago, Dr. Kopuri was reluctant about leaving the city life. His wife, Dr. Aparna Kopuri, had been offered a position as a pediatric psychiatrist in the area, and upon taking it, the couple relocated from St. Louis.

"We came from a city, and we had one child at the time," Dr. Kopuri said. "Brevard didn't even have a Toys 'R' Us yet. We were thinking, 'We have to drive an hour just to buy toys?'"

However, once they made the move, Dr. Kopuri and his wife quickly realized that they enjoyed life on the Space Coast. The schools and community surpassed their expectations.

"This is a good place," Dr. Kopuri said. "We are so thankful to be here. This community is so good to us. Now, it is our goal to give back." He does so by operating with the philosophy that patients and staff are his family, and he treats them like such.

After straightening smiles in Brevard for more than two decades, he is now beginning to see second-generation clients. He said he is thrilled that patients trust him so much that they bring their children to see him.

Additionally, most members of his staff have been working alongside Dr. Kopuri at Central Florida Orthodontic Specialists for more than 10 years. His daughter, Dr. Avanthi Kopuri, is a recent addition to the team, and one that he is very proud of.

"You rarely find a father and daughter orthodontist duo," he said. "I am so happy to be working with her, and I'm very proud of her achievements. I don't tell her that enough. Working with her is wonderful"

When asked about his hobbies, Dr. Kopuri said that aside from playing tennis, straightening teeth is truly what he loves to do. "It makes me so happy to see patients that feel good and comfortable with their smiles," Dr. Kopuri said. "Smiling makes people's lives easier, and I will never get tired of being able to help people achieve perfect smiles. I'm not going to retire until my brain stops working because I enjoy this job so much."

Dr. Kopuri's passion also drives him to serve as the president of BIMDA. He has been a member of BIMDA and has volunteered in various board member positions since the not-for-profit organization's inception.

According to Dr. Kopuri, BIMDA is critical to the community because it represents a well-diversified group of physicians and dentists who work closely with hospital networks to constantly enhance relations between hospitals and doctors for the betterment of the medical community and its patients.

Additionally, the group contributes to various charities and local causes, which is one of Dr. Kopuri's favorite components of BIMDA. "Even though it's a medical organization, our main focus is charitable contributions and volunteerism," he said. "All committee members put their heart and soul into this organization, and it's all on a volunteer basis. We really want to help the community."

Ultimately, his vision for BIMDA is to expand the organization's charitable efforts to reach a global level. "I am interested in not only continuing the group's philanthropic efforts locally, but also branching out further by organizing member missions to bring medical and dental care to some of the world's poorest nations," Dr. Kopuri said.

DR. RAVI SHANKAR, RADIATION ONCOLOGIST, PRESIDENT-ELECT OF BIMDA FOR 2014

Ravi Shankar, M.D., a radiation oncologist and president of Cancer Care Centers of Brevard, has been practicing medicine for 26 years. He said he has always taken an interest to the field of oncology because it allows him to give hope to patients who may feel like their disease is unbeatable. "Having the chance to give patients a cure and a full life to live is incredible," he said. "It's the best part of my work."

Dr. Shankar moved to Brevard in 2007, after working at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Fla. He enjoys living in Brevard because of the connected medical community, the family lifestyle and the excellent public education.

At Cancer Care Centers of Brevard, his philosophy is in-line with that of the organization as a whole. He strives to improve hope and lives of patients he serves. "I love working with patients," he said. "I enjoy communicating to them and breaking down the technical aspects of their disease in simple terms so that everyone can understand what it means." He said communication is the most critical element in delivering treatment because patients must understand what is happening to them. "If you can explain to them what a diagnosis really means, then they are a lot more receptive to your treatment," he said.

In his free time, Dr. Shankar enjoys spending time with his wife, Dr. Radhika Shankar, who left the dental field to care for their daughter, Pallavi. "I like to read books and visit new places with my family," he said. "We like to go on long drives. I love the waterfront."

As president-elect of BIMDA, Dr. Shankar aims to continue the success of the organization in years to come. He said he has found BIMDA to give him a well-rounded set of skills, and the organization also keeps him informed of the constant changes in healthcare. "Meetings are important because as physicians, once we specialize, we tend to go into our own focus," he said. "It's good to hear what other physicians are doing and apply their methods to our own practices."

For more information on BIMDA and its events, please visit Bimda.com or contact Dr. Ashok Shah, Sponsorship Chair at (321) 268-2005 or Glad Kurian, Founder & Honorary Executive Director at (321)952-0853.

