



# SAMS

## 2021 INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Program Booklet

"COVID-19 Pandemic: Lessons  
Learned Moving Forward"

Trabzon, Turkey on July 23, 2021.



Syrian American Medical Society- SAMS |



sams-usa |

society.sams-usa.net

Dear SAMS Colleagues,

We are looking forward to hosting SAMS 2nd International Symposium, "COVID-19 Pandemic: Lessons Learned Moving Forward" in Trabzon, Turkey on Friday, July 23, 2021. Our full day symposium will bring together SAMS Members, physicians, humanitarians, and thought leaders, including health care practitioners from inside Syria, and of course our excellent group of SAMS Members! Attendees will learn about the latest updates to treatment and vaccination for COVID-19, its impact on the ground and SAMS' response to the crisis. The symposium will include upwards of 8 hours of CME lectures and a gala dinner with live entertainment and special guest speakers, and will take place at the Radisson Blu Hotel Trabzon.

Following Friday's symposium, we invite our attendees and their families to join us on a six day social excursion, from July 24 - 29. This family friendly tour includes day trips to a plethora of breathtaking natural landscapes, ancient ruins and historical sites, traditional and modern culinary experiences, and high energy adventures including ziplining, horse riding, rafting, and more!

We are so excited to have each and every one of you and to come together again after a long and challenging journey we've all been navigating since our last in-person meeting in Orlando. We hope that the symposium and excursion provides a venue for well-deserved relaxation, reconnection, refocusing and refueling of our collective mission to enrich SAMS members' academic and educational endeavors and to continue to strengthen our humanitarian efforts in Syria and beyond.

We've put together the following informational brochure to aid you in your travel planning, complete with COVID travel restrictions and advisories, event schedules, accommodation information, and more.

As always, thank you all for your constant dedication to SAMS, our members, and the communities and people we serve.

Dr. Basel Termanini  
SAMS Foundation Chair

Dr. Amjad Rass  
SAMS President

Dr. Mazen Issa  
Symposium Co-Chair



# PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## **SYMPOSIUM:**

Thursday, July 22 | 5:00PM - 8:00PM - Registration

Friday, July 23 | Registration - ALL DAY

Trabzon City Tour for families: To Be Announced

8:30AM - 5:30PM - Scientific Program (CME Accredited)

8:00PM - 11:00PM - Evening Gala Dinner and Children's Gala Program

## **EXCURSION:**

Saturday, July 24 | Thursday July 29  
Stay tuned for the full excursion itinerary!



# SYMPOSIUM AND SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

As SAMS first in-person meeting since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are both excited and humbled to bring together an excellent lineup of speakers, many of whom have been on the frontlines of the pandemic for the past year and a half.

Our theme this year is “COVID-19 Pandemic: Lessons Learned Moving Forward.” Our speakers include academics, practitioners, public health officials, and humanitarians who will share lessons learned, updated research and analysis, and data-driven assessments of COVID-19 and pandemics going forward. We are thrilled to have speakers both from the US and the MENA region who can speak from diverse perspectives, from COVID management in practice, to humanitarian aid, to academic and COVID-19 research, and public health policy making.



## National Arab American Medical Association

National Arab American Medical Association (NAAMA) is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. This activity was approved for up to 7 credit hours. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

CME Certificates will be provided upon completion of a post-conference survey.



# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

## SESSION 1

8:00AM – 10:00AM | COVID-19 Epidemiology & Management | Speaker

8:00AM – 8:15AM	Opening remarks	
8:15AM – 8:30AM	The Virology of COVID-19	Leena Hamadeh, PharmD
8:30AM – 9:00AM	COVID-19 Demographics, Epidemiology, and Treatment	Mazen Najjar, MD
9:00AM – 9:30AM	Management of COVID-19 by the Republic of Turkey	Muhammet Ceren, MD
9:30AM – 10:00AM	Review of COVID-19 Approved Treatment Protocols	Mazen Najjar, MD

**10:00AM - 10:30AM Coffee Break**

## SESSION 2

10:30AM – 12:30PM | SAMS Pandemic Management in a Conflict Zone: NW Syria | Speaker

10:30AM – 11:00AM	COVID-19 Response Strategy and COVAX	Vinod Varma, MD
11:00AM – 11:30AM	SAMS Preparation and Implementation: Hospital Volume & Capacity	Mazen Kewara, MD
11:30AM – 11:50AM	SAMS ICU Training: Capacity Building Plan	Abd Arrahman Alomar, MD
11:50AM – 12:10PM	COVID-19 Training: The Evaluation	Khaled Abdullah Alhajji, MD
12:10PM – 12:30PM	SAMS ICU Training: Trainee Perspective	Ahmad Maarouf, MD

**12:30PM - 1:30PM Lunch**





# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

## SESSION 3

1:30PM - 3:30PM

COVID-19 Variants & Vaccinations

Speaker

1:30PM - 2:00PM

Updates on Coronavirus Vaccines

Ghassan M. Saed, MD

2:00PM - 3:00PM

Updates on Coronavirus Mutations

Ghassan M. Saed, MD

**3:00PM - 3:30PM Coffee Break**

## SESSION 4

3:30PM - 5:00PM

A Post-COVID Era

Speaker

3:30PM - 3:50PM

Post-COVID Syndrome

Muhammad Abdulgany Hamadeh, MD

3:50PM - 4:10PM

Behavioral Health in COVID Times

Amjad Bahnassi, MD

4:10PM - 4:30PM

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Medical  
Education: Challenges and Innovations

Abd Arrahman Alomar, MD

4:30PM - 4:50PM

Guidance on Infants Born to Mothers with COVID-19

Abdulghani Sankari, MD

4:50PM - 5:00PM

Concluding Remarks

**8:00PM - 11:00PM Evening Gala Dinner**



# Speaker Biographies

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## **Leena Hamadeh, PharmD**

Leena Hamadeh is a clinical pharmacist who received her pharmacy degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Pharmacy. She completed her first year of residency at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago and went on to complete her Infectious Disease Residency at Advocate Christ Medical Center. She is currently practicing as an Infectious Disease Clinical Pharmacist currently practicing at OSF Little Company of Mary Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois. She has been a part of the SAMS Midwest Foundation since November 2020.

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## **Mazen Najjar, MD**

Dr. Mazen Najjar is a graduate from the University of Aleppo. He is an infectious disease specialist and a Clinical Assistant Professor at Michigan State University.

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## **Muhammet Ceren, MD**

Dr. Ceren completed his pediatric training in 2006. Since 2019, he has served as the Head of the Migrant Health Center's Health Workers Association. He is also serving as an expert on the COVID Resolution Desk for the Ministry of Health in Turkey. He is married with one child.

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## **Vinod Varma, MD**

Dr. Vinod Varma is an experienced health systems specialist focusing on primary health care service delivery in fragile and conflict-affected settings and health policy, finance and systems in low and middle-income countries including evaluation of complex interventions, provider payment systems and getting research into practice.

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## **Amjad Bahnassi, MD**

Dr. Bahnassi came to Worcester in the early 1980s for a residency program at UMass Medical Center as a psychiatrist and never left. After completing his residency, he started Behavioral Healthcare Services, a practice he still leads after more than 25 years.





# Speaker Biographies

## **Mazen Kewara, MD**

Dr. Mazen Kewara is the Turkey Country Director of the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), one of the leading medical and humanitarian organizations working in Syria. Dr. Kewara has a medical degree and PhD in vascular surgery from the University of Damascus and has worked in the Tishreen Hospital in Damascus. In 2011 when the conflict in Syria began, Dr. Kewara started treating victims of the government's violence against peaceful protests, but had to leave Syria to Turkey with his family in 2012. Dr. Kewara then started working with SAMS, and was the founding staff member of the SAMS Turkey office. As Country Director, Dr. Kewara has overseen the growth and expansion of SAMS's northern Syria programs, including supporting health workers, sponsoring hospitals, providing cross-border medical assistance, and training hundreds of doctors and nurses. In addition to humanitarian services Dr. Kewara is involved in the documentation of human rights violations that SAMS does to highlight what health workers have been witnessing in Syria. Dr. Kewara participated in the civil society supporting rooms in Geneva talks, and in many other delegations advocating for humanitarian aspects in Syria. He led the organization in Turkey for more involvement and a leading role in humanitarian coordination and civil society activism.

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## **Ghassan Saed, MD**

Dr. Ghassan M. Saed is currently a Professor of Gynecologic Oncology in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit, Michigan. He is an internationally renowned clinical and translational investigator, who is recognized for many scientific contributions within the fields of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, Immunology, and Gynecologic Oncology. His contributions include publication of over 300 peer reviewed manuscripts, 10 chapters, and 500 abstracts. Additionally, he has given over 350 scientific presentations.

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## **Khaled Abdullah Alhajji, MD**

Dr. Khaled Abdullah Alhajji is originally from Hama, Syria. He is a Cardiologist and has been the medical supervisor for SAMS intensive care projects for the past six years.



# Speaker Biographies

## **Ahmad Maarouf, MD**

"Dr. Ahmad Maarouf received his medical degree from Damascus University College of Medicine in Damascus, Syria. He completed residency in Internal Medicine at Western Reserve Care System/Forum Health. He continued his education at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) as a visiting scholar conducting basic science research and won the American Heart Association Physician-Scientist grants to study Epithelial Sodium Channels. Dr. Maarouf completed a nephrology fellowship in 2009 and a critical care fellowship in 2011, both at UPMC. He advanced his education by receiving a master's degree in business administration from Case Western Reserve University in 2018. From 2009 – 2010, he served as a faculty member at Henry Ford Hospital's Nephrology and Hypertension Division. He held numerous medical directorships, committee chairmanships, and staff positions at Beaumont Health, Michigan's largest health system. He also served as a clinical assistant professor at Michigan State University from 2016 until present, and also as the associate program director for the Internal Medicine Residency Program at Beaumont Health – Trenton. While in Michigan, he served as an advisory board member for Life Gift. Dr. Maarouf is a father of two girls and a boy and enjoys traveling and hiking. He enjoys practicing in community hospitals and focusing on the quality of care delivered to the community we serve. Starting March 2021, Dr. Maarouf became the Chief Medical Officer at HCA Houston Healthcare Northwest with primary focus on advancing quality and patient safety.

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## **Muhammad Abdulgany Hamadeh, MD**

Dr. Abdulgany Hamadeh graduated from Damascus University Medical School in 1983. He went on to complete his Internal Medicine residency at the Hines VA/Loyola University Medical Center. He then complete his pulmonary and critical care/sleep fellowship at Northwestern University Medical Center in 1992. He currently practices at Advocate Christ Medical Center and is the Chief of the pulmonary section and Medical Director of the sleep disorder center.



# Speaker Biographies

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## **Abd Arrahman Alomar, MD**

Dr. Abd Arrahman Alomar is a Syrian Pediatrician, previously working as the Turkey Health Cluster co-coordinator. He is the Senior Health Advisor at SAMS Turkey office.

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## **Abdulghani Sankari, MD**

Dr. Abdulghani Sankari, MD, Ph.D., FAASM, FCCP, is a Physician-Scientist, Professor and Director of Medical Education/DIO. Dr. Sankari is Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Pulmonary Diseases, Critical Care Medicine, and Sleep Medicine. He is a member of several Veterans Affairs and National Institutes of Health review panels. Dr. Sankari has secured several million dollars in grants and has been the principal investigator for government- and non-government-funded studies examining pathophysiology and outcomes for sleep-disordered breathing.

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## **Mohammed Morshed Tamim, MD, FAAP**

Dr. Tamim graduated from Damascus University Medical School in 1986. He went on to finish his Pediatric Residency and Neonatology Fellowship at Case Medical School, MetroHealth Medical Center in 2006. Before moving to the USA, he finished pediatric residency training and worked for a few years in Dubai, UAE. He has mixed experience between the USA and the Gulf area, Dr. Tamim has also participated in many international conferences in the Gulf Area and in Syria, in addition to other conferences and meetings in the USA. He has published several peer review articles and abstracts in the USA and the UAE. Currently, Dr. Tamim works as an attending neonatology staff member at Akron Children's Hospital, and is Chairman of the Pediatric Educational Committee and Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics.

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## Hani Atassi

Merrill Lynch Wealth Management



### Hani Atassi, CFP®, CPM®

First Vice President  
Wealth Management Advisor  
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### Professional Profile

With 25 years in the financial services industry, Hani joined Merrill Lynch Wealth Management as a financial advisor in 1996. Today, Hani focuses on serving Health Care Professionals. He received his bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering from University Of Texas at Austin in 1991 and his MBA in Finance from Loyola University, Chicago in 1994. Hani follows a disciplined process that begins with taking the time to get to know each client and the client's family, financial situation and what matters most to them. He is passionate about delivering excellent service. He holds the Certified Portfolio Manager from Columbia University, and CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ certificate.

As a Senior Portfolio Manager, Hani can help clients pursue their objectives by managing on a discretionary basis his own Personalized or Defined Strategies, which may incorporate individual stocks and bonds, Merrill model portfolios and a third-party investment strategies. A Senior Portfolio Manager may make their strategies available to clients working with other Merrill advisers.

Hani's team believes that good client relationships are built through teamwork and client involvement, delivered through our advisors, client associates and access to the global resources of Merrill. Our goal is to be your primary source for financial advice and guidance. We want you to value the dedication and diligence we provide at each step of the wealth management process.

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# profile

## SKAFCO, a Financial Planning Office



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*Preserving Your Past . . . Protecting Your Future . . . Securing Your Legacy*

I am an advocate for my clients, their dependents & employees. Since 1996, I've been a reliable strategist for my client's life-long planning and lasting legacy. I value my clients, and feel that they are my true employer. My team & I will strive to provide extra-ordinary service along with a professional investment strategy.

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- Chartered Financial Consultant
- CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ Professional
- Accredited Estate Planner
- Chartered Life Underwriter
- Chartered Advisor for Senior Living
- Million Dollar Round Table Life Member:  
Top of the Table
- I have helped more than 300 clients manage their investable assets of \$127 Million through my broker dealer MML Investors Services (MMLIS) as of 12/1/19.
  - Client assets reflect managed and brokerage account values held through MMLIS as of 12/1/19.



Syrian Forum, a nonprofit organization established in 2011 in Turkey, works to rebuild Syrian lives through five programs. Well beyond providing only direct temporary relief, our programs are focused on a 360 degree holistic approach that are designed to empower displaced Syrians within Syria and Syrian refugees in Turkey, securing lasting and sustainable change. Our mission is to rebuild their lives from an emotional, financial and humanitarian angle.

We provide a comprehensive and functional alternative to the sense of defeatism and desperation. Syrian Forum is composed of over 2,300 dedicated full-time employees and professionals who are mostly from the region, speak the dialect and understand the cultural and political nuances on the ground. They are bound together, determined to uplift their compatriots into acquiring the necessary competence and skill set to rebuild, develop, and sustain their families.

**Our five programs are as follows:**

- Ihsan: Relief and Development
- Rizk: Economic Empowerment Program
- Bousla: Development and Innovation
- Omran: Public Policy, Research and Advocacy
- ALSouria: Media and news coverage



## Travel Advisories in Turkey:

In preparation for your travels, we strongly urge you to review the below information that includes US State Department issued Travel Advisories and travel restrictions and protocols for entering Turkey and returning to the US. Please note that all information and restrictions may change with little warning. We strongly recommend to check with your travel agent and/or airline for the most updated information.

### US State Department Travel Advisories:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/turkey-travel-advisory.html>

### General COVID-19 Information for Turkey:

<https://tr.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information-2/>

### Turkey COVID-19 Entry Restrictions:

<https://www.turkishairlines.com/en-int/announcements/coronavirus-outbreak/travel-restrictions/>

### USA COVID-19 Re-entry Requirements:

[https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/covid-19\\_testing\\_required\\_US\\_Entry.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/covid-19_testing_required_US_Entry.html)

SAMS has also arranged for PCR testing to be available on site at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Trabzon by request.

### **Please schedule your PCR test with SAMS Staff upon check-in at the Symposium.**

We also recommend enrolling in the US State Department STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program) to receive important updates and advisories and to facilitate communication in case of an emergency.

<https://step.state.gov/>

### Connecting Flights en route to Turkey:

If you are connecting through any third country, we strongly recommend checking with your airline and the transit country's official sources of information to ensure you are aware of all requirements and restrictions for transiting passengers.



# KEY CONTACT INFORMATION:

**We put together a list of key contact information for your reference throughout your travels:**

Trabzon Emergency Services:

Medical: 112

Police: 155

Fire: 110

US Embassy Ankara: +90 312 455 5555

## **SAMS Leadership:**



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# SAMS 10TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE:

## GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND BREAKTHROUGHS IN HEALTHCARE DELIVERY AND DISPARITIES THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

SAMS is hosting its 10th Annual National Conference in Chicago, Illinois on September 3-5, 2021. The conference will bring together physicians, allied health professionals, students, and humanitarians. The conference will be hosted at Swissotel Chicago in the heart of downtown. Don't miss this opportunity to acquire CME credits and stay up-to-date on the work of SAMS.

Register by July 31, 2021 to receive a 10% Early Bird Discount!

**We hope you enjoy your time in Trabzon at the Symposium and Excursion, and would love to see you in Chicago in September!**



### **Important Disclaimer:**

While we've done our best to collect relevant and accurate information in this guide, please be advised that SAMS does not claim to be an authority on any information, procedures, protocols, or recommendations presented. As a traveler, you assume full responsibility for your travel, health, and safety and should ensure that you understand and follow all required protocols as dictated by government officials, public health authorities, transportation companies, and other governing authorities.

THANK YOU