

РЕСПУБЛИКА АРМЕНИЯ  
МИНИСТЕРСТВО  
ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ  
МИНИСТР



REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
MINISTER

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ  
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23.09.2019 N ԿՔ/10/15624-19  
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Dear AAHPO members,

It is my great privilege and honor to send greetings to all who celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Armenian American Healthcare Professionals Organization.

During the recent two decades, your organization significantly invested in the development of healthcare capabilities in Armenia.

Your commitment and generosity towards implementation of different programs of continuing professional development of healthcare professionals in Armenia is incredible.

I wish you every success in your future endeavours.

SINCERELY,

ARSEN TOROSYAN

МИНИСТЕРСТВО  
ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ  
РЕСПУБЛИКИ АРЦАХ



MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
OF ARTSAKH REPUBLIC

ԱՐՑԱԽԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ  
ԱՌՈՂՋԱՊԱՀՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՆԱԽԱՐԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

ԱՀ, ք. Ստեփանակերտ, Փետրվարի 20/1,  
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*Dear members of the Armenian American Health Professionals  
Organization (AAHPO),*

*I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for  
the work you have done for Artsakh Republic, i.e. improving health  
care awareness, increasing disease prevention and early detection,  
providing medical support and education to the communities. The  
doctors and health care professionals associated with the  
organization have made vital contributions to the health and welfare  
of those they treat. The members of the organization continue to play  
an important part in advancing the health workers' knowledge of  
medicine and health care.*

*I extend my congratulations and thanks to your membership for  
its positive contributions to the health and well-being of our people.  
Best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, as well  
as highly productive activities and continued success.*

*Best wishes*

Minister



Araik Baghryan

25 Septembre 2019



DIocese OF THE ARMenian CHURCH OF AMERICA (EASTERN)  
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Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate

A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP DANIEL

*Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)*

With profound joy, I offer these words of encouragement to the members of the Armenian American Health Professional Organization of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, as they mark the 25th anniversary of this accomplished group. On behalf of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, please accept my blessings and warmest congratulations.

Since its birth 25 years ago, AAHPO has been a great benefit to our people, here in the United States—especially in the Greater New York region—and flowing outward to the Republics of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh. I am especially pleased that AAHPO has been collaborating for years with the Fund for Armenian Relief—the humanitarian relief and development agency of the Eastern Diocese—on several fruitful projects in our homeland.

It has been a blessing for our Armenian health professionals to share their expertise, and to advance the quality of life for our brothers and sisters, abroad and at home. And it is equally blessed for all of you to enjoy the warm, collegial, mutually supportive atmosphere that AAHPO promotes.

For this Silver Anniversary tribute, AAHPO is honoring two exemplary figures who have brought great distinction to their work in the organization, in the community, and in the field of medicine: Dr. Lawrence Najarian and Dr. Suzanne Topalian. Both of them have demonstrated remarkable compassion, generosity, and foresight, by reaching out with their healing art. Tonight we ask our Lord—who is also a Healer—to strengthen the ministry of these two honorees, and continue to guide them in their compassionate work.

Finally, I hold the greatest admiration for the way AAHPO continues to support, preserve, and respect the foundational institution of the Armenian people: our holy church. All of your officers and members deserve our deepest thanks. May God bless, inspire, and protect you, as you continue your vital service in Armenian life.

With my prayers,

Bishop Daniel Findikyan  
Primate

October 19, 2019

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ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA  
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MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS TO THE  
ARMENIAN AMERICAN HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ORGANIZATION  
OF NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY AND CONNECTICUT (AAHPO)

On behalf of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of American I have the distinct pleasure to express thanks and appreciation to the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this vital organization that has worked tirelessly through the years to raise awareness of health care and has helped to provide the best care possible to our fellow Armenians in Armenia, Artsakh, the Middle East, and, indeed, throughout the Diaspora.

On the occasion of this milestone anniversary we extend our congratulations to all of the dedicated members of the AAHPO. We especially acknowledge the two honorees on this occasion, Suzanne L. Topalian, MD., and Lawrence V. Najarian, MD. Their service throughout the years is worthy of the thanks and recognition that will be accorded to them during your 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on October 19. We are happy to extend our thanks and appreciation to the many accolades they will justly receive.

For me it has been a personal pleasure to see the growth of the scope and service of the AAHPO during the past twenty-five years. I wish you continued growth in your distinguished service during the coming decades and pray our Lord and Savior will be your guiding light in all of your humanitarian efforts. God bless you.

Prayerfully,

ARCHBISHOP ANOUSHAVAN

Prelate

Armenian Apostolic Church of America  
(Eastern Prelacy)

October 2019

# Lawrence V. Najarian, M.D.

*President of AAHPO*

On behalf of the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO) Board I welcome you to tonight's fundraising event – our Gala Benefit Banquet. This year we celebrate a very special event - Our 25th Anniversary! AAHPO's single greatest achievement is to have brought together the health care community by providing a platform which unleashes its collective passion and commitment, to make a difference and improve the lives of our fellow Armenians.

The goal for our programs - and EVERY project AAHPO is asked to participate in – is to Help Save Lives!

AAHPO is a multifaceted, all-volunteer, 501(c)3, tax exempt, medical philanthropy. AAHPO's mission is to improve healthcare awareness, increase disease prevention and early detection, and provide medical support and education to Armenians in the tri-state area as well as our brethren in Armenia. It also seeks strategic health care solutions to medical care delivery in Armenia.

Today, we actively leverage the collective knowledge, abilities and resources of over 500 health care providers in pursuit of our mission. The whole, indeed, has become much larger than the parts. We achieve together what none of us could ever accomplish alone!

As we look toward the next twenty-five years, AAHPO is committed to identifying even more opportunities and inaugurate even more programs to deliver more medical services, support and education to those who need it most. We move forward with the bold vision and ambitious goal to be the nexus between the many healthcare needs of our brethren here and in the homeland, and the solutions they so richly deserve.

We are so thankful for the vision of our founders and for the participation of so many healthcare providers who have helped advance AAHPO's mission over the last twenty-five years. These volunteers have collectively donated thousands of hours of their time. But it takes more than time for these programs to take place. It takes funds that have been donated very generously by many of you. Our donors to whom we are grateful, are the essential link between the pillars of our strategic plan and the strength of our future.

For the last twenty-five years, AAHPO has been relentless in its efforts to make the vision of our founders a reality. If it were not for this collaboration of health care providers, volunteers and donors, AAHPO would not be thinking of the next twenty-five years and beyond. It is our vision for the next generation to be ceaseless in their efforts to continue AAHPO's legacy of helping save lives. Together, we have accomplished a lot. However, our responsibility to our community demands that we do more, and we will, with your continued support! Our work touches the lives of all Armenians and helps enhance and extend human life. It is priceless.

Thank you for joining us tonight as we celebrate AAHPO's twenty-fifth anniversary and the exemplary success of our honorees. Have a great evening!

Respectfully,  
Lawrence V. Najarian, MD  
President, AAHPO



## LAWRENCE V. NAJARIAN, M.D.

*Distinguished Physician and Visionary Leader*



**Dr. Lawrence V. Najarian**, is a physician, teacher, and humanitarian who accepts the AAHPO Gold Medal Award on behalf of all the volunteers who have helped AAHPO accomplish its mission over the last 25 years. He is a second-generation Armenian American whose grandparents came through Ellis Island in 1921. Like other survivors of the Armenian Diaspora, they were forever grateful for the opportunity to flourish in a

new country and were honored to become American citizens, a fact that is gratefully acknowledged by every succeeding generation. His parents, high school graduates, worked hard to send him to college.

Today, Dr. Najarian is a board-certified ophthalmologist, founder and medical director of the Bedminster Eye and Laser Center, Bedminster, NJ, where he has ministered to the surrounding communities for 30 years. He is a graduate of The Johns Hopkins University, the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine and completed his training in ophthalmology at New York University Medical Center, Moorfields Eye Hospital in London, and performed research in ocular immunology at Emory University.

For over 30 years, Dr. Najarian has served on the New York University and New York Eye and Ear Infirmary voluntary faculties, teaching ophthalmology residents. He also lectures at Columbia University's Continuing Medical Education Program. He is the recipient of The Arnold P. Gold Foundation Gold Award and this year received the "Healer of the Year Award" from the Teaneck Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Najarian's commitment to science education extends to local classrooms. In 2008, he developed a teaching program for 7th graders at the Gill St. Bernard School and continues to collaborate and expand the program.

A lifelong Boy Scout, Dr. Najarian was honored with the Good Scout Award (2018). At age 13, he was elected to the Order of the Arrow and attained the rank of Eagle Scout. He served as assistant Scout Master, merit badge councilor, fundraiser and board member of Friends of Scouting. His son, Greg Najarian, is an Eagle Scout.

Dr. Najarian has served since 2006 as President of the Armenian American Health Professional Organization, a volunteer-led 501(c)3 charity engaged in medical philanthropy. AAHPO provides medical mentoring, workshops, emergency consultations, counseling, medical care and education to underserved populations in the tri-state area as well as in Armenia and Artsakh.

Dr. Najarian also served on the Board of the Armenian Eye Care Project, which honored him with a Silver Award for his service to patients. He currently serves on the executive board of the Armenian Medical International Committee.

Through these organizations, he has made multiple medical missions to Armenia, organized and chaired international medical meetings, facilitated the donation of a \$1 million microsurgical training laboratory in Yerevan, where several generations of eye surgeons have received training, and supervised the training of physicians who provide much needed care in the rural villages of Armenia and Artsakh.

Dr. Najarian is also a 2019 recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, awarded to individuals for accomplishments in their field and inspired service to our nation.

## SUZANNE L. TOPALIAN, M.D.

*Distinguished Physician-Scientist  
and Groundbreaking Researcher*



**Dr. Suzanne L. Topalian** is the Bloomberg-Kimmel Professor of Cancer Immunotherapy and is a Professor of Surgery and Oncology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She is also the director of the Melanoma Program in the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center, and an associate director of the Bloomberg-Kimmel Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy at Johns Hopkins.

Dr. Topalian grew up in Teaneck, New Jersey, and her father Malcolm Topalian was a founder of the St. Thomas Armenian Church in Tenaflly. She received her undergraduate degree in English literature from Wellesley College, and her medical degree from the Tufts University School of Medicine. She then went on to complete a residency in general surgery at the Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, during which she conducted a fellowship in Pediatric Surgery Research at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. She completed a second fellowship in Surgical Oncology at the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.

Subsequently, she joined the faculty of the NIH as a Senior Investigator in the Surgery Branch of the National Cancer Institute. In 2006, after a 21-year tenure at the NCI, Dr. Topalian transitioned to Johns Hopkins to become the inaugural director of the Melanoma Program in the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Dr. Topalian is a physician-scientist whose studies of anti-tumor immunity – that is, how the immune system reacts to cancer -- have been foundational in developing immune-based cancer therapies. She has conducted seminal work in developing lymphocyte transfer therapies (“adoptive T cell transfer”) and experimental cancer vaccines.

However, she is best known for leading the clinical development and biomarker discovery for PD-1 pathway blockade, a new immune-based treatment approach with durable activity and survival benefit in several types of advanced cancers. To date, these efforts have supported FDA approvals for 6 new drugs and diagnostics in 16 different cancers.

Dr. Topalian's work is widely recognized: she was named one of “Nature's 10” in 2014, and received the Karnofsky Award from the American Society of Clinical Oncology in 2015, the Taubman Prize in 2016, and the NCI's Rosalind E. Franklin Award in 2018, for landmark discoveries in cancer immunotherapy. Dr. Topalian was elected to the National Academy of Medicine in 2017. Her work has opened new avenues of scientific investigation and has established immunotherapy as a pillar of oncology.



## ABOUT ARMENIAN AMERICAN HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ORGANIZATION (AAHPO)

AAHPO was established in the fall of 1994 through the vision and determination of Nahabed G. Kasabian, MD, Khoren Nalbandian, RPh and John A. Nercessian, MD. All three were active individuals in the the New York, New Jersey Metropolitan area and they felt that the Armenian community needed a medical healthcare group to educate, serve, and help it.

The original steering committee consisted of Dr. Nahabed Kasabian, Mr. Khoren Nalbandian, Dr. John Nercessian, Dr. Pierre Maldjian, Dr. Haikaz Grigorian, Dr. Edmund Gergerian, Dr. Kourkin Tchorbajian, Dr. Knarig Khatchadourian, Dr. Harout Mekhjian, Dr. Hrair Shahinian, Prof. Annette Choolfaian, RN, MPA, Dr. Robert Aslanian, Dr. Heripsime Ohanian and Dr. Victoria Voskian. After several meetings, preliminary by-laws were drafted and the organization achieved a non profit status. AAHPO membership was open to individuals with professional degrees in all health related fields such as Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Podiatry, Chiropractic, Optometry, Nursing, Nutrition and others.

The original mission of AAHPO was to promote and advance the science and art of healing, to educate and improve the health services of the Armenian community in the metropolitan area, to foster fellowship among Armenian Health Professionals,

to assist young Armenian health providers with direction and guidance into their medical fields, to cooperate and coordinate activities with other Armenian Health Professional organizations and to address and improve health care needs in Armenia.

Throughout the past 25 years, AAHPO's presidents and board members implemented and expanded AAHPO's mission assisted by an increased membership in the organization, commitment and dedication of its members and engagement of the community. Rejuvenated by novel ideas and energy, AAHPO's mission shifted to a higher level of service with the development of new and innovative programs geared to serving the tri-state local Armenian communities as well as Armenia.



*1995-1996 Executive Officers.*

*Standing left to right, Dr. Haikaz M. Grigorian, Khoren O. Nalbandian, R.Ph., Dr. Ohannes A. Nercessian, Dr. Robert A. Aslanian, Dr. Nahabed G. Kasabian, Dr. Pierre Maldjian, Dr. Edmund L. Gergerian. Seated left to right, Dr. Victoria Voskian, Dr. Knarig Khatchadurian, Dr. Heripsime Ohanian*





# HONORING OUTSTANDING ARMENIAN LUMINARIES IN MEDICINE AND PHILANTHROPY

Throughout the years, AAHPO has honored and paid special tribute to exceptional physicians and philanthropists in the Armenian community for their outstanding contributions to the advancement of healthcare here and in Armenia.



*Mrs. Louise Simone Manoogian*



*Dr. Ara Hovanessian*



*Dr. Stephan P. Ariyan*



*Dr. Edgar M. Housepian*



*Dr. Avedis K. Khatchadurian*



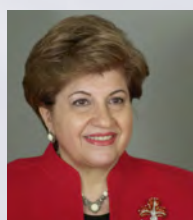
*Dr. Harout A. Mekhjian*



*Mr. Kevork Hovnanian*



*Dr. Aram V. Chobanian*



*Mrs. Rita Balian*



*Dr. John P. Bilezikian*



*Dr. Roger V. Ohanesian*



*Dr. Levon Nazarian*



*Mr. Nazar Nazarian*



*Dr. Ara Darzi*

## *Outstanding Philanthropy in Armenia in the Health Field*

Mrs. Louise Simone Manoogian, Mr. Nazar Nazarian,  
Mrs. Rita Balian, Mr. Kevork Hovnanian

## *Outstanding Achievements in Medicine and Research*

Dr. Ara Hovanessian, Dr. Avedis K. Khatchadurian,  
Dr. Aram V. Chobanian, Dr. John P. Bilezikian

## *Outstanding Achievements in Surgery*

Dr. Stephen P. Ariyan, Dr. Harout A. Mekhjian,  
Dr. Edgar M. Housepian, Dr. Richard K. Babayan, Dr. Ara Darzi

## *Outstanding Achievements in Medical Outreach in Armenia*

Dr. Levon Nazarian, Dr. Roger V. Ohanesian

## *Outstanding Achievement in Health Policy and Management*

Ms. Annette Choolfaian, RN, MPA

## *Lifetime Achievement Award*

Dr. Haikaz M. Grigorian

## *Ambassador to Humanity and Medicine*

Dr. Raffy A. Hovanessian

## *Outstanding Achievement in the Founding of A.A.H.P.O.*

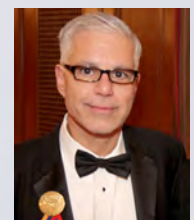
Mr. Khoren O. Nalbandian, RPh  
Dr. Nahabed G. Kasabian



*Dr. Raffy A. Hovanessian*



*Khoren O. Nalbandian, RPh*



*Dr. Nahabed G. Kasabian*

## 10th Armenian Medical World Congress (AMWC09)

AAHPO's efforts to improve medical care delivery to our local Armenian Community and Armenia were recognized by the Armenian Medical International Committee (AMIC) of which AAHPO is a member. In 2009, AAHPO was chosen to host the prestigious Tenth Armenian Medical World Congress in New York City. Over 300 health care providers from around the world convened to attend scientific sessions where world famous physicians, scientists, and luminaries presented the latest medical advances, research and technology available in the medical and allied health fields with emphasis on Health Care Delivery Systems in Armenia and the Diaspora. During the closing ceremonies, Dr. Ara Darzi, Dr. Levon Nazarian, and Mr. Nazar Nazarian were honored for their outstanding accomplishments in medicine and philanthropy.

Recently, AAHPO was offered a seat on the AMIC Executive Committee. AAHPO is committed and supportive of AMIC's role as an important global connection for all Armenian health care professionals.



*10th Armenian Medical World Congress honorees.  
Left to right, Dr. Levon Nazarian, Mr. Nazar Nazarian, Lord Ara Darzi, Mr. Haig Didizian, Mrs. Vicki Shoghag and Dr. Raffy Hovanesian.*



*Left to right, Dr. Aram Chobanian, Lord Ara Darzi, MD, Minister of Health, U.K., Dr. Hranush Hakobyan, Dr. Harutyun Kushkyan, Minister of Health of Armenia, Dr. Gohar Kyalyan, Dr. Edgar Housepian, Dr. Ara Babloyan.*

## ELLIS ISLAND AWARD RECIPIENTS

### AAHPO MEMBERS & HONOREES

Dr. John P. Bilezikian  
Dr. Ted Chaglassian  
Dr. Aram V. Chobanian  
Ms. Annette Choolfaian  
Dr. Raffy A. Hovanesian  
Mrs. Vicki Shoghag Hovanesian  
Mr. Kevork Hovnanian  
Dr. Edgar M. Housepian

Dr. Haroutune A. Mekhjian  
Dr. Lawrence V. Najarian  
Dr. Tavit Najarian  
Mr. Nazar Nazarian  
Dr. Ohannes A. Nercessian  
Dr. Roger V. Ohanesian  
Mrs. Louise Simone Manoogian



*Dr. Lawrence Najarian, Co-Chair Congress, Congressman Frank Pallone, Dr. Avedis Bogosian, President of AMIC, Dr. Vicken Pamoukian, Co-Chair Congress, a guest and Dr. Aram Cazazian*



# MEDICAL OUTREACH IN ARMENIA

## Continuing Medical Education Program

As Armenia became a proud independent nation in 1991, its healthcare delivery system faced unexpected challenges. While in the United States Continuing Medical Education (CME) is a yearly requirement for physicians, dentists, and most healthcare professionals, in Armenia, CME is not a requirement and does not really exist. So once one graduates from medical or dental schools there are no programs for continuing education.

Several years ago, Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) and AAHPO, through the vision of Dr. Raffy A. Hovanessian, recognized the depth and widespread nature of this problem and partnered to fund the CME Program for physicians from rural Armenia and Karabagh. This program is vital to training physicians and nurses as tens of thousands of Armenians depend on their medical skills. The feedback gained from physicians trained in this program has been very positive. Truly appreciative of the knowledge gained, the graduates return to their rural villages, apply the skills gained in treating their patients and sharing their knowledge with fellow physicians.



*Dr. Raffy Hovanessian, Dr. Tsoline Kojaoghlanian, Dr. Garbis Baydar, Dr. Lawrence Najarian and a graduate of the CME Program in 2011*

Since 2010, AAHPO's steadfast commitment to the Continuing Medical Education Program resulted in the training of 25 physicians each year. More than 200 health care providers have benefited from this program so far, with many more waiting to participate in this invaluable opportunity.



*Some CME program graduates with AAHPO Medical Mission participants during the July 2011 Medical Mission to Armenia*

The program enables doctors and nurses to enhance their skills and learn new techniques, improving the quality of healthcare delivery to their patients. Funds raised by AAHPO for the CME month-long program in Yerevan cover tuition expenses, lodging and a stipend for doctors who are taking time off from work and family. Over the course of four weeks, physician and nurses participate in intensive programs in their specialty or subspecialty in leading medical centers, universities and advanced clinics in Yerevan.

AAHPO's efforts to raise funds for the CME program were realized through several major fundraisers and the generosity and philanthropy of Mr. & Mrs. Nazar & Ardemis Nazarian which have secured the continuation of the program for now. However, AAHPO still depends on the generosity of its members and friends to keep the CME program in place for many years to come.



*2019 CME graduates together with Dr. Hambardzum Simonyan*



# MEDICAL OUTREACH IN ARMENIA

## Medical Mission to Armenia

AAHPO's Medical Mission was launched in July 2011 when a group of 20 physicians, dentists and nurses visited clinics in rural Armenia while they attended the Armenian Medical Congress in Yerevan. The next Medical Mission of 2014 focused on recognizing and treating thyroid disease. Consecutively since 2015, the AAHPO medical mission has worked with Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) and/or Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) to facilitate its medical missions. Using their vast infrastructure and connections to local polyclinics and hospitals has allowed our AAHPO Medical Mission Volunteers the ability to gain access to rural areas where people sadly still have no or limited access to medical, dental, or eye care.

Since 2015 the Medical Mission outreach has volunteered in several villages in different Marzes (provinces), including Yerevan, Armavir, Alaverdi (Lori), Panik (Shirak), Berd (Tavush), and Artzakh. The AAHPO Medical Missions are extremely rewarding as they allow our AAHPO volunteers to work with healthcare practitioners in Armenia, transferring knowledge and connecting on a personal level, creating friendships which last for years. Our volunteers pay their own way and often take their own supplies or donations, taking time off from their practices but it is truly a life-changing experience.



July 2019 Medical Mission to Armenia participants

AAHPO's endeavors to provide medical assistance in Armenia were apparent in **2006** when AAHPO, through Dr. Lawrence Najarian's efforts, negotiated a \$1,000,000 donation from Pfizer Inc. to the Armenian Eye Care Project (AECF) for state-of-the art **"Wet Lab."** The equipment furnished five operating rooms and teaching labs becoming the central feature of the newly created "Center of Teaching Excellence in Eye Care" in Yerevan.



Knarig Khatchadourian, PhD,  
Dr. Lawrence Najarian, Dr. Roger  
Ohanesian, Dr. Edgar Housepian

**In 2009, Hyebridge Telemedicine** was initiated in collaboration with Armenian Fund, USA. This program enables health care providers to consult with their counterparts in Armenia on challenging medical cases. Newer technology promises to make this a more commonly used modality in the near future.

**In 2014, the Conference on Nutrition** attended by over 180 health professionals focusing on childhood malnutrition was held at the American University of Armenian (AUA). Organized by Columbia University, AUA, FAR and World Vision was also co-sponsored by AAHPO and Armenian Medical Fund. Kim Hekimian, PhD, professor of Public Health at Columbia University and AUA and an AAHPO Board Member, opened the International Symposium.



# MEDICAL OUTREACH IN ARMENIA

## Current AAHPO member projects in Armenia

Throughout the years, many AAHPO members have traveled to Armenia and organized their own mini medical missions by visiting rural clinics, treating patients, training local doctors, bringing medical supplies, and donating medical and dental equipment.

### **Dr. John P. Bilezikian - Destination: Armenia 2007-2019**

AAHPO Board Member, Dr. John P. Bilezikian, is Professor of Medicine and Pharmacology at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University where he has spent virtually his entirely academic career as an endocrinologist, practicing and conducting research in his chosen specialty of osteoporosis. Inspired by the late, great Professor Edgar Housepian, also a distinguished member of the Columbia University faculty, Dr. Bilezikian first visit to Armenia in 2007 led to a commitment to improve the skeletal health for Armenian women in Armenia ever since.

To that end, he has singlehandedly arranged for the delivery of over 10 instruments to measure bone density (a key method to diagnose osteoporosis), placing them throughout Armenia and in Artsakh. This fall, he will have conducted his 13th Annual Osteoporosis Symposium in Yerevan at which over 500 Armenian doctors and other health care professionals attend. In addition, he will have conducted his 3rd International Summit at which world leaders from Eurasian countries and beyond will have gathered to discuss key global aspects of osteoporosis. The Osteoporosis Center of Armenia, which he founded in 2017 and is directed by Dr. Varta Babalyan, was recognized by the International Osteoporosis Foundation in 2019 with a medal of commendation, signifying it as among the most active and productive in the world.

### **Dr. Vahe Tateosian**

AAHPO Board Member, Dr. Vahe Tateosian has been involved in health care projects across Armenia and Artsakh in several capacities. Namely, he organized and moderated a number of medical and surgical missions to Armenia and has been actively involved in lecturing and providing hands-on training

in Anesthesia and Critical Care medicine in both Yerevan and Artsakh. He continues to lecture throughout the year in Armenia on critical care medicine via the Tele-Health program and the National Medical Library of Armenia. Most recently he was an invited lecturer at the 2019 Anesthesia Symposium of the Armenian Medical World Congress.

### **Dr. Samuel Badalian**

Every year, since 2006, Dr. Badalian has been going to Armenia to teach urogynecology and vaginal surgeries in different hospitals in Yerevan and in Marzes. He organized 3 Urogynecology Symposiums in the country by inviting many well known specialists from all over the world to teach in Armenia. Last October he was in Tavush region of Northern Armenia. This was his 3rd Urogynecology and Operative Gynecology Symposium in Armenia. Dr. Badalian was there with Dr. Elena Sagayan from Kaiser Permanente Hospital, CA. They performed multiple pelvic reconstructive surgeries with anti-incontinence procedures. Their visit was coordinated by the FAR office of Armenia.

### **Dr. Kim Hekimian**

AAHPO Board Member, Kim Hekimian, PhD, has worked on issues related to infant and young child feeding in Armenia. With support from the Fund for Armenian Relief, Dr. Hekimian, with her colleagues at the Institute of Human Nutrition, Columbia University, has organized conferences on maternal and child nutrition held at the American University of Armenia School of Public Health.

In 2019, under AAHPO's sponsorship, she organized an annual conference to explore how the Diaspora can move away from humanitarian assistance toward institutional capacity building in health care in Armenia. The conference focused its discussion on how the Diaspora can better spend its time and money to improve the quality of health care, focus on prevention as well as treatment, align its priorities with Armenia's, and actually measure the health outcome effects of Diaspora contributions. Stay tuned for the next conference on February 1, 2020.



AAHPO Activities Over 25 Years





AAHPO Banquets Over the Years





## PROGRAM

Welcome

Banquet Co-Chairs

***Dr. & Mrs. Aram & Rima Cazazian***

Master of Ceremonies

***Ms. Ani C. Hovanessian, Esq.***

National Anthems

***Ms. Hasmik Mekhanejian***

Invocation

***Very Rev. Fr. Simion Odabashian***

AAHPO Video Presentation

Keynote Speaker

***Dr. John P. Bilezikian***

Dinner

Presentation of Awards

Distinguished Physician-Scientist and Groundbreaking Researcher

***Dr. Suzanne Topalian***

introduced by ***Dr. Drew M. Pardoll***

Distinguished Physician and Visionary Leader

***Dr. Lawrence V. Najarian***

introduced by ***Dr. Raffy A. Hovanessian***

Dancing to the Tunes of

***DJ Harry***

Viennese Dessert Table



**Ms. Ani C. Hovanessian, Esq. Master of Ceremonies**

**Ani Hovanessian** is a partner and Chair of the New York Tax and Wealth Planning department of the law firm Venable, one of America's top 100 law firms with over 850 attorneys in offices across the country practicing in all areas of the law. Ani graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Stanford University with a double major in Psychology and Political Science. She then attended NYU School of Law and has worked at large law firms throughout her career. She focuses on trust and estate planning, business succession planning and charitable tax planning. Ani serves as Personal General Counsel to high net worth families and individuals, including private equity, hedge fund and venture capital principals; executives of privately and publicly held businesses, family business owners; domestic and international entrepreneurs; real estate investors; and art collectors.

She advises her clients on the complexities of strategic wealth transference, business succession and asset protection planning, which include premarital and postmarital planning. Ani's clients not only appreciate her legal guidance, they also value the meaningful relationships that she develops with them. In 2017, Ani was chosen as one of five Rising Stars at her previous law firm. Ani lives in northern New Jersey and in addition to her vibrant career is raising her three rising stars, Ara, Armen and Alec. She is also the daughter of Dr. & Mrs. Raffy & Shoghag Hovanessian.

**Drew M. Pardoll, M.D. Introducing Dr. Suzanne L. Topalian**

**Dr. Drew M. Pardoll** is the Abeloff Professor of Oncology, Medicine, Pathology, Molecular Biology and Genetics at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. He directs the Bloomberg-Kimmel Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy and the Cancer Immunology Program in the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins. Dr. Pardoll attended Johns Hopkins University, where he earned his MD, PhD in 1982 and completed his medical residency and oncology fellowship in 1985. He then worked for three years at the National Institutes of Health as a Medical Staff Fellow, before returning to Hopkins to join the faculty in 1988. Dr. Pardoll has published over 300 research articles and over 20 book chapters on cancer immunology and immunotherapy, and he is a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors. His work covers subjects such as cancer vaccines, gene therapies, cancer prevention technologies, and oncology drug development based on modulating cancer-associated immune pathways.

He is internationally recognized as a field leader and has served on numerous editorial boards and scientific advisory boards. Dr. Pardoll married Dr. Suzanne Topalian in 1993, and their collaborative work has developed new immune-modulating drugs such as anti-PD-1 for cancer therapy.

**Raffy A. Hovanessian, M.D. Introducing Dr. Lawrence V. Najarian**

**Dr. Raffy A. Hovanessian** has touched the lives of many individuals as a doctor, philanthropist and community leader. Dr. Hovanessian graduated from American University of Beirut (AUB), Lebanon in Internal Medicine. He specialized in Gastroenterology at Johns Hopkins University. Drafted into the U.S. Army as a major, Dr. Hovanessian put his medical education to good use during the Vietnam War, focusing on infectious diseases of the stomach and colon during his assignment at the Fort Knox, Kentucky.

For 40 years, Dr. Hovanessian led a vibrant private practice in Northwest Indiana. He has been President of the Medical Staff at Mercy Hospital, Alpha Omega Honor Medical Society, and has also served as Chairman of the Department of Medicine at both Mercy Hospital and Methodist Hospital, and Chairman of Methodist Hospital's Credentials Committee.

A true patriot and community leader, Dr. Hovanessian has served the Armenian community at the highest levels in a multitude of organizations including the Armenian Assembly, AGBU, AUA, Armenian Church Endowment Fund, Diocese of the Armenian Church, and Catholicos Electoral Committees of the Armenian Church. He is the recipient of many awards including Ellis Island, Etchmiadzin's St. Gregory and St. Nersess Medals, Cilicia's Prince of Cilicia, NAACP Golden Heritage Award, and Prelacy Man of the Year. Through his efforts at the Fund for Armenia Relief and as a Board member of the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO). He has been an activist leader in supporting continuing medical education of physicians in Armenia, and for this reason, in 2014 he was presented with AAHPO's Ambassador to Humanity and Medicine Award.

Dr. Hovanessian has been married over 50 years to his accomplished, art curator wife, Vicki Shoghag, and proud father of his three children, Armen, Ani, and Aileen who are all professionals. He is also the loving grandfather of his seven grandchildren.



**John P. Bilezikian, M.D., PhD (hon)** *Keynote Speaker*

**Dr. John P. Bilezikian**, the Dorothy L. and Daniel H. Silberberg Professor of Medicine and Professor of Pharmacology at the College of Physicians & Surgeons, Columbia University is Vice Chair of the Department of Medicine for International Education and Research and Chief, Emeritus, of the Division of Endocrinology. He is Director of the Metabolic Bone Diseases Program at Columbia University Medical Center. Dr. Bilezikian received his undergraduate training at Harvard College and his medical training at the College of Physicians & Surgeons. He completed four years of house staff training (internship, residency and Chief Residency) on the Medical Service at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center.

Dr. Bilezikian received his training in Metabolic Bone Diseases and in Endocrinology at the National Institutes of Health in the Mineral Metabolism Branch under the tutelage of Dr. Gerald Aurbach. He belongs to a number of professional societies including the American Society of Bone and Mineral Research, of which he served as President (ASBMR), 1995-1996 and the International Society of Clinical Densitometry, of which he served as President, 1999-2001. He is a member of the Endocrine Society (ISCD), the American Federation for Clinical Research, the American Society for Clinical Investigation, the Association of American Physicians, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, and the American College of Endocrinology that has designated him Master.

He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO). He served on the Board of Governors of the International Osteoporosis Foundation (1999-2015) and is a current member of its Committee of Scientific Advisors. He is Chair of the Endocrine Fellows Foundation. He served as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism and as Senior Associate Editor of the Journal of Bone and Mineral Research. He is Executive Advisory Editor of Bone Research. His books include Editor-in-Chief of The Parathyroids [1994, 2001, 2015], and co-editor of The Aging Skeleton (1999), Dynamics of Bone and Cartilage Metabolism (1999, 2006), Principles of Bone Biology (1996, 2002, 2008, 2019) and Osteoporosis in Men (2010). He is Editor-in-Chief of the Primer on the Metabolic Bone Diseases and Disorders of Mineral Metabolism (2019). He has been on numerous panels, including serving as Chair of the NIH Consensus Development Panel on Optimal Calcium Intake (1994), Co-chair of the last three International Workshops on Primary Hyperparathyroidism (2002, 2008, 2013) and of the first International Workshops on Hypoparathyroidism (2015) and Controversies in Vitamin D(2017-2019).

He is a major national and international spokesperson for the field of metabolic bone diseases. Dr. Bilezikian's major research interests are related to the clinical investigation of metabolic bone diseases, particularly osteoporosis, primary hyperparathyroidism and hypoparathyroidism. He is the recipient of the Distinguished Physician Award of the Endocrine Society, the Frederic C. Bartter Award of the ASBMR for Excellence in Clinical Research, and the First Annual Global Leadership Award of the ISCD.

In 2009, he received the Gideon A. Rodan Excellence in Mentorship Award from the ASBMR. He received the Laureate Distinguished Educator Award of The Endocrine Society in 2014. In 2014, he was made honorary member of the Brazilian Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism. In 2015, he received the Oscar Gluck Humanitarian Award of the ISCD and the Inaugural Global Educator of the Year Award from McMaster University in Canada. In 2017, was named Honorary Member of the Russian Osteoporosis Association and in 2019, the Brazilian Association of Orthopedic Osteologists. Dr. Bilezikian has received Lifetime Achievement Awards of the Armenian American Medical Society of California and the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO). He was honored in 2017 by the Greater Boston Armenian American Medical Association. In 2017, he received the Doctor Honoris Causa Award from the Carol Davila School of Medicine in Bucharest, Romania and from the University of Pisa, in Pisa, Italy.

He was also designated in 2017, as Visiting Professor, Yerevan State Medical University. He received the Distinguished Physician Award of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists in 2018. He received the Ellis Island Congressional Medal of Honor from the United States Government in 2018. Also, in 2018 he received a Parliamentary Medal of Honor from the Government of Armenia for distinguished service and a similar honor from the Government of Brazil. In 2019, he received the Gold Medal for Outstanding Achievements in Medical Research, the highest honor that Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons bestows on its graduates. He founded the Osteoporosis Center of Armenia which had its Grand Opening in October, 2017. In Armenia, he has provided the capability to measure bone density throughout the country. He has also directed 13 Annual Osteoporosis Conferences, the most recent one of which was held at the American University of Armenia in October 5, 2019. The 3rd International Summit on Osteoporosis was held in Armenia also in October, 2019. He has published over 850 papers in endocrinology, osteoporosis, and other metabolic bone diseases.



## MEDICAL OUTREACH IN THE TRI- STATE AREA

**Health Fairs, Medical Forums and Workshops** held several times a year in local churches, halls, and schools are very well received by the public at large. Local distinguished health care professionals volunteer their time to educate, explain, and answer questions on various medical conditions. The Medical Forums are not however a substitute for personal medical care, rather a wonderful adjunct to it.

**“Your Health”** a bimonthly TV show airing on Voice of Armenians. This program features AAHPO members sharing their knowledge on common medical conditions in an interview format with Dr. Ohan Karatoprak as moderator. These shows have been taped and are available for viewing on AAHPO website, [www.aahpo.org](http://www.aahpo.org).

**E-mail Alerts** on AAHPO activities and Public Health issues are sent regularly to the public at large. These e-mails contain very useful information on many subject matters including future events, lecture presentations, and current national and international safety concerns.

**AAHPO Website**, initially started in 2007, has expanded to provide updates on AAHPO activities, projects, upcoming events, information on finding health care providers by specialty and location, photo gallery, publications, and blogs. It is currently restructuring its format to include a more comprehensive approach to serve the community.

**Bone Marrow and Blood Drives—Giving the Gift of Life** for the Armenian Bone Marrow Registry. This is especially important for Armenians who need bone marrow transplants to cure various forms of cancer. The registry can help them find a genetic match from within the Armenian community. Several blood drives have been done at various public gathering events.

**AAHPO Hotline**, set up in 2008, is a public service support line which receives calls from individuals in immediate medical need. These calls are referred to proper health care professionals for appropriate guidance and referral.





## MEDICAL OUTREACH IN THE TRI- STATE AREA

**Career Day & Mentoring Community Forum.** This yearly activity at Fordham University, initiated by AAHPO and conducted in conjunction with other professional groups such as Armenian Engineers and Scientists of American(AESA) offer guidance and information to students and young professionals who are pursuing higher education options and need advice on career development.

**The Armenian Heritage Cruise** - Medical Education in the Caribbean 2015-2020 AAHPO Board Member, Dr. John P. Bilezikian, leads the medical education initiative of the Armenian Cultural Association that sponsors the yearly Armenian Heritage Cruise. The educational initiative is accredited for continuing medical, nursing, pharmacy, and dental education, meaning that health care professionals can earn educational credits while cruising the Caribbean with fellow Armenians on one of the great cruising vessels in the world (e.g. the Oasis of the Seas).

Many of his faculty have been prominent members of AAHPO. To name just a few, Dr. Raffy A. Hovanessian serves as co-chair of the program. Other faculty over the years have included Dr. Larry Najarian, Dr. Gregory Kazandjian, and Dr. Samuel Badalian. There is still time to sign up for this year's AHC Caribbean cruise (January 12-19, 2020) and take advantage of this remarkable educational and cultural opportunity that is part of AAHPO's overall educational mission.

**Clergy Conference Medical Presentation** was done for the first time in 2014 to educate and prevent common medical problems our clergy face.

**On-site help as needed**—AAHPO has been a constant presence in case of emergencies at the annual Genocide Commemoration gathering in Times Square and other such large events in the East Coast.

**Webinars:** AAHPO is always on the look out for the latest technologies to facilitate remote communication with students, peers and the public.



*Mentoring 2018, Group of AAHPO professionals present at Fordham*



*Armenian Heritage Cruise CME Program 2018. Seated Dr. Raffy Hovanessian, Dr. John Bilezikian. Standing Dr. Larry Najarian, Dr. Samuel Badalian, Romic Eskanderian, Pharm D. and Dr. Greg Kazandjian*



**The AAHPO 5K Run/Walk** started in 2017 promotes fitness and also serves as a fundraiser for supplies for AAHPO's Medical Mission to Armenia.

**Social Media and our children** - Lectures given in local Armenian schools by AAHPO members have contributed to increased awareness of the dangers of social media.



## PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

One of AAHPO's goals as set in the original mission statement was to bring health care providers together to meet, interact, exchange ideas, plan service projects for the organization, and work together as a group.

**Educational Meetings for members.** These informative dinner and lecture presentations given by AAHPO members in New Jersey, New York, and Manhattan cover the latest hot topics in many medical specialties.

**Partnering with other professional groups.** Several successful joint dinner meetings with the Armenian Engineers & Scientists of America (AESA) and the Armenian Bar Association (ABA) resulted in closer cooperation and communication between them. One such event was the New York Stock Exchange fundraiser in partnership with Armenian Eye Care Project.

**Aid in finding medical residency positions.** Several newly graduated doctors were able to find residencies in their desired specialty with the assistance of board members and their connections.

**New professional groups.** Recently AAHPO was instrumental and supportive in the formation of a new health organization group, the Delaware Valley Armenian Health Professionals Organization (DVAHPO).

**Annual Membership Meeting and Christmas Brunch.** It is not all work at AAHPO. Our members and their families get together every December to review the activities of the year, elect new members, then rejoice and wish each other a Happy New Year.

### Recognitions

In June 2011, Armenian American Health Professionals Organization, AAHPO, was recognized for its Educational efforts to improve health awareness, disease prevention, and early disease detection for Armenians and others, both locally and in Armenia and was selected as a finalist in the Education



*Joint dinner AAHPO with Armenian Bar Association (above) and Armenian Engineers and Scientists (below)*



Hero Organization category in the 2011 NJBIZ Healthcare Heroes awards program. The Healthcare Heroes awards program recognizes excellence and innovation and honors individuals and organizations making a significant impact on the quality of healthcare in New Jersey.

**AAHPO Board of Directors would like to thank the following organizations  
for partnering and collaborating with AAHPO**

Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)  
Fund for Armenia Relief (FAR)  
Children of Armenia Fund (COAF)  
Armenia Fund, USA  
Armenian Medical Fund  
Armenian Medical International Committee (AMIC)  
Armenian Eye Care Project  
North Hudson Community Action Corporation  
Armenian Engineers & Scientists of America (AESA)  
Armenian Bar Association (ABA)  
Community Blood Services  
Armenian Bone Marrow Registry  
Armenian Medical Society of Southern California  
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)  
Prelacy of the Armenian Church (Eastern)  
Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA)  
The Hovnanian School  
Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS)  
Armenian Wounded Heroes Fund

**AAHPO would like to thank every single member of the community who has donated time or money over the  
years towards accomplishing our goals and making them a success. We would not be here without you.**



# Donations

## Honorary Chair

*Dr. & Mrs. Lawrence V. & Magda Najarian*

“Congratulations to all of the AAHPO health care providers, volunteers, and donors who have worked together to help advance AAHPO’s mission for the last 25 years!”

# Donations

## Grand Benefactor

*Dr. & Mrs. Levon & Claudia Nazarian*



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Loyal and faithful benefactors of AAHPO over the years

*Dr. & Mrs. Raffy A. & Vicki Shoghag Hovanessian & Family*

Congratulations to F.A.R. Armenia and Dr. Hambardzum Simonyan  
for successfully heading the CME Programs in Artzakh.

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In Loving Memory of Khoren O. Nalbandian

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*No booklet of this nature can possibly boast  
of being free from oversight and errata.  
Therefore, we earnestly apologize for  
unintentional omissions and misprints.*



## In Memoriam

Honorees & Members of AAHPO who were  
Humanitarians and Luminaries  
in Medicine and Health Related Specialties

Robert A. Aslanian, DDS  
*Second President of AAHPO*

Avedis Bogosian, MD  
*President AMIC 2008-2012*

Annette Choolfaian, RN, MPA  
*Educator and Trailblazer*

Haigaz M. Grigorian, MD  
*Distinguished Psychiatrist & Educator*

Mr. Kevork Hovnanian  
*Distinguished Humanitarian*

Edgar M. Housepian, MD  
*Internationally Renowned  
Neurosurgeon & Humanitarian*

Khoren O. Nalbandian, RPh  
*One of founding fathers of AAHPO*

Mrs. Louise Simone Manoogian  
*Distinguished Humanitarian*