

# NAMASTE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF NEPAL SEATTLE SOCIETY

In the past few months, we, the Nepali Community, have been recognized as a thriving community not only on the local and state level in Washington State but also at the federal level. Our Dedicated work has drastically increased our capacity as a community-based organization and opened many doors for us to advocate for our needs and increase the representation of our community. I urge you all to join us in these efforts so we can give back to the community that we so deeply love and care for.

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, we have faced many challenges as individuals and as a community. Through all of that, we continue to persist and overcome challenges together. The pandemic has shown that we, the Nepali people in Washington are a strong and resilient community.

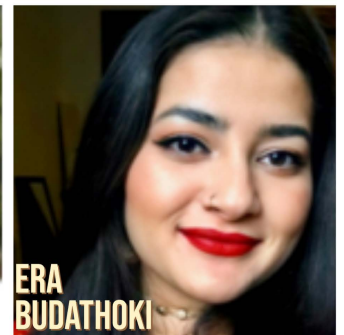
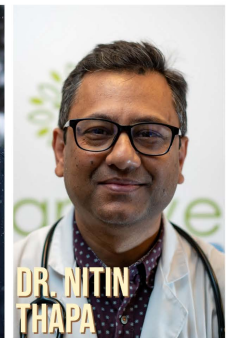
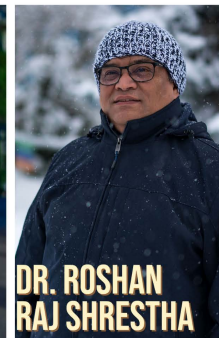
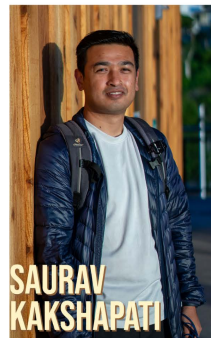
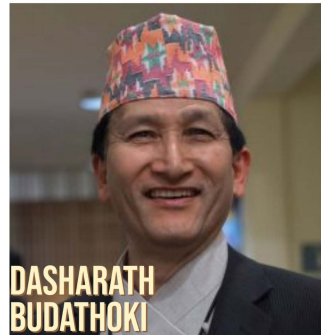
Nepal Seattle Society Board of Directors (BOD) have been hard at work to find ways to make it easier for our community to deal with those challenges by engaging and empowering each other while building our institutional capacity to serve our community better. We have done several webinars related to COVID-19 via zoom and have shared resources and information on our social media in an effort to engage our community.

To continue such efforts to tackle health-related issues faced by our community, NSS Health Committee was thus formed at the beginning of 2021. The Committee's objective is to identify the health needs of our community; share information and resources to promote Health and Wellness in our community such as updated guidelines on COVID-19 safety practices, mental health resources, insurance, accessibility information, debunking, and fact-checking false information.

We invite our community members interested in protecting and advancing the health and wellbeing of our community to join the NSS Health Committee!

We are happy to share that NSS has successfully secured funds to serve Nepali communities in Washington state and PNW in protecting our communities from COVID19 and its impacts.

## NSS HEALTH COMMITTEE



# OUR APPEAL TO US SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES

HUMANITARIAN RELIEF IN NEPAL FOR COVID-19 CRISIS

Our efforts haven't been limited to just our communities in Washington. We have also advocated for COVID-19 relief for Nepal. Around May 2021, Nepal saw the 2nd surge of COVID-19 cases and deaths and therefore BOD and NSS Health Committee came together and wrote letters to, emailed and called our 10 U.S. House of Representatives and Senators from Washington State urging them to advocate to prioritize Nepal in their international COVID-19 relief aid. Swiftly, we raised our collective voices to facilitate the COVID-19 vaccine, medical equipment, and supplies for Nepal.

On June 4th, the Biden administration announced the distribution of approximately 7 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine in Asia. On July 12th, The US embassy reported the arrival of 1.53 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine at the Tribhuvan International Airport.

These past few months, we have made ourselves-- the Nepali community in Washington-- visible, vocal and of importance to Washington State's representatives in Washington D.C., impacting decision making for the betterment of our community.



NEPAL SEATTLE SOCIETY  
www.nepalseattle.org

May 11, 2021

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
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Kalpna Sharma

Durga Shrestha

The Honorable Patty Murray  
U.S. Senate  
c/o Madeleine Pannell, Health Care Aide  
154 Russell Senator Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

**Re: To facilitate COVID-19 vaccine, medical equipment & supplies relief aid for Nepal**

We, Nepali Americans, are writing to you as a community of concerned residents of the State of Washington, and as **your constituents on behalf of our 30 million mothers, fathers, children, cousins, and neighbors in Nepal. We are writing because they need your help. We are writing because every day that passes without help simply due to lack of a cylinder of oxygen someone else in our family and community struggles and suffers or might even die alone with COVID-19.** We are writing seeking help in securing much needed humanitarian relief for the COVID-19 crisis that Nepal is currently facing. Our families and other loved ones who are in Nepal are facing the COVID-induced health disaster that is worsening by the minute but has received little global media coverage.

Whilst much of the world's attention has been focused on India and its humanitarian crisis given the explosion of COVID-19 cases there--which we wholeheartedly support--Nepal, which shares open borders with India, is facing an equal and perhaps more catastrophic outcome given the lack of infrastructure to deal with the spillover in COVID-19 infections in Nepal.

Per the World Health Organization, today, on May 11, the COVID-19 positivity rate in Nepal is 44% with reported new 9,483 cases and 250 deaths. Some heart-wrenching statistics:

- **Nepal has the fastest infection rate in South Asia, faster than even India;** the daily average rate of infection in the last 7 days is a staggering 30 per 100,000 people (compared to 28 in India) according to John Hopkins University
- More than 404,000 people in Nepal have tested positive, overwhelming the hospitals and health service system that are turning away critical patients
- Severe shortage of oxygen supply, resulting in increasing daily deaths
- 600 ventilators for the entire country, and the UW's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation predicts that Nepal will need over 10,000 ventilators by May 24
- Less than 2,000 ICU beds for the entire country with a scarcity of beds for patients
- Only about 1% of the country has received vaccines against COVID-19 thus far

"I spent harrowing 48 hours during Mother's Day frantically calling hospitals in Kathmandu searching for an open ICU bed for my COVID positive, seriously ill 67 year old mother. Even though we finally found a hospital bed, **we were told to manage oxygen supply on our own and there is a massive shortage of oxygen in Kathmandu.** All I can do now is pray." - Angad Pun, Snohomish County resident.

Mail: PO Box 75443, Seattle, WA 98175 | Email: info@nepalseattle.org



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"Time is of essence, money alone can't solve the problem, and we need to mobilize local professionals and local leaders with basic equipment like oximeters, thermometer and oxygen concentrators. **Local professionals like Biomedical Engineers can fix the non-functional oxygen plants and ventilators in the health care facilities.** But international development partners including UN agencies who are working are not able to mobilize these local resources and are **not able to procure those minor equipment and supplies on time simply because of their complex procurement policies.**" - Voice of a local development professional from Nepal.

"My mom's caretaker got COVID a couple of days back; she stopped coming to see my mom. **She is a poor woman with two kids now staying at the community isolation center as her landlord asked her to leave the house because of COVID.** This is just an example...many more moms and children are suffering with this kind of incident." - Roshan Shrestha, Seattle resident.

"When my 71 year old mother with pre-existing conditions went to a hospital in Kathmandu to get her vaccine when it became available to elders, she was turned away and told that vaccines had run out. **Health equity approach is central to protecting the most vulnerable.**" - Maya Magarati, King County resident.

**This is an urgent appeal from the local Nepali communities throughout Washington State asking you to please advocate for and do what you can to ensure that the extra COVID vaccines earmarked for donations include distribution to Nepal. Additionally, medical supplies like oxygen concentrators and oximeters; oxygen cylinders; oxygen tanks and other related supplies are crucial and immediately needed; and chartered flights to Nepal with these equipment and supplies be arranged as soon as possible in order to prevent a mass scale loss of life.**

The local Nepali communities throughout the State of Washington stand ready to help and provide whatever assistance we can offer you to ensure that Nepal receives these life saving supplies to avert a humanitarian crisis in the making.

We look forward to your encouraging response and cooperation.

Yours very sincerely,

Dasharath Budhathoki  
President  
Address: 1015 123rd St. NE, Unit A, Seattle, WA 98125  
Cell: (206) 265-1695 | Email: budhathokid@gmail.com

Mail: PO Box 75443, Seattle, WA 98175 | Email: info@nepalseattle.org



## WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS

When vaccine supply was slowly starting to become available for the 65 and older population, around February 2021, we conducted a successful **virtual COVID-19 Vaccination Town Hall and Q&A** over Zoom with Seattle-King County Public Health Coronavirus Task Force lead and our Nepali medical professionals in WA to inform our Nepali community about vaccines and access. With Seattle-King County Public Health's support, we specifically connected with our community elders aged 65 and over to access vaccines.

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Building on that partnership, in April 2021, the NSS was awarded \$25,000 by the Washington State Department of Health (WA-DOH) to start a communications campaign on COVID-19 among Nepali residents across Washington State. We were among 100+ community-based organizations in the State WA-DOH that provided the funds. The NSS selection committee carried out interviews and hired the following individuals to form the Communications team for the COVID-19 Communications project:

- Nabina Rai as Office Secretary
- Shraddha Malla as Program Coordinator
- Rachit Raj Shrestha as Video & Media Contractor

This team, BOD, and our amazing volunteers accomplished many activities revolving around COVID-19 awareness in our community.

### COVID-19 Vaccination Town Hall and Q&A

A collaboration between Nepal Seattle Society and King County Public Health

**Date : Friday, February 19, 2021**

**Time : 7:00 PM PST**

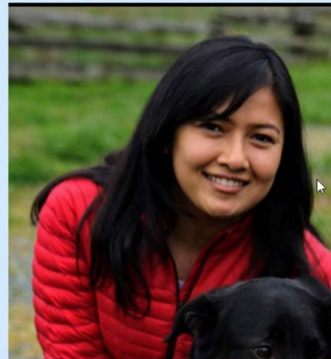
**Our Panelists :**



**Priti Mody-Pan, MPA, MA**



**Seema Abbasi, MD**



**Shraddha Kakshapati,  
Pharm D, RPh**



**Prakash Thapalia, MD**



**Moderator :**  
**Maya Magarati, PhD**  
**BOD, Nepal Seattle Society**

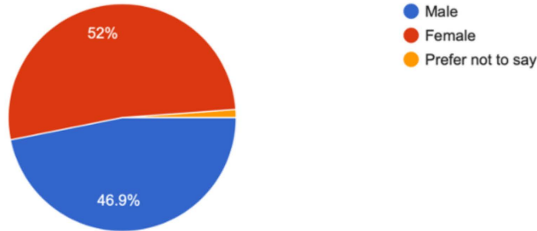




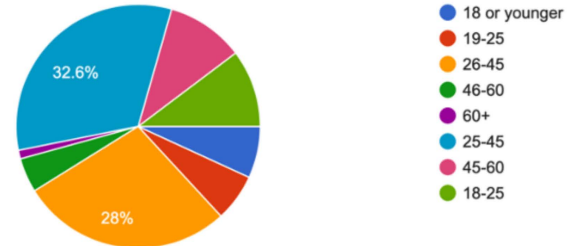


# GET VAXXED TO WIN \$500 RAFFLE CONTEST DATA ANALYSIS

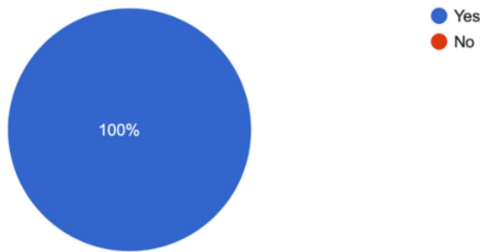
What is your gender?  
175 responses



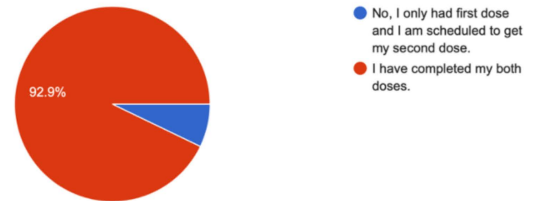
Which age group do you belong to?  
175 responses



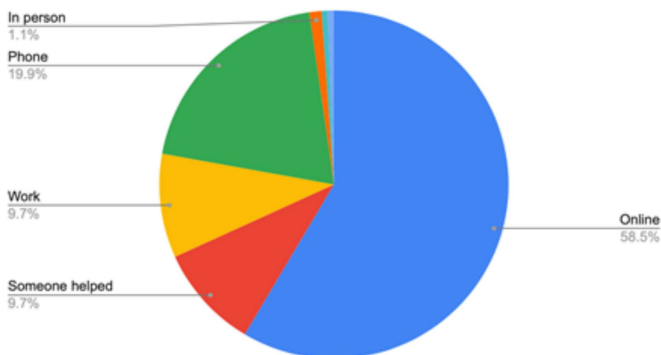
Did you get your COVID-19 vaccination?  
175 responses



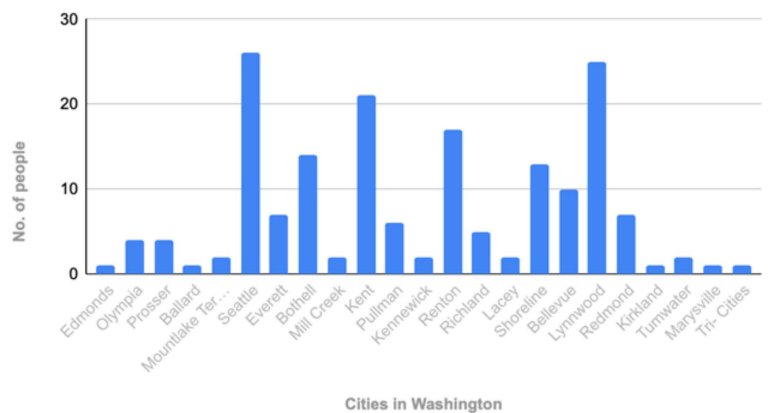
If you had Pfizer or Moderna, have you completed both doses of vaccine?  
168 responses



How did you schedule your vaccine appointment?



Which city in WA do you currently live in?



## IN THE WORKS

We have successfully secured another \$100,000 grant, this time through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Foundation (CDCF)! NSS is one of the 150 community-based organizations selected, out of 585 applicants across the country (we are among 12% selected). A team led by BOD, Dr. Maya Magarati, and the Health Committee swiftly put together a proposal for the project "Using Nepali Elder-guided Youth Voice to Improve Vaccine Coverage in the Nepali Communities in the Pacific Northwest" aka "Nepali Elder Youth Partnered Vaccine Accessibility Liaison (NEYPVAL)" to CDC-F in a short time frame.

We have hired the following to implement the project:

- Leema Pradhan, M.Sc, and Program Manager
- Rachit Raj Shrestha, B.A., and Communications Officer
- Shraddha Malla, B.S. and Public Health Officer
- Shubheccha Shakya, A.A., and Financial and Admin Assistant
- Palina Piya, MBA, Volunteer Advisor

The project's main objective is to reach Nepali individuals, help them navigate the healthcare system, and help disseminate accurate information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. We want to spread awareness of the vaccines and the vaccination process and encourage Nepali-speaking people to continue to follow CDC protocols as it is of utmost importance. Furthermore, we seek to empower our youth members to lead these communication efforts to help protect their community.

Our project's primary goal is to promote the safety of and access to influenza and COVID-19 vaccines to lessen the health disparities faced by our community. We also strive to increase vaccine confidence in the Pacific Northwest Nepali Community through culturally appropriate social media, educational materials, partnerships, and cultural events.

Following are the key objectives that we envision:

- Community mobilization and engagement
- Culturally relevant content development and dissemination.
- Establish database, regular updates on vaccinated population
- Partnership with other community-based organizations and public health departments.





## IN THE WORKS

WA-DOH was impressed with the work we did in Spring 2021 to promote culturally relevant COVID19 vaccine information in our communities hence they encouraged us to apply for another \$50,000 grant at the end of our first grant period (July). NSS Health Committee submitted an updated proposal for this additional funding opportunity under a short deadline. It got approved on July 20th, 2021 and upon the approval and guidance of the Board of Directors, NSS signed the contract with the DOH on July 31st.

We will then proceed in selecting people to serve on this project.

Our goal for this upcoming project is to:

- Extend partnership, outreach, and connect with our Nepali community living in rural communities and other hidden pockets of Washington
- Continue creating engaging educational and communication materials around COVID-19, health issues, and vaccines
- Mobilize and empower our Youth and Cultural Committee but also work with our already established subcommittees to expand our health efforts
- Incorporate our culture and increase the visibility of our Nepali community
- Establish a secure, anonymous database of Nepali people residing in Washington to effectively advocate for our needs at the local and federal levels.

# DHANYABAD

# MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE BEEN A POWERHOUSE BEHIND THE SCENE AND HAVE MADE THIS PROJECT SUCCESSFUL! THANK THEM ALONGSIDE US FOR THEIR PASSION AND DEDICATION!

## We are immensely grateful to Our Board of Directors for their thoughtful leadership:

Abhibandu Kafle  
Aditi Kc  
Anita Paudel  
Barsha Pradhan  
Bickrant Shrestha  
Cynthia Karki  
Dr. Nawang Sherpa, NSS co-founder  
Dr. Nitin Thapa  
Dr. Sudikshya Baskota  
Era Budhathoki  
Kajal Sapkota  
Kranti Paudyal  
Kripa upadhyay  
Krishna Gurung, NSS co-founder  
Mitra Dahal  
Nishant Dhungel

Dasharath Budhathoki  
Saurav Kakshapati  
Suraj Gautam  
Richa Thapa Magar  
Kalpana Sharma  
Durga Prasad Shrestha  
Buddhi Jung Kunwar  
Madhab Bhandari  
Tara Aryal  
Dr. Roshan Raj Shrestha  
Pramod Devkota  
Dr. Maya Magarati  
Dr. Madan Karkee

Palpasa Manandhar  
Poojan Bhattarai  
Rakshya Sigdel  
Ranjan Bhusal  
Roshani Shiwakoti  
Samita Parajuli  
Shaina Budhathoki  
Shree Ram Dahal  
Shubhechha Shakya  
Sierra Cvach  
Smriti Dahal  
Soniya Kunwar  
Sophia Kunwar  
Sunita Shrestha  
Utsav Bajgain  
Writu Kakshapati

## Partnered Restaurants

Annapurna Cafe-Seattle  
Everest Kitchen  
Himalayan Java Coffee - Lynnwood  
Kastoori Grill  
Kathmandu Momocha  
Momo and Pizza Ghar

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If you have any questions, suggestions, and ideas please feel free to reach out to us at [health@nepalseattle.org](mailto:health@nepalseattle.org)