

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FAMILY ISSUES URGENT PLEA: BONE MARROW TRANSPLANT NEEDED FOR
28 YEAR OLD INDIAN AMERICAN IMMEDIATELY**

South Asian Community Grapples with Critical Shortage of Bone Marrow Donors

New York, NY, June 22, 2007 – An Indian American patient diagnosed with life-threatening Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (or AML), is facing a critical battle – to find a bone marrow donor of South Asian descent immediately. Since his diagnosis, friends of the 28-year-old physician, Vinay Chakravarthy, have banded together to urge the country's sizeable South Asian community to register with National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) urgently.

According to the Asian American Donor Program or the AADP, there are 6.5 million people registered in the National Marrow Donor Registry or the NMDP. However, only 90,995 or (1.4%) registered are of South Asian descent. Asia Blume, Recruitment Director, Asia American Donor Program said: "The retention rate for Asians is between 30-40%. For South Asians, it's even lower and, for all other ethnic groups, the retention rate is between 70-80%."

HOW TO REGISTER: Listing in the Registry is a safe, simple, non-invasive procedure that takes 15 seconds to collect a sample of cells from the inside of the cheek with a cotton swap. Vinay's family and friends have set up a web site for "Team Vinay" at www.helpvinay.org, to help potential donors quickly locate local drives in their community being organized on a daily basis. Team Vinay aims to register 20,000 people of South Asian descent over the next two weeks.

Vinay's wife, Rashmi Chakravarthy is asking the community to help the urgent cause: "Vinay is my best friend and the love of my life. Please help us live the life we've always dreamt of. The donor drives are not just for Vinay, but for a greater cause. Together, we can raise awareness and build a larger South Asian registry for patients like Vinay, who can and will beat the odds."

The www.helpvinay.org website states that a Caucasian has a 1 in 15 chance of finding a match. And, a South Asian has 1 in 20,000-100,000 chance in finding a match. In the past, only 50% of South Asians who have been identified as a possible match, come in for follow up testing. More than 11,900 new cases occur in the United States each year,

mostly in older adults. The average age of a person with AML is 65 years. Fewer than 10% of people with AML are children. Donor drives are happening across the country this week including areas such as Davis, CA, Seattle, WA, San Francisco, CA, Carol Stream, IL, Chicago, IL, San Jose, CA, Berkeley, CA, Buena Park, CA. Please visit the website for more details or if you would like to set up a donor drive in your area: www.helpvinay.org

About Vinay Chakravarthy:

Vinay is a native of Fremont, California. He attended Ardenwood Elementary for grammar school and Walters Junior High and Kennedy High School. He completed his undergraduate degree at U.C. Berkeley and went on to obtain his Master's and Medical Degrees from Boston University. He is a resident in orthopedics at Boston Medical Center. He was married in 2005 to Rashmi, a medical student at Boston University.

About Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (AML):

According to the National Marrow Donor Program, Acute myelogenous leukemia (AML) is a fast-growing cancer of the blood and bone marrow. In AML, the bone marrow makes many immature cells called blasts. Blasts normally develop into white blood cells that fight infection. However, the blasts are abnormal in AML. They do not develop and cannot fight infections. The bone marrow may also make abnormal red blood cells and platelets. The number of abnormal cells (or leukemia cells) grows quickly. They crowd out the normal red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets the body needs.

About Team Vinay:

This web site has been put together by Vinay's friends and family to save his life and raise awareness for the need for South Asian representation in the bone marrow registry. Since Vinay's relapse and web site posting, the South Asian community has come together nationwide, gathering powerful momentum to support this cause. Since it was started, the community has held over 120 bone marrow drives in over 10 states across the country, and have 70 more drives planned in the next 2 weeks. They have registered over 7000 people to become donors. Please visit www.helpvinay.org for more information.

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