IMANA, the Islamic Medical Association of North America, is an organization of Muslim physicians that was founded in 1968. The physicians work collaboratively with countries around the world to spread the message of proper health care and to come to the aid of those in need during catastrophic events.

This organization achieves tremendous success because it engages with the communities where the physicians work, seeking to instill quality programs to support the needs of the people locally. IMANA works closely with governments both on the national and local levels, as well as with community leaders and health care workers.

On July 3, 2009 IMANA advocated for health care reform on Capital Hill in Washington, D.C. for the first time. The topic of conversation was “Perspectives from the Front Line.” Dr. Khalique Zahi represented the organization and spoke about the vision of health care being the “shared responsibility grounded in common humanity.” Dr. Zahi advocated for each nation to band together to support world health.

The most recent relief effort has taken place in Haiti, which was devastated by a level 8 earthquake on January 12. Thousands in Port-au-Prince were left buried beneath buildings and homeless. Families were forever torn apart and neighbors were forced to bury the deceased in mass graves. Physicians from IMANA who are experienced in medical relief after disasters, headed to grief stricken Haiti to work in teams to provide care to those without. Doctors found themselves working in make shift tents where they combined their surgical skills in hopes to perform advanced surgeries. They would sometimes treat 300 patients daily. Dr. Mehr, a physician volunteering in Haiti stated, “It’s very clear in the Quran that to save one human life is as if you saved all of humanity.”

In Yemen, IMANA worked with religious leaders to advocate for maternal child health, family planning and reproductive planning. After training there was a 50% increase in knowledge of family planning for religious leaders. It is necessary to develop health messages that are consistent with the tenets of Islam so that Muslim communities will remain open minded to the teachings of the medical profession.

IMANA worked with the High Islamic Council to utilize verses from the Koran to address HIV/AIDS in Mali, Africa. In Tanzania it helped to reduce the stigma of AIDS and promote HIV awareness.

To support the Katrina Relief in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina devastated and flooded the city, members of IMANA donated funds to clinics in New Orleans. In 2005, a tsunami swept huge walls of water inland and caused millions to drown in its raging waters. Within Banda Ache, Indonesia the organization used donated member funds to purchase a clinic building that has continued running since July 2005 and sees 25 patients daily.

In Niger, Africa 200,000 women suffer from vesico-vaginal fistula from prolonged obstructive labors as a result of marrying at young ages and not receiving proper health care. IMANA has both educated the community as well as provided proper medical attention for these young women.

IMANA provided relief to the people of Pakistan during the 2005 earthquake. The organization spent $100,000 on
medication and other desperately needed items. Another $175,000 was donated to purchase medical equipment for the operating rooms that had been devastated. IMANA received 250 wheelchairs from other organizations to donate to those injured during the catastrophe. IMANA collaborated with the Red Crescent and Islamic Relief to run health care facilities. Housing projects were coordinated to provide permanent housing for those left homeless during the earthquake. Two hundred thousand dollars was allocated to this project.

In Bangladesh, IMANA encouraged Imams to get involved in the development of the community by offering a 45-course training. Some of the courses included were: food security, family healing, agriculture, rural electricity, and early child education. IMANA strongly advocates for female doctors to be supported in helping to meet the medical needs of women.

When IMANA sees a need to meet, it meets it. When IMANA sees that money is needed, it gives. When IMANA sees lack of medical knowledge, it teaches. This organization embodies the vision of unity and togetherness no matter the race, culture of religion. It seeks to educate all people so that the people will then be able to help themselves.

TO Learn more about AMANA please visit www.imana.org