



Summary of Health Improvement Board Meeting/Seminar held at Hussein Islamic Centre, Stanmore on 16th May

Attendees;

Sadik Merali	Chairman of HIB
Rizwan Alidina	Vice Chairman of HIB
Akber Mohammedali	Representative for HIB on COEJ council
Hussein Jiwa	Vice president of COEJ and previous Chairman of HIB
Farhana Manekia	Project lead for Health promotion and Hajj vaccinations
Anar Nanjiani	Health promotion
Abdul Hussein Manekia	Hajj vaccination and website
Sameera Merali	Special Needs Access Network Co-ordinator
Safia Virji-Jawad	Health screening co-ordinator
Hamid Taqi	Private medical insurance project co-lead
Fayaz Haji	Essex Jamaat HIB rep
Mohammed Kassam	Stanmore Jamaat HIB rep

Apologies sent;

Sakina Walji	E. Africa trip co-ordinator
Shahid Merali	Birmingham Jamaat rep
Allyhussein Alimohamed	Wessex Jamaat rep
Mohammed Bhamani	Leeds Jamaat rep
Mohammed Nanji	Peterborough Jamaat rep
Mohsin Asaria	Hyderi Jamaat rep
Akil Nur	Referrals for overseas patients

Start with Quran recitation by Br. Mohammed Kassam

Dr. Hussein Jiwa, Ex-chairman of HIB started the meeting with an overview of the beginnings of HIB. He outlined the Aims, objectives and structure of HIB when it was formed. He prepared some handouts which I am attaching with this email. Please refer to them for more information on his talk.

Dr. Akber Mohammedali gave his apologies for coming late. He was at an MCB meeting. He was planning to discuss the new COEJ constitution, capacity building and community work

Vision Statement

Sadik Merali and Rizwan Alidina facilitated a session for the group to come up with a Vision Statement for the Health Improvement Board;

We came up with the following statements;

“To promote the health of our community and encourage a healthy lifestyle”

“Serving the community to develop our physical, mental, spiritual and social wellbeing”

“To ensure that our community as a whole are fully aware of and maximise their access to available local health care and preventative services. Wherever possible we should facilitate that access.”

It was agreed that our vision statement will be formed from a combination of the three statements above. I will forward to all and put it onto the website once it is formed.

What does a modern European Jamaat want from the Health Improvement Board

The next session was also facilitated by Sadik and Rizwan.

The following were agreed on in a brainstorming session;

- To help empower community members to get appropriate healthcare, which is available in their local community. This may involve signposting to available healthcare resources.
- Facilitate the use of local resources.
- Promote healthy lifestyle
- Use our “buying power” to achieve national discounts in organisations like gyms, private medical insurance.
- Share resources between Jamaats. E.g. a health related article printed in one Jamaat’s newsletter can be shared with other Jamaats to publish in their own newsletters. A healthcare professional may agree to volunteer their services to other Jamaats. HIB is well placed to be able to arrange for this.
- Sharing good practices amongst Jamaats.
- E-mail help line for community members. A member of the community can email with a health related issue which a moderator can forward by email to the relevant health care professional who can then reply (moderator can keep their identity confidential).
- Motivate existing resources. Dr Jiwa presented a list of names of Healthcare Professionals who have expressed interest in volunteering for HIB in the past. They have however been unused for a long time.
- Articles to be published in local newsletters
- Use our activities to establish good relations with neighbouring and surrounding non Shia and non Muslim communities. This may help us access funding from local PCT and council
- Use our healthcare professional database to forward national requests for volunteers, e.g. Crisis (for homeless), Mercy Ships (Africa), Bridge to Aid etc with the eventual aim that we ourselves can develop our own volunteering organisation that can address emergency need locally and worldwide.

How can we raise the profile of HIB?

It was felt, during the previous brainstorming sessions that HIB did not have a large enough profile. We discussed how we may change this.

We identified that many members of the community do not know we exist and are unaware of our activities. Many are aware of the health screening and think this is all we do. Another brainstorming session was done to work out how to promote ourselves;

- Have our own newsletter
- Promote ourselves through our projects, e.g. the soon to be launched private medical insurance scheme and the health promotion drives.
- Promote ourselves more actively at the health screenings which can act as our “road show”.
- We need Jamaat reps to be more active. The lack of Jamaat reps present at the meeting was noted.

Team Reports

Each team head was given the opportunity to present their work, then opening the floor to the rest of the team for questions.

Health Promotion

Farhana Manekia presented her plan to introduce a CoEJ-wide health promotion topic. Her team will prepare leaflets, presentations, PowerPoint presentations and posters that will be circulated to Jamaats. Jamaats can choose to use these resources to promote the chosen health topic. The team will be covering 3-4 topics a year.

The first topic to be covered is depression. In the light of the current economic climate, she felt it is an opportune time to bring up the taboo topic.

Dr Akber Mohamedali was able to give some feedback on the leaflets that were produced for depression and presented at the meeting. It was decided that “Islamic” health advice would be used with caution due to the possibility of it being taken out of context by the authors and because they may not be appropriate or relevant to our target audience.

Hajj Vaccination

Farhana Manekia reported on the first hajj vaccination programme that was offered to all hajj groups. 4 groups took up the service.

This year Farhana hopes that more groups will take up the service. She hopes to be in touch with the hajj group leaders earlier in the year in order for this to happen. In the future she hopes to be able to co-ordinate vaccination programmes that will be based in the local Jamaat vicinities. She acknowledged that this is a long way off at the moment.

Health Screening

Safiya Virji Jawad presented a progress update on the popular health screening. Since taking over from Dr. Jiwa at the Sweden Jamaat screenings, she has arranged screenings for Milton Keynes and Leeds Jamaats. She has secured a date for Essex Jamaat in June and hopes to do one more this year.

She has recruited a largely new team of healthcare professionals, who are complementing the existing team. She has brought in new stations, including a psychiatrist, paediatrician and for the next screening at Essex, a physiotherapy session.

She felt that the workload in organising the screenings was very heavy. She identified areas where the workload may be reduced;

- Jamaats to be more co-operative in setting up of centre ready for the screening. The team (who come from across the country) are currently having to turn up the night before to set up the tables and chairs, ready for the morning
- Jamaats to be more pro-active in recruiting local volunteers for some of the stations, e.g. registration, height/weight, urine dipstick etc. This would mean a smaller team would need to be brought from other Jamaats, making the organisation of transport, recruitment etc less arduous.

Sadik Merali and Safiya agreed to discuss, after the Essex screening, how to help make the workload more manageable.

Akber Mohamedali and Rizwan Alidina expressed concerns that the new stations were moving away from “screening” and tending towards “treatment”. Safiya said she would keep this in mind when introducing further stations.

Special Needs

Sameera Merali gave an update on how SPAN started, to where they are today, as an organisation who have been working with Hujjat Jamaat, Stanmore as their base for launch.

The SPAN (Special Needs Access Network) team have so far done a survey in Stanmore Jamaat during Prophet’s (SAW) wafaat in 2007. The data collected showed that our Jamaat has a spread of special needs that include mobility difficulties, visual and hearing difficulties and learning difficulties. The survey also showed a lack of awareness amongst our community members with regard to the needs for those with special needs.

SPAN have done 3 speeches in Stanmore Jamaat to help raise awareness and to try and tackle the issues brought up in the survey. They have also been given access to the “Access Report” carried out by Harrow Council. Unfortunately SPAN have been made to feel that their priorities are not being shared by the Hujjat Executive Committee. They have also found it difficult to pass on the project to willing volunteers of other Jamaats.

Members of the meeting congratulated Sameera on putting Special Needs onto the map. Despite the setbacks, it was mentioned that there had been considerable progress in the fact that there was a special needs co-ordinator in the HIB team.

A new strategy was not discussed but Sameera has agreed to push on with the issue of special needs and settle for smaller outcomes than had previously been targeted.

Summer Holiday Volunteering Trip to Tanzania

Sukaina Walji was unable to attend the meeting and so Sadik Merali presented on her behalf.

The objective of the trip was to give members of the community an opportunity to volunteer in a medical based organisation in East Africa. After some research, it was

found that medical organisations were unable to provide much opportunity for non medical volunteers. Since most of our volunteers fell into this category, the organisation that was selected was a school/orphanage run by a Shia organisation which bases its work around Tableegh and spreading Islam amongst the locals in Tanzania.

Sakina Walji, with her team has organised for a group of 7 males and 7 females to go to Dar-es-salaam and volunteer at this organisation. InshAllah, the group will be leaving in July and going for 3 weeks.

A seminar was held a few weeks ago where all the participants attended. They have been asked to fundraise for the organisation and are doing so. They are also aware that organisations such as these require long-term financial commitments and they will InshAllah be developing these links with the organisation.

Hajj Health Project

For the First time, HIB offered the vaccination service to all Hajj groups. We provided all Hujjaj in participating groups with meningitis and flu vaccinations. Historically, HIB only provided vaccinations for the European Hajj Mission group.

The launch of the extended vaccination project was a little late and so as a result, of the groups that were invited, 4 took up the service. The model used for the European Hajj Mission group was used for each of the programmes, with the vaccinations being done on the day of the seminar.

InshAllah, for the coming Hajj season, Farhana and Abdul Hussein Manekia are planning to launch earlier in order to allow more groups to take up the service. Farhana spoke about a future vision to have vaccinations being done in each town to accommodate a local service for Hujjaj. It was agreed that this may be something to think about but for the near future, the vaccinations will be done in the individual hajj seminars.

Before last years Hajj, the medical advice leaflet for Hujjaj was modified by Shahid Merali and It was well received and was made available for all Hujjaj. It will be available for future years until the need arises to amend it. It will be considered if changes need to be made with the recent Swine flu epidemic.

Private Medical Insurance

Sadik Merali and Hamid Taqi have been working with Independent Financial Advisors in the community with the aim to provide Private Medical Insurance at a discounted rate for members of our community.

We have interviewed interested organisations and will InshAllah be in a position over the next few months to launch this project with the chosen organisation.

Dental Society

Dr Hussein Asaria is working on building a network of Dentists and Dental students. Amongst his aims he hopes to link all these professionals so that they can network

amongst each other, be in a position to share good practices, be able to help new Dentists coming through to name a few of the potential benefits of this network. This project is in its infancy.