



Rao Musunuru, M.D. Museum & Library

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West Pasco Historical Society

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To West Pasco Historical Society Board of Directors and The Honorable New Port Richey City Council and Staff:

As you may know, February 1 is Rao Musunuru, M.D. Day in Pasco County as proclaimed by the Pasco County Commissioners in 2014. The West Pasco Historical Society and Rao Musunuru Museum and Library became one of his many success stories since 2010. At that time the members of the historical society found themselves with a building in much need of repair and not enough money to pay the overhead. Because of his love for our community he decided to get involved. Learning through the President of CARES, at that time, Dr. Musunuru obtained the necessary information to support the efforts. He ended up saving the museum from extinction by donating enough funds to not only pay the bills but to completely restore and remodel the building. Thanks to Dr. Musunuru the museum has undergone another renovation in 2019 which brought it from a humble beginning to a state-of-the-art museum that is a focal point of the city and the county. Dr. Musunuru remains the largest benefactor in the history of the museum and steadfastly continues his financial and educational support. One of our latest projects is reopening and managing the Baker House as the oldest house in Western Pasco County. If it has to be relocated, Dr. Musunuru has offered to assist financially, if necessary.

Dr. Musunuru is a nationally acclaimed cardiologist having won many national awards for his work in the medical field and education. He has been a member of PHSC's District Board of Trustees for over 22 years, which is the longest term any board member has ever served at a college. Since Dr. Musunuru established his home in our community in 1981 he has established the acclaimed Heart Institute of Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point and has been a generous contributor to many organizations and foundations throughout Pasco County. Among his many local distinctions he was the presenting sponsor for the Centennial Celebration of the New Port Richey Library in 2020.

Dr. Musunuru has written many articles in magazines and newspapers to benefit his fellow man. The attached article he wrote in 2013 regarding vaccines is relevant and even more critical today. As a physician on the front lines of the pandemic he has cared for patients who die alone after weeks of suffering. He comforts devastated family members, some of whom did not take the coronavirus seriously. Please read Dr. Musunuru's compelling article about the unfounded fear of life-saving vaccinations. Vaccination fears are fueled by conspiracy theories, including false claims that the vaccine can generate the virus. Many lives have been lost in the last year due to ignorant theorists spreading misleading information. I firmly believe taking Dr. Musunuru's advice will make us among the responsible citizens of our community who are pro-actively combating the virus, expediting our return to the healthier, more normal way of life we miss so much.

With sincere appreciation,

Bob Langford, President

The West Pasco Historical Society, Inc.

OPINION



tampabay.com/opinion

Guest column | Dr. Rao Musunuru

Vaccines protect you and those around you

A couple of winters ago, I went to the hospital to make patient rounds and was frightened, literally, as I walked to the nurses' station. I thought I had become a passive participant in a science-fiction movie.



Musunuru

Face masks and computers on wheels were everywhere.

What happened? Did we get a patient infected with a monster virus?

Turns out the hospital's parent company decided to require all the health-care workers who refused to receive a flu vaccine to wear face masks during the flu season, which runs until May.

I wasn't going to debate the scientific wisdom of the decision or the true effectiveness of the policy. It was a desperate attempt to convince health care workers to get the flu vaccine to protect the large number of exposed vulnerable patients and their unvaccinated visitors. People carry the virus and are contagious for a day before they actually develop symptoms.

If the scenery scared me, wouldn't it frighten the public and our ill patients? I was curious why such a large percentage of health-care workers resisted the vaccination.

They freely shared with me their personal, philosophical, moral and medical concerns, beliefs, fears, and objections.

Some said they had never caught the flu and were not about to get a shot. Some said they developed the flu after getting a vaccination in the past. Some said they thought the flu was such a minor thing and the vaccine was dangerous. Some were concerned that they may become pregnant and worried about fetal death and autism. Some just did not like things being imposed on them by the authorities and some even thought that the government and the industry were all in it together just to make money.

All these concerns, even though often repeated, have no scientific validity, to my knowledge.

People cannot get the flu from the vaccination (dead virus). However, they can get the flu in spite of the vaccination for several reasons. Not everybody who receives the vaccination develops immunity. It takes about two weeks for the immunity to build up after the vaccine. One may be infected with a different strain of the virus that is not part of that year's vaccine. One may get infected with a completely different virus or even bacteria causing similar symptoms, but not the flu. The symptoms can be because of seasonal allergies, which started much earlier this year because of warm weather. Hallmark of typical flu symptoms is the early and sudden onset of high fever, muscle aches, and exhaustion.

The Centers for Disease Con-

trol and Prevention declared we have a flu epidemic this year meaning at least 7.2 percent of the people infected with the flu die because of its complications. That should say something about the need for prevention and protection.

Vaccination is the most beneficial, simple and practical preventive measure against pathogens causing disease. Small-pox is eradicated from the globe and polio is almost eradicated because of vaccination programs. Like any other medicine, vaccines can have side effects. The benefits are estimated to far outweigh the potential risks.

Vaccination is now proven to prevent cancers caused by infections like liver cancer from hepatitis and cervical cancer from human papilloma virus. Vaccination against some types of cancer are being pursued. Vaccination is being tried to prevent diseases caused by intrinsic inflammation like atherosclerosis that causes heart attacks and vaccines also are being developed for non-infectious conditions like high blood pressure, aortic aneurysm, Alzheimer's, and type I diabetes.

It is high time to get off the anti-vaccine band-wagon, especially among health care providers who took the pledge "first, do no harm."

The purpose of vaccination is not only to protect yourself, but to protect others from you.

Dr. Rao Musunuru is a cardiologist in Bayonet Point.