

Dr. Prakash Thopiah is a retired cardiologist who lives in Champaign and was born in India. He graduated from Gulbarga Medical School in 1974 and moved to England at the age of 25 where he trained at several hospitals. He came to the U.S. in 1983 and after a residency and fellowship at Wayne State University Affiliated Hospitals in Detroit, moved to Champaign to practice cardiology and to make a home for his family. He was affiliated with Christie Clinic, Gibson Area Hospital, and OSF Heart of Mary Medical Center as well as its predecessors. Dr. Thopiah was physician of the year in 2011, received a stewardship award by Provena, and its Cath Lab was named after him after his years of saving lives there.

Dr. Thopiah is a fan of all sports and, in addition to rooting for professional sports teams, was an active participant in local 5K, 10K, and half-marathon races. In 2019, he began noticing worsening neck and back pain which he first attributed to what is often a side effect of his profession in cardiac catheterization but was eventually diagnosed as ALS in January 2020. On learning he had this challenging disease he was distressed to learn there is no medical therapy and the prognosis is grave.

Accepting the progressive loss of independence can be one of the hardest aspects of the disease, but Dr Thopiah feels strongly that he can still contribute to the ALS community and bring awareness to the public about this disease. He is participating in research projects, including gene testing and new drug trials. He and his family, the Thopiah Trekkers, sponsored the Champaign “Walk to Defeat ALS” last year and will again sponsor the walk this year on September 25th to raise awareness, to provide resources and services to families free of charge, and to help unlock the mystery of ALS and find the key to treatments and a cure. As an advocate for getting up, staying active, and making a difference in the world, Dr. Thopiah continues to advocate for ALS causes and support all who are fighting to find a cure. We are pleased to present the Physician Champion Community Service Award to Dr. Thopiah.