

Professor revamps physical therapy education

BY TONYA LAYMAN
Contributing Writer

Dr. **Zoher Kapasi** believes physical therapy can make a huge difference in people's health if they can learn to use their bodies' own power to heal and live a better life. Because of this belief, he is using his talents and skills to advance the profession and develop the next generation of physical therapists.

Kapasi, associate professor and director of the Division of Physical Therapy and vice chair of education in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at **Emory University** School of Medicine, joined Emory's Physical Therapy division in 1994. He became the director in 2011.

When he became chair, Emory's Doctor of Physical Therapy program was ranked 11th by U.S. News and World Report. Today it is No. 5 with the top four tied for first.

Kapasi no longer sees patients; he believes his talents and skills are best used to advance the profession.

"To me there is no separation between practicing clinically and teaching – both are equally important. We have to make sure we are training the next generation of therapists or doctors," he said.

Emory's Division of Physical Therapy offers all doctoral level programs,

▶ DR. ZOHER KAPASI

Age: 54

Title: Associate professor and director, Division of Physical Therapy; vice chair of education, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine

Company: Emory University School of Medicine

Education: Bachelor's and master's degrees, the University of Bombay; Doctorate, Medical College of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University; post-doctoral work in immunology, Basel Institute for Immunology; MBA, Emory's Goizueta Business School

Family: Wife, Manisha; one daughter, Saanya

Hobbies: Reading nonfiction books, watching movies, listening to music and traveling



JOANN VITELLI

Dr. Zoher Kapasi is working to advance the physical therapy profession.

including the doctor of physical therapy (DPT) program, DPT-MBA with Goizueta Business School and DPT-MPH (master of public health) program with the Rollins School of Public Health.

Kapasi also implemented the DPT-MBA program at Emory, in addition to advancing the first physical therapy faculty clinical practice within The Emory Clinic. He began the dual Emory/Georgia

Tech DPT/Ph.D. program designed to train physical therapy students for careers in research to enhance the care of patients, while encouraging collaboration with the Emory Center for Ethics to implement a DPT-Bioethics dual degree program.

He is directly responsible for growing research funding over five-fold, with nearly \$1.5 million from the National Institutes of Health.

He is proud of the school's first two residency programs for physical therapists in orthopedics and neurology. "In PT, you graduate from your program and get your license and start practicing. But in medical programs, there a path to internship and residency programs. So residency programs are something new in physical therapy," Kapasi said.

A third residency program focused on acute care will start this August, he said. This will be the first in the Southeast and the fifth in the nation.

Kapasi is the Allied Health Professional Award winner in Atlanta Business Chronicle's 2017 Health Care Hero Awards.

Kapasi's work associating the DPT program with other degree programs will enhance the field, said Emory Department of Rehabilitation Medicine Chair Dr. **David Burke**.

"By affiliating with other degree programs, the strength of physical therapy can be enhanced. We have the power to broaden the teaching capacity of the staff and broaden the research capacity within the division," he said. "Dr. Kapasi has a real vision of what physical therapy could become from treatment to research to collaborating with other disciplines in medicine."